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8	4	7	3	5	6	9	2	1
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2	9	4	8	6	7	3	1	5
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What Is 'Common Sense' in 2021?

3 Steps to Perfect, Comforting Soup

Lessons in Happiness from a Very Good Dog

How to Plan Your Own 'Vision Day': Part 2

The Good News

Give Yourself the Boost of Getting Outside

LET THAT FRESH AIR FUEL YOU

Hunkering down and waiting for the dark and chilly winter season to pass sounds pretty nice. But the reality is, if we deprive ourselves of time outside, we do ourselves a big disservice both mentally and physically. Staying indoors all day affects your energy and mood, which makes it hard to get anything done, so here are four easy tips to make it easier to get a little fresh air.

1. MAKE IT A PRIORITY. Getting outside means making the conscious effort to do so. If you want to reap its benefits, you have to decide to make it a priority in your day-to-day schedule. If you make the act important to you, you have more motivation to actually do it.

2. USE MORNINGS EFFECTIVELY. Waking up and getting the day started can be hard. But studies have shown that natural light helps decrease your melatonin production, which means you feel ready to



4 Tips to Make Getting Outside Easier

face the day sooner. So, set yourself a second alarm to head outside and take a quick walk around the block just after waking. Don't even wash your face or grab coffee. Just get out there.

3. TAKE YOUR WORK OUTSIDE. If you're working from home, take some work outdoors. Phone and virtual meetings are a great outdoor option, especially if you'll just be an active listener and aren't required to do any work simultaneously. Attach a note to your meeting reminders to get yourself set up outside five minutes before you start.

4. CREATE A SCHEDULE. It might feel strange to set reminders throughout the day to step outside, but you easily get wrapped up in activities and overlook breaks, and these reminders are exactly what you need. Start with 10-minute blocks three times a day. If you stick to them, soon you won't need a schedule to get outside anymore.

Winter weather may be cold, but even when you're bundled up under a jacket and scarf, just 5–10 minutes outside can do wonders for your mood and energy for hours.



'COMMON SENSE' FOR 2021!

Timely Lessons From Founding Father Thomas Paine

January is the month of new beginnings, goal-setting, and cold weather. So, it's fitting that Thomas Paine choose January 1776 to anonymously publish his pamphlet, "Common Sense," which has been credited for being a key piece of literature leading up to the Revolutionary War. Why would he choose a time when people stayed close to home by their fires?

If you haven't heard of him, Paine is one of our nation's Founding Fathers born on Jan. 29, 1737. He was an activist, philosopher, political theorist, and revolutionist. His "Common Sense" pamphlet galvanized the citizens and colonial leaders to fight for their independence against British rule. He argued that Europe was the true parent "country" of the colonies, not Britain.

The pamphlet explained how King George, and monarchy in general, automatically put some citizens above others based on birthright and not ability, which easily leads to tyranny. He proposed the big idea of a government lead by equals, where no one person was superior over another. He supported frequent elections to ensure elected "citizens" continued to represent those who elected them to office. Frequent elections would give power to the citizens to express their displeasure or agreement with what the "elected" were doing.

Last spring, when I learned Paine's birthday was in January, I thought it would be a great time to revisit his writings, particularly "Common Sense." Little did I know how our electoral process would play out last fall. I was amazed at how much I learned from this 245-year-old pamphlet about "true equality" and uniting a country under common rule. After all, we are on the heels of one of the most divisive

presidential elections in history. If there were ever a time when we could use common sense, this is it!

When I sat down to listen to Paine's words on audiobook, I was blown away by how nearly everything he wrote could apply to current events. It was almost as if he had a crystal ball! Paine felt that the cause of America (equality for everyone, a fair government, accurate representation, etc.) was the cause of all mankind. He had a focus on commerce with the colonies trading with all of the world economies to support the new continent. He also wrote that while society is based on human wants and needs, government is a necessary evil meant to provide security and promote commerce.

Paine's list of common sense rules for government runs for pages and pages. Here are just a few quotes that stood out to me:

- **"It's easy to see that when Republican virtues fail, slavery ensues."** In other words, when our elected officials don't accurately represent us, we no longer have any say and become slaves. This is clear today in countries with election systems less fair than ours.
- **"... by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully."** This one hit me hard. As of this writing, our national debt is more than \$27 trillion and will definitely be a burden on future generations.
- **"... the more simple any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered."** Put more simply, Paine thought that when our government gets too big, it becomes incapable of producing

what it promises and it is hard for the citizens to rein in. Sound familiar?

- **"[Elected officials] are supposed to have the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them" and "act in the same manner as the whole body would act were they present."** Basically, Paine believed that representatives should have the same wants and needs as those who elect them and should not be self-serving. Unfortunately, these days some officials seem pretty disconnected from their constituents. Apparently, this is a centuries-old issue!

Paine's literature is thoughtful and articulate. His recipe for equality and freedom may be just what the world is looking for today. He wrote that our strength as a nation is in **unity** and that intimacy and friendship are necessary for our county to thrive. I think that those things are still very true, don't you?

Today, people want many of the things Paine wanted — equality for everyone, a government that protects the common interests, and laws that apply equally to all Americans. To achieve this, our county needs to come together and heal our divisions. This country has done many great things and our citizens have benefited from the groundwork our Founding Fathers established. They created a foundation of equality and governance by peers, which we have strayed from. While we've come a long way, **there's still progress to make.**

I hope that in 2021, friendships can reset among all citizens, we choose to celebrate how far we have come, and we learn from our mistakes so as not to repeat them!

-Deb Matz



Soup's On!

PERFECT YOUR SOUP RECIPE WITH THESE 3 TIPS

Soup is perfect for sick days and alongside grilled cheese, and Grandma always seemed to have a recipe to make everything better. For as simple and comforting as soup can be, recreating those memories from your stovetop includes a few tedious steps. Become a soup master with this go-to guide to winter's favorite dish.

Start by chopping vegetables into bite-size pieces that will easily fit on a spoon. No one wants a spoonful of soup that's just carrots after all! Then, add vegetables to your soup based on cooking time and flavoring. Carrots, onions, and celery should "sweat" in the pot with oil and seasoning *before* you add the broth to capture the fullest flavor of these ingredients. Potatoes and other root vegetables can be added in the boiling phase, while leafy greens only need minutes in the pot toward the end to capture their full flavor.

Simmer to blend flavors.

Simmering is the key to a great soup. Once all your ingredients are in the pot, reduce the boiling to a low simmer. This allows the flavors to play together without overcooking. If a soup is boiled for too long, the vegetables,

meats, and/or pasta can become mushy and underwhelming.

Season gradually — but generously.

No one enjoys a bland soup, but too much seasoning can overpower the natural flavors of your ingredients. Add your seasoning to vegetables as they sauté in the pot before adding the stock. Then, add the stock and the remainder of your ingredients. Only add more seasoning as the soup simmers and do a taste test. Add a bit of salt and pepper until it's perfect! If you over-salt, don't panic. Adding more stock, potatoes, noodles, or cream can fix your soup in a pinch.

Bonus Tip: Always serve your soup with bread, toast, or crackers. It's the perfect vehicle to soak up all the flavors!

Mind your peas and carrots.

The magic of a hearty minestrone or old-fashioned chicken noodle soup comes from the flavors of vegetables to create the perfect blend of comfort and taste. However, overcooking or undercooking vegetables can ruin this delicate balance. So, consider the vegetables you want in your soup and plan accordingly.



HAPPINESS LESSONS FROM A VERY SMART DOG

Meet Kara, Deb's Best Friend!

Hello! My name is Kara, and I'm a 6-year-old border collie/Labrador mix. You might know my human, Deb. She thought you might need a smile and a quick reminder about living a happy life, so she gave me this spot to tell you why it is so easy for a dog to be happy! I'm so excited to share my secrets!

The truth is that dogs have some of the happiest lives in the whole world. Yet this does not happen by accident. Dogs like me know what our job is and are good at finding things to wag our tails about. I think it's because of the way we look at things. I don't just mean sniffing stuff — I mean the way we think. I have some dog tricks that help me feel good, and I'll share them with you as long as you promise not to tell the other dogs that I spilled our secrets, okay?

- **Find joy in the simple things.** Visitors at the door, food in my food bowl, walks through the neighborhood, and treats when I'm good are *amazing!* They might not be big, but that doesn't make them less great!
- **Be curious.** Sometimes following my nose gets me into trouble, but it's always worth it. I love to explore, adventure, and take detours when Deb and I go for walks, and

it makes me happy to discover things. I don't understand why painted turtles hide when I approach or the deer bolt upon my greeting. I just want to play!

- **Make someone else feel important.** My favorite thing to do is to greet Deb with a kiss when she comes home. Sometimes I just follow her around to let her know how much I care, and that makes me happy, too. Plus, sometimes I get extra pets just for showing up. What a great life I live!
- **Choose to be happy.** Compared to dogs living on the street or in shelters, I don't have a single thing to whine about. I have so much! There's a warm place for me to sleep, lots of food to eat, a human who loves me. How could I be sad? I guess I could be sad if I took my human for granted, but that would not be fun. Why do humans do that?
- **Be grateful.** This is probably the most

powerful secret I know. Gratitude fills my heart with joy, and I just can't help sharing that joy. When I am grateful, the world is more alive than ever!

- **Learn to forgive and let go.** Sometimes people step on me, but you know what — that's okay! I know they didn't mean it. Heck, even if they did do it on purpose, it's not worth growling about. What's over is over, and I'd rather move on to chase squirrels or bright reflections on the wall.

I've been through some hard stuff in my 42 dog years (my last humans weren't so nice), but I still find things to wag my tail about. I am certain that is why Deb adopted me. So, I hope some of this dog wisdom works for you!

Happy New Year!

-Kara

SUCCESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

Let your Vision Day set the momentum for 2021!

Last month, I recommended that you set a date for your own "Vision Day" and explained how to start setting goals for your personal life. In case you missed it, a Vision Day is a 24-hour period of reflection, relaxation, dreaming, and planning where you mull over your current year's achievements and set goals for the new year for both your personal and professional life. It's a practice that I love to use to find clarity and direction for my life. In this article, I'll share what to do on Vision Day and how I make it easy.

On your selected Vision Day, turn off your phone and find a location that is inspiring without distractions. You want an environment where you can envision the life you want to live in vivid detail. Focus on areas that are important to you. I want my business to grow by a certain percentage each year, but I also want a full and fulfilling personal life. Therefore, I set personal goals in the following areas: faith, family, fitness, health, personal development, home life, charity, travel. I also set 4-6 primary business goals. Your priorities will revolve around what is important to you.

It's important to give yourself enough time to meditate and create a clear picture of your ideal future. So I don't forget ideas as they swirl around my mind, I'll jot them down on a piece of paper. Envision your future in as much detail as you can. For example, when I envision a 16-mile hike in the Appalachians, I focus on what it feels like to have accomplished that goal, the beauty of the old mountains and smells along the way. These are my "feel-good" motivators that help me stay on track of my goals.

Once I am done thinking and dreaming, I start to write down my goals and organize my plan in one of the two Vision Day templates I created for myself. The first template creates a framework that helps me visualize my "12-month," "1-10 year," and "next 10-year" plans for my life and my company. It's amazing how putting the ideas on paper not only provides clarity, but also often reveals challenges and conflicts between goals. This process includes my business (or professional) goals, and I often find that I am trying to put 2,000 minutes in a 1,440-minute day. So, now I have to select the most important and effective objectives. The second template makes this easy, and I will explain how you can get your **free** template in a minute.

Your primary business and personal goals should be broad and push you to excel. The objectives set under each goal help define the goal with actionable and measurable steps. Then each objective will

have several strategies on how to reach the objective. Finally, under each strategy, list several tactics or actions steps you'll need to take to fulfill each strategy.

Your Vision Plan is your road map for the year. It lets you know what you should be working on and when. If used correctly, it will help you say "no" to things that do not fit your objectives. Charting each goal, objective, strategy, and tasks/action steps makes them easy to track and evaluate. You may find some strategies aren't working. Scrap them and focus on the other strategies or try a new one. The process also makes delegating simpler, and it can provide a clear performance measure for each team member.

Most likely you will find that one day is not enough time to complete your Vision Plan, but you will be far enough along to complete it in the week to come. After a year where many of us feel helpless, you will appreciate how invaluable this process is for recovering in a happy and prosperous way.

I believe this so strongly that I'm happy to give you my ACTION STEPS template for free! It's easy to use and you can personalize it to your situation. To get the free template go to DLJTaxServices.com/VDtemplate21. For more hands-on direction or you want someone to help lead your team in the process, call me to book an appointment at 920-944-6020 or 678-491-9744.



The Good News

"Oh, come back to God. Live by the principles of love and justice, and always be expecting much from him, your God."

—Hosea 12:6

BRAIN BREAK

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Solution on Pg. 4

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