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## Brotherly Bonds

### THE ENDURING VALUE OF SIBLING TIES

Many stories about brothers and sisters focus on rivalries, jealousy, or battles over a parent's estate. I have just one sibling, a brother three years younger, and the two of us are lucky. My mother said the one thing she is most proud of is how well we get along. We can go for months without seeing each other and feel as close as ever when we meet again.

On April 10, we recognize National Siblings Day, a good time to celebrate solid sibling ties. Psychologists say these relationships are more important than many people realize. Most people spend more time with their brothers and sisters than anyone else, and ideally, they serve as a source of support and companionship. In our case, my brother's personality and mine mesh well. My brother is like my mother, and I'm more like my father. And my brother and I get along as well as my mother and father, except, of course, that we're siblings rather than spouses.

We have a very sarcastic family, and we have fun reminding each other of past adventures and embarrassments. I famously climbed over an outdoor shower at our house on the Jersey Shore one summer and my brother slipped and cracked his head open trying to follow me. He needed stitches, but when an emergency room physician tried to sew him up, my brother called him a "dummy doctor" and told him not to touch him. He is very stubborn.

From taking family road trips as kids to watching live soccer games together in London as adults, my brother and I share countless warm memories. When we were growing up, our parents drove us all over the West, through Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, and New Mexico, and the whole family went to Europe for two weeks. As teenagers, my brother used to visit me in college, and we had all kinds of fun my parents would never want to hear about.

After he graduated college and moved home, my brother lasted about 2 weeks before he decided he needed to move out. I had just started practicing law in New York at the time, so my brother came to Brooklyn and lived on my couch for a few months. Sharing that apartment was a little tight, but it was fun to have him under the same roof. After he moved out, I had to get a cat. It was just too quiet after he was gone.



My brother and I both played soccer when we were kids, and we played together again in an adult league in Manhattan for a while. We still love watching live matches, and have traveled to London for long weekends several times to watch live soccer and explore all that London has to offer. We also spent plenty of nights stumbling around London together after a long day of watching soccer. More recently, we took my wife and my brother's fiancée at the time, who is now his wife, for a four-day weekend there in 2020, and we all had a great time.

Now that my brother and I both have children, we sometimes vacation together at our family home on the beach in South Jersey. We spent two weeks there last summer with my three school-age kids and my brother's toddler. He and his wife have since had a second child.

As we pass through each new stage of life, my closeness with my brother means even more to me. At ages 13, 11, and 8, my children are a little older than his. Still, one of my greatest hopes is that the strength of our bond will trickle down to the next generation, so the cousins, too, can enjoy the same closeness that has so enriched our lives.

*- Andrew M. Ayers*

# LEGALLY UNBELIEVABLE

## WHEN THE LAW MEETS ABSURDITY

There are some outlandish laws in the U.S., but you can also get away with plenty of surprising things. Let's dive into some of the crazy laws from around the country.

### Surprisingly Legal

#### Flame On

Owning a flamethrower is surprisingly legal and easy in 48 states. The only state where you can't own one is Maryland. And if you want a flamethrower in California, you must get a license. The rest of the states say, fire away!

#### Car Radar

Another surprising law concerns radar detectors: In most states, utilizing a radar detector in your personal vehicle is completely legal. Do you want to check someone's speed or look out for police officers? Unless you live in Mississippi,

Virginia, Washington, D.C., or on a military base, it's entirely legal!

#### Sleepy Surgery

There are absolutely no laws that state surgeons must get a good night's sleep before surgery. As dangerous as this sounds, at least surgeons usually do have a limit on how long they can work at once, curtailing the worst outcomes of an exhausted doctor.

### Shockingly Illegal

#### Car Cursing

While in Maryland, you should be mindful of keeping your swear words to yourself (or whisper them softly) while driving through the small city of Rockville. It is considered a misdemeanor to swear from a vehicle within earshot of other people. Your curse words could cost you up to \$100 in fines or 90 days in jail.



#### Blindingly Obvious

Driving blindfolded has never been a good idea, but that clearly didn't stop adventurous residents in Alabama from testing their blind driving skills. Maybe that's why the state passed a law making blindfolded driving illegal.

Keep an open ear and be mindful of what is legal and what is not. Nobody wants weird laws creating dumb criminals!

# Joke's on You!

## THE HISTORY OF APRIL FOOLS' DAY

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate April Fools' Day every April 1 with silly pranks and whimsical tricks? April Fools' originated in France during the 16th century when the country switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. The change moved the new year from the end of March to Jan. 1.

The shocking part is that not everyone was aware of the change. Those who continued celebrating New Year's Day on April 1 were mocked, labeled as "April Fools," and subjected to pranks.



These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish or a gullible person. Historians have also linked April Fools' Day to festivals such as Hilaria (Latin for joyful), which was celebrated in ancient Rome at the end of March by followers of the cult of Cybele.

It involved people dressing up in disguises and mocking fellow citizens and magistrates and was said to be inspired by the Egyptian legend of Isis, Osiris, and Seth. There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather.

Regardless of its origin, April Fools' Day has become a worldwide tradition with links from the past. Today, April Fools' Day means playing pranks and tricks on friends and family. People have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations, and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims to fool their audiences.

So, when someone pulls a nasty prank on you on April Fools' Day, remember why and where it came from!

# TAKE A *BREAK*



## Be the Parents Who Are Prepared

### CREATING AN EMERGENCY KIT FOR ANY SITUATION

To be proactive in life is to be successful! As a parent, planning ahead must become second nature if we want our children and families to stay strong in the face of adversity. While many good parenting tips are out there, the smartest is creating an emergency kit to help out in any scenario.

An emergency kit will have everything you and your family may need during an emergency, such as having to stay inside for longer than usual or the electricity goes out. Each family's kit will vary depending on their kids' individual needs. It's vital to have all these things collected *before* the trouble begins, stored in a container, and kept in a safe and easily accessible location in case of an emergency. Making a family emergency kit can also be fun for the family to do together.

These are the necessary steps to create a toolkit:

1. You will need a large plastic bin or box to put things into.
2. Go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for a list of key items to include in a kit: [CDC.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html](https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html).
3. Go shopping for the appropriate items you need, then check them off the list as you put them into your emergency kit.
4. Place an updated copy of your checklist inside your large plastic bin or box once you put your kit together to know what is inside the kit and to find your checklist easily.

Keeping your family safe should be a top priority at all times. It is so important to teach preparation skills to our children at a young age so they can be ready and thrive through life's most turbulent moments.



## Grilled Steak With Chimichurri Sauce

Savor the flavor with our mouthwatering grilled steak, paired perfectly with vibrant chimichurri sauce.

### Ingredients

- 2 lbs steak (flank, sirloin, or skirt steak)
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - Salt and pepper, to taste
- For the chimichurri sauce:**
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
  - 2 cloves garlic, minced
  - Juice of 1 lemon
  - 2 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 tsp red pepper flakes
  - Salt and pepper, to taste

### Directions

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
2. Rub the steak with the olive oil, salt, and pepper.
3. Grill the steak for 4–5 minutes per side or until it reaches desired doneness.
4. Meanwhile, make the chimichurri sauce: In a small bowl, mix together the parsley, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper.
5. Let the steak rest for 5 minutes before slicing.
6. Serve the steak with the chimichurri sauce and enjoy!



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# FROM CONFLICT TO COMPASSION

## Luke Combs Strikes a Chord

Imagine waking up one December morning to the bizarre news that one of your favorite celebrities is suing you for a whopping \$250,000. That's what happened to Florida resident Nicol Harness, a devoted fan of country music sensation Luke Combs.

The story began when Harness found herself in hot water for selling unofficial merchandise adorned with lyrics from Combs' songs. She had sold 18 tumblers at \$20 each and had no clue this would lead to a legal battle that would wreak havoc on her life.

Harness, who had been dealing with congestive heart failure, received an email from Combs' legal team during her hospital stay. Unfortunately, due to her medical condition, she missed the 21-day response window, which resulted in further complications. Her Amazon account,

containing funds from recent sales, was locked due to the lawsuit, leaving her in a dire financial situation.

What sets this story apart is not the initial legal dispute; it's the remarkable response from Combs himself. Upon learning of Harness's situation, he recorded a heartfelt TikTok video where he apologized directly to Harness and extended his hand to help her during this challenging time. He gave her \$11,000, twice the amount that had become inaccessible in her Amazon account due to the lawsuit. He emphasized that no fan should ever go through such an ordeal and expressed his sincere regret for the situation.

Combs didn't stop there; he decided to positively impact Harness's life by selling similar tumblers on his own website. All proceeds from these sales were directed



toward Harness's family to support her medical care, further showcasing Combs' commitment to making amends and righting the situation.

This incredible turn of events reminds us that even in the face of legal battles and adversity, acts of kindness and empathy can prevail. Combs, a country music superstar, proved in words and actions that he values his fans, turning a potential lawsuit into a story of compassion and unity in the country music community.