



## Making the Grade

### The Teachers Who Shaped Me

One of the many things I'm grateful for is that my children have incredible teachers. I can see their dedication and individual engagement with each kid whenever I attend a parent-teacher conference. I didn't get to attend parent-teacher conferences when I was growing up, but I am thankful that I also had teachers that were compassionate and understanding.

I have fond memories of several teachers who influenced, inspired, and challenged me in high school and beyond. May 3 is National Teacher Day, so it seems like the perfect moment to reflect on what I learned from my favorite and most memorable educators.

In high school, I moved from Connecticut to Minnesota, and one of my first English teachers was Mr. Backen. Throughout my time in his class, he encouraged me in my pursuit of speech and debate — which may have had something to do with my choice to become a lawyer. Debate also introduced me to philosophy, which remains an interest (and a good way to bore everyone at a party you no longer want to stay at!).

Mr. Backen even went to the same college I ultimately chose. While I didn't select it for that reason, it was beneficial to have someone I could go to for advice, and learning about his experience helped me make up my mind. To this day, we are still in touch. We met up a few times back when he would visit New York with the debate team, and we also write each other old-fashioned letters. (In fact, I think I owe him one back!)

I met another teacher in college who I still talk to through social media. Rodney was my international relations teacher, and he had a dry, sarcastic wit. That really appealed to me and fit well with my personality, so even though his class was early in the morning, I'd never miss it. I'd become interested in political science after high school, he kept the fire burning and was one of my favorite teachers I've ever had.

Then there was Father Dan. I went to St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, and some of the clergy members were also teachers. Father Dan was unusual in that he was both a lawyer and a priest. He taught me my first few law classes during undergrad. It was nowhere near as intense or intimidating, but it gave me a tiny taste of how law school might look. I enjoyed his classes and learning about his story — my only regret is that I didn't get to participate in his Bahamas program!

Finally, in law school, I had a particularly memorable professor. She will go unnamed — because I still happen to be a little scared of her! She taught a class on corporations, and she was one of the most intimidating people I've ever met. Her classes were like those classic movie law school scenes where the teachers challenge their students in front of everyone. You never knew who she would call on or what she would ask, so I always paid strict attention in her class.

She taught me a lot about business law — but more importantly, she taught me the importance of being prepared.

It's hard to believe that by the time you read this, it will have been 20 years since I graduated from law school; I'm not sure where the time went. But all these years later, I still appreciate the value of a good education, which starts with good educators.

After the past couple of years, I'm not sure how teachers have retained their passion enough to get up and go to school in the morning. But with my kids, I see that they have, and I'm so thankful for it. If a teacher is making a difference in your child's life, don't wait for a special day of the year to tell them how much you appreciate their hard work. Even though our interactions with teachers may be brief, their impact lasts a lifetime.



*- Andrew M. Ayers*

# A Timeless and Influential Book

## It's Time to Read or Reread This Classic

"How to Win Friends & Influence People" by Dale Carnegie has stood the test of time. Published in 1936, this book has sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. Relating to the key relationships of humans, the book embodies self-improvement, communication, relationship building, and compassion. Every working professional or individual rubbing elbows in their social group needs it in their toolbox!

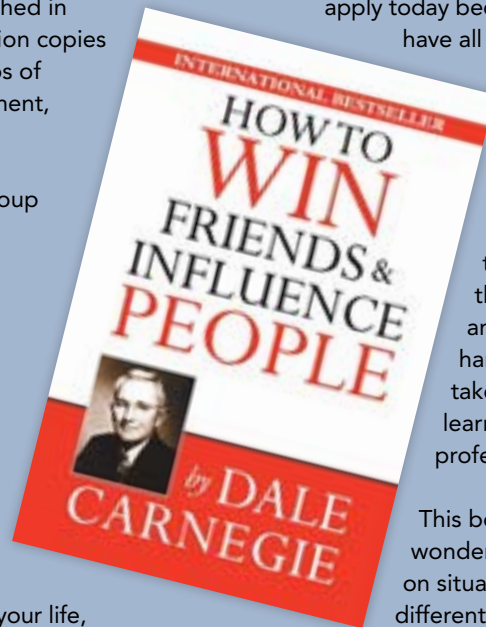
If you haven't already experienced the influential and game-changing words of Dale Carnegie, it's time to pick up a copy. If you've already read it, it's time to give it another read to review and remember because there is still much value to unfold.

Embedded within each page of this easy-to-read book are recommendations for creating, building upon, and improving successful and positive relationships within your life, whether it be with friends, family members, coworkers, network professionals, or supervisors. Written and published more than 85

years ago, its life lessons and thought-provoking suggestions still apply today because, while technology, education, and infrastructure have all advanced, our basic human tendencies and the way we interact remain the same.

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you," Dale Carnegie states. In "How to Win Friends & Influence People," he explores the importance of putting the needs, interests, and values of others before your own and how to handle situations for the best possible outcome. It takes a deep dive into getting to know yourself before learning how to bond with others on a personal and/or professional level.

This book, a brilliant study on human nature, will have you wondering why you didn't read it sooner while reflecting on situations and interactions you could have handled differently. But most importantly, Carnegie's pointers are sure to provide amazing insights while you learn to get along with just about anyone.



## Woman Attempts to Sue Wendy's

### For an Alleged Finger in Her Chili



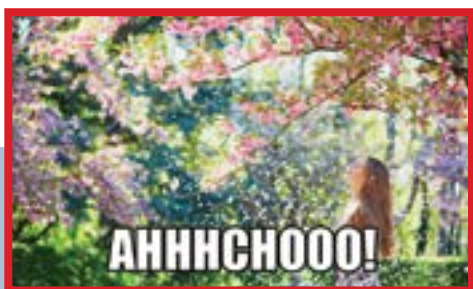
Back in 2005, a woman became imaginative and filed a claim against the owner of a Wendy's franchise in San Jose, California, stating that she was served a bowl of chili with a human finger in it. Her allegation cost the fast-food chain millions in damages, and as it turns out, the woman's claim was false. She was eventually arrested and convicted of attempting to extort Wendy's.

On March 25, 2005, Wendy's was put in the spotlight under false allegations. A woman, Anna Ayala, visited a Wendy's with her family and ordered a bowl of chili. She then made a large scene, claiming that she bit into something crunchy and discovered that it was the fingernail of a human finger inside her chili! All of the employees in that particular Wendy's were astonished because they each had all 10 fingers still attached. Even more, all Wendy's employees at other locations who handled raw materials still had all of their fingers. When a forensic investigation was done on the finger, it was found that the finger was not cooked at 170 degrees F for three hours, like the rest of the chili was.

Eventually, it was discovered that Ayala had 13 different lawsuits open against different companies, and when her story began to waver, she dropped the lawsuit on April 12, 2005, claiming it was putting too much pressure on her. But Wendy's, having already lost millions of dollars, was hard-pressed to prove this was not negligence on their part. They set up a tip line and offered \$50,000 to anyone who had information on the owner of the finger. Eventually, after genetic testing, authorities discovered that the finger belonged to a Nevada man who was a coworker of Ayala's husband; the man had recently lost a finger in an industrial accident and had given it to Ayala to settle a \$50 debt. Both Ayala and her husband were charged and ordered to pay restitution. It was quite the finger feud!



# TAKE A **BREAK**



## MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH RAINBOW FRITTATA

Impress Mom with this delicious breakfast recipe!

### Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/4 cup sweet potato, diced
- 1/4 cup yellow pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup broccoli, chopped
- 8 eggs
- Basil, thyme, salt, and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 avocado, pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced
- Cherry tomatoes, halved
- Sriracha hot sauce (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F and coat a cast-iron skillet with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In the skillet over medium heat, cook sweet potatoes, yellow pepper, and broccoli until soft.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, basil, thyme, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour egg mixture into skillet with vegetables. Don't stir but instead use a spatula to lift the edges of the egg mixture until it is evenly distributed.
5. Transfer mixture to oven. Bake for 5 minutes or until the dish sets.
6. Top with avocado and tomatoes. Drizzle Sriracha on top (if desired).

Inspired by EatingWell.com

## THE ART OF QUIETING YOUR MIND BEFORE BED

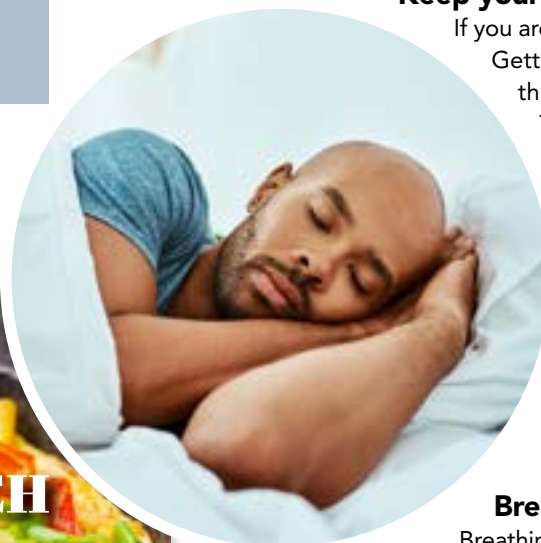
All day long, thoughts run through your mind, and by the end of the day, your head is probably ready to explode. After all, it's estimated that in 24 hours you can have between 60,000–80,000 thoughts. At some point, your brain needs a break, and that's especially true before you try to go to bed. Here are some ways to quiet your mind, so you can get a full night's sleep!

### Keep your bed for sleeping.

If you aren't sleeping, get out of bed!

Getting in the habit of scrolling through your phone, watching TV, reading, working, or even eating in bed teaches your brain that your bed is for things other than sleeping! If you find yourself tossing and turning, get out of bed and try a relaxing activity such as reading, journaling, listening to music, or meditating.

When you get tired, try getting back in bed.



### Breathe deeply.

Breathing exercises can not only help calm your mind and spirit, but they can lower your heart rate, which is especially beneficial in relieving stress or anxiety when things are upsetting you.

### Write it down.

Instead of letting thoughts fill your mind right before bed (such as the next day's tasks or any worries you have), set aside time before bed to write it out. Whether you are a fan of journaling, writing letters, or simply just listing out your problems, goals, and thoughts, grab a pen and paper and make it a nightly routine. This way, your thoughts will be freed before your head hits the pillow.

### Try a light snack.

When you can't sleep, the last thing that you want to do is eat something heavy. In fact, when you eat a large meal right before bed, your digestive system can become overwhelmed. But, studies have shown that eating a light carbohydrate snack such as crackers or popcorn when you can't sleep may be helpful.

### Turn your room into a sleep haven.

Keeping your bedroom neat, relaxing, and calm can help improve your sleep! Keep all televisions, computers, and screens out of the bedroom and furnish it with soft colors and textures that are tranquil and soothing to you.

Pumping the brakes on worrisome thoughts racing through your mind can be tough, but trying these tips and tricks may earn you some relief and much needed sleep.



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## Aiming to Keep Them Together Nonprofit Builds Free Homes for Licensed Foster Families

Studies show that over half of the children in foster care also have a sibling in the foster system. Of those children, more than 75% are separated. In North Carolina, Fostering Hopes joined forces with another nonprofit, H3 Collective, to build foster homes so they can keep large sibling groups together. Some of these homes are big enough to house five children, which is usually the maximum number of children the foster system allows under one roof.

Alex Williams, the founder of Fostering Hopes, explained that the need for foster homes and foster parents is so high that, many times, children are sent out of their home county. He estimates that roughly 50% of the 20,000 children in North Carolina's foster program will be placed outside of their home county. Adam Ponder of H3 Collective was proud to announce that Fostering Hopes and H3 are currently working together on a 3,600-square-foot, five-bedroom home for a licensed foster family, and the group hopes to have it ready for occupancy this summer.

As if living in the foster program isn't hard enough on a child, being packed up and moved across the state — sometimes

counties away from their brothers and sisters — is traumatizing. The goal is to provide children a home where they feel comfortable and safe with enough room for all siblings. Once this initial build is complete, Fostering Hopes and H3 plan to build many more large foster homes in Western North Carolina. They've even made the goal of expanding into 10–15 counties in the western part of the state!



"The intention is to provide hope to children who typically find themselves without it," Alex Williams told Fox News. "We hope to keep siblings together, to keep children in their home communities, and to provide dedicated families or parents for children who need them the most."

There is no better feeling than helping children grow, thrive, and flourish. The efforts of Fostering Hopes and H3 Collective are inspiring, heartfelt, and are bound to make a difference in the lives of many children and families.