



The Great Candy Exchange

No Tricks, Just Treats

Halloween is usually a busy time for my family and me. We have three kids — a 7-year-old, a 10-year-old, and a 12-year-old — who absolutely love the spooky holiday.

For the last couple of years, we've had an ongoing theme of "Star Wars" costumes, and there was one year the kids dressed up as Princess Leia, Kylo Ren, and Yoda. This year, the kids are thinking about doing the Mandalorian and Baby Yoda! My daughter may do a different theme, but whatever she decides to do, I'm sure it'll be great!

Being in Minnesota, part of the trick is that you have to be warm enough for the night! One thing that's interesting as far as Halloween stories is the infamous Halloween blizzard of 1991.

I moved in 1992, so I heard no end of the story, and even to this day, we still hear stories about the blizzard that caused a period of heavy snow and accumulation in the Upper Midwest. Thankfully, I had missed it by a year, but it sounds like it was quite the blizzard back then.

During the pandemic in 2020, my wife took the kids on a drive to look at some of the great Halloween decorations in the neighborhood. While she was gone, I was in charge of hiding candy all over the backyard. We had some glow stick bracelets that I cracked, put together, and placed all over the yard with the candy in the middle so the kids could find them.

Since there was no real trick-or-treating, and no one felt comfortable going to people's houses, that was our modified way of doing it! The COVID-19 years were pretty tough because we have a great neighborhood for candy. There's one house around the corner where they're always outside sitting by a bonfire, and they would give out full-sized candy bars and treats for the kids.

We'll probably stick around the neighborhood again this year, and one place that we always look forward to seeing is a home about five blocks from us. It's a guy that is into video effects, like the ones from the entertainment industry, and he has the most spectacular decorations.



Last year he literally had a full-on "Star Wars" theme in his yard, with flashing lights, giant setups, and a projection screen where he streamed the movies. The kids absolutely loved it! Every year, he does something different, so we usually swing by at some point in the night just to see what he's got going on. I'm looking forward to seeing what he'll have this year.

At the very end of Halloween night, we have a great candy exchange! So, the kids will sit down and literally dump all of their candy out and it's like watching a sports league trade players. They trade candy for who likes what, and we all have a great time getting our favorite candies from one another.

Whatever is left over that nobody likes usually ends up in our office, so my clients always get an extra little treat when they come by!

- Andrew M. Ayers



Teenager Saves a Woman's Life

After Taking One First-Aid Training Class

It was a typical day at work for 15-year-old McDonald's worker Sydney Raley — she was taking orders, engaging with customers, and delivering food. Everything went as planned for Raley until the unexpected happened.

After handing a woman part of her order, Raley left the drive-thru window to retrieve the rest of her food. But when she returned, something strange happened. "She was coughing like crazy, and I noticed she was gagging ... I immediately knew, 'Oh, no, she's choking,'" Raley told CNN. The woman's daughter freaked out because she felt so scared for her mother. Even some of the McDonald's employees seemed shocked and momentarily unable to take action. Luckily, Raley knew what to do.

She immediately told her colleague to dial 911 as she dove through the drive-thru window to help the choking woman. Besides working at the fast-food chain, Raley was also a babysitter and had taken

a first-aid class through the Red Cross. In this class, she learned the Heimlich maneuver, which Raley used to dislodge the chicken nugget the woman had eaten.

Although the woman was in shock after what she endured, she felt grateful for the teen and her act of heroism. Her bravery didn't go unnoticed by Paul Ostergaard either, the owner-operator of the McDonald's where Raley worked. He told CNN, "Sydney truly personifies what it is to be a hero." In addition to this recognition, Raley also received \$100 from a fund first-responders use to reward people who do brave work within the community.

Thank you, Sydney, for showing us that not all heroes wear capes — they are in our community everywhere we go. We encourage everyone to take a first-aid training course, so all of us can become the heroes of tomorrow. Plus, you never know when that knowledge will come in handy.

Never a Dull Moment

Why We Should Live for Today

We can't change the past, nor can we predict or guarantee the future. In the end, all we have is the present, yet most of us live our lives ignoring its many possibilities.

It's easy to tune out the life around you, especially if you do many of the same things every day. Taking care of the kids, commuting, working, and running errands can blur together. Just as bad, when life isn't going the way we want, it's easy to fantasize about how things "should" be or how they once were. When we live busy or stressful lives, worrying or planning can also make us feel more in control.

The problem with these strategies is that they don't change anything. They help us discount the only thing we can control: what we do now. Life can pass you by that way if you're not careful. The solution is to exist in the present moment as much as possible and enjoy the good things around us while we have them. Studies show that living this way makes people happier, healthier, and more likely to form strong relationships.

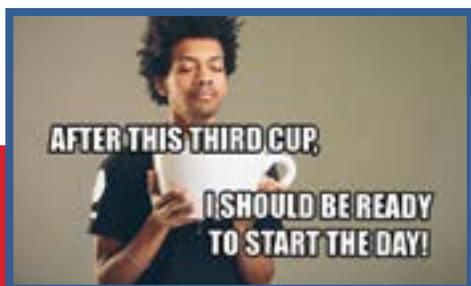
But how do you even get started? The process requires a different way of thinking called mindfulness. Mindfulness is about focusing on what is happening in the present moment — not that work deadline, the movie you just watched, what's for dinner, or the kids' extracurricular schedule. It takes practice, and many people use meditation or breathing to help.

When mindful, we concentrate on what others say and become more fully present. We also start to notice the small things we usually overlook: the cool breeze on our skin, the sound of the birds, the feel of a sweater, or the sight of our loved ones smiling. Our lives become fuller. And our stress decreases because we're not clinging to things beyond our command.

No one ever stops worrying entirely, and some planning is necessary to live a successful life. But too much can leave us with no energy or time to enjoy it. John Lennon once sang, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." Start living in the present so you don't blink and miss yours.



TAKE A *BREAK*



CREAMY BAKED PUMPKIN RISOTTO

Ingredients

- 5 cups of low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups Arborio rice
- 2 cups of pumpkin, diced
- 1 1/2 cups canned pumpkin purée
- 1/2 yellow onion, minced
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp mascarpone cheese
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Directions

1. Heat the oven to 400 F and arrange a rack in the middle.
2. In a 3-quart baking dish, combine broth, rice, diced and puréed pumpkin, and onion.
3. Season with salt and pepper, then stir until evenly combined.
4. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake until water has been absorbed and rice granules are puffed.
5. Remove from the oven and stir in basil, grated Parmesan cheese, mascarpone cheese, and olive oil.

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com

IT'S WORLD TEACHERS' DAY!

3 Ways to Show Gratitude

Teachers have impacted you and your children's lives in more ways than one. Maybe they inspired you to take a certain career path, always understood you, or were there for you or your child when it was needed. Teachers have a demanding job, so in honor of World Teachers' Day on Oct. 5, let's take some time to appreciate them. Here are three ways to show your gratitude this month.

Donate school supplies.

Some teachers spend personal funds to purchase school supplies for their classrooms. This expense can become costly, especially if they provide for multiple students. Donate unused notebooks, pencils, pens, or other school supplies to a teacher. Some teachers even have wish lists available if you want to purchase new items for their classrooms. They will appreciate your kindness, and the children who need these supplies will also be grateful.

Write thank-you letters.

If you had a teacher who impacted your life, or if your child has a favorite teacher, write them a thank-you note. Handwritten notes are more meaningful than ones you buy at the store. It shows you put in time and effort to create something specifically for them. You can write about a favorite memory you had with them or the ways they've inspired you. If you're feeling extra generous, add a gift card to the note! A small message can go a long way in turning someone's day around.

Volunteer when you can.

In addition to teaching in the classroom, teachers need to chaperone students during field trips, recess, lunch, and standardized tests. Contact your child's school and see when they need volunteers to help with these activities. Teachers will greatly appreciate it because they will have a chance to take a break or organize their materials for the next class. Even if it's just for the day or a few hours, teachers will appreciate the extra assistance.

Teachers play a vital role in preparing our children for the real world. They teach them vital social skills and problem-solving strategies that will assist them as they age. So, let's take some time to show appreciation for their dedication to our children.



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The Man Who Felt 20 Years Younger

Wanted to Legally Change His Age



We've all heard about people legally changing their name or gender, but have you ever heard about someone trying to change their legal age? In 2018, a 69-year-old Dutch man named Emile Ratelband petitioned a court for permission to change his age. He wanted to alter the year he was born on his birth certificate by 20 years so he could be 49 years old. So, how did this case end? Let's find out.

What was his reasoning?

Ratelband wanted to change his age because he argued that he felt 20 years younger. He said his doctors told him that he had the body of a younger man, and his health was far better than most men his age.

He alleged that he experienced age discrimination because, being 69, he is limited in what he can do. If he were 49, he could buy a house and car and work more hours, and his chances on the dating app Tinder would improve if he were younger.

What was the court's decision?

Ratelband's argument did not convince the district court in the Dutch city of Arnhem. The court said there was no evidence that Ratelband had experienced age discrimination. It stated that, unlike legally changing your name or gender, changing your age causes many problems such as the many rights and duties related to age, such as voting, attending school, military obligations, and pension.

Although Ratelband has the freedom to feel 20 years younger, mentally and physically, he cannot legally change his age because of the legal and societal implications that would follow, the court added.

The district court rejected Ratelband's request, but he plans to appeal.

In the Netherlands, the public doesn't take Ratelband's claims seriously. They even make fun of his international exposure and willingness to provide interviews worldwide to justify his wishes. So what do you think of this legal case? Is age just a number? Let us know your thoughts!