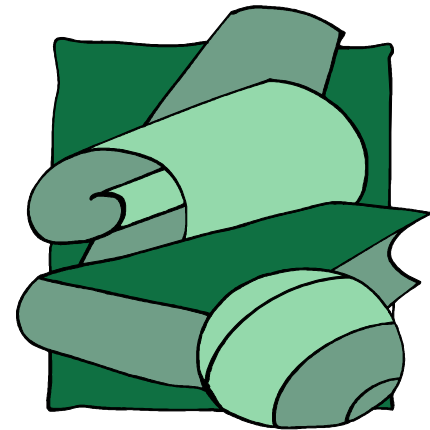


Hodgepodge



A Man Who is Without

A man without a conscience is like a man without a soul,
and he doesn't care who he uses.

A man without compassion is like a man without a heart,
and he doesn't care who he hurts.

A man who is thoughtless is like a man without any
feelings, and he doesn't even know how to love.

A man who is a dreamer is like a man without any real
identity, and he'll never be content with what he has.

A man who is a drifter is like a man without a home, and
he'll never trust anyone as long as he keeps running.

A man who is not open and honest is like a man without
any truthfulness; you can never believe anything he says.

—*Karen Smith*

The Year of Our Lord 2000

I heard a storm is comin'.
Like all the others they gave it a name.
It'll cause an economy crisis they claim.
Y2K is its name.

The optimist thinks it is a cinch.
Our world is too smart for such a glitch.
While pessimists store all they get,
The naive think it's a myth.

The government has no power over it.
The world will not escape it.
We certainly cannot ignore it.
And financially, will you trust it?

Being undecided is not wise.
Make up your mind in ninety nine.
Being prepared will give you peace of mind
When the year 2000 comes.

—*Annie Bell*

Life is Not All Roses

Sometimes I feel strange that I speak English, write essays in English, and especially I am always eager to improve my English skills. I feel like this because I hated to study English when I was a student.

I had to take English classes for six years in junior high school and high school, but I hated all of these English requirements. Therefore, I was always discontent that I had to read and write English, because I was Japanese, lived in Japan, had no friends who spoke English, did not like to study English, and believed strongly that I did not need English skills. Of course my English test scores and records were always dreadful. As I did not like English, I always studied it unwillingly. I could not get a good score on my English test so I came to dislike English more and more. It was a vicious cycle. Furthermore, if I had a chance to choose English or another subject, I always chose the other one. I always searched for ways to avoid all kinds of English matters.

In addition, at the university I had to take English classes for two years and I sometimes had to read English theses and write abstracts of my theses in English. I usually could not finish without friends' help to do my homework and reports. This was really unpleasant for me.

Unfortunately my boyfriend got a job in the U.S. and moved to the U.S. I married the boyfriend after all, and I also moved to the U.S. I could not say that I did not like English, and I did not want to study English any longer. If I avoided English, it was impossible for me to live here because I could not do anything by myself.

In spite of this situation, I still did not like to study English, so I unwillingly took some English as a Second Language classes at first. After almost one year had passed, I started to study English positively. I started to understand American culture and characteristics. Little by little I started thinking that I would like to communicate more fluently with people who lived around here.

I had a lot of disagreeable experiences here because I could not convey what I wanted to say or I could not understand what people said. It may be so, but I had met a lot of nice people here. I wanted to talk with them but I could not communicate well, so I always felt impatient with my English skills. Therefore, I started to think that I needed to improve my English skills much more. I did not feel unpleasant about English now, since I knew that English was not a subject in school, but the way of communication.

Now I enjoy taking some English classes here. Of course I found them by myself and I go to classes positively. However, as I did not study much when I was a student, my English vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are very poor. Sometimes I am anxious about whether I will be able to use English fluently someday because I know that I have to study so many things. I often think if I had studied English hard when I was a student, I would not feel miserable now.

I always feel deeply in my heart that the reason I have to study English hard now is that I did not study English hard before. In life, I believe I should not always choose the easy way. Even though I can choose so for a little while, I will spend a hard time later. Life is not all roses.

—Yuki Ohashi

A Man of His Word Died Today

John Freeman Stephens was shot and killed October 5, 1905 for being a man of his word, according to court records.

John was a young man of thirty-three years, one of fifteen children, married with five girls of his own. He was well known by all the town's people as being a man of his word. If John said he would do it, he did it. John's employer once said, "John can shoe a horse better and faster than any man I've seen. He is honest and a man of his word." John was a very aggressive young man and some were afraid of him. John never picked fights, but he never turned his back on one either.

The night before the killing, John and his friend Henry met with some other friends to play cards. Following the game John and Henry argued outside Henry's home. John said, "Henry, you cheated in there and you know how I hate cheaters. Now you are going to pay." Pulling his pistol, John began shooting around Henry's feet making him dance. When his gun was empty, he looked at Henry and said, "I thought I knew you better. I'm really surprised at you!" John then turned and walked away.

It was the next morning and the circus was in town. John and his family dressed and set out on foot for the circus at Pine Grove. On the way they met Henry and his family. Henry was carrying his baby daughter in his arms and beneath the infant's long dress, he carried a loaded gun. As John walked up to Henry, John said, "Morning, sport." John's wife screamed. John turned, and Henry's bullet hit John in the back. John lived just long enough to look at Henry and say, "My God, Henry, why?"

After the killing, several stories circulated. John's brother-in-law said it was the most senseless shooting he had ever heard of. A cousin said it was over a dog fight in which Henry's dog was killed. John's daughter said it was over the card game. Another cousin said it was John's wife's fault for screaming— John turned and Henry thought that John was going for his gun, then shot from beneath the infant's dress.

Court records say that Henry's testimony was that he feared for his life. Henry testified that a friend had told him that on the night of the card game, John vowed to kill him before another sunset. Henry believed the friend and feared for his life. Henry pleaded self-defense. He was found innocent of murder, but guilty of carrying arms.

—Anna Khulenberg

An ABLE Student's List of Things I Hate

I hate not having my GED by now.
 I hate that I cannot help my kids with homework.
 I hate thinking I may be here next year.
 I hate the way I treat my step-kids. I hate the way my step-kids treat me.
 I hate all the fighting that is going on in the world.
 I hate trying to get the wrapper off a CD.
 I hate greens and chitterlings.
 I hate when you tell people you'll call them back and they call you back.
 I hate sitting at the dinner table and someone smacks.
 I hate pointless math besides addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and percentages.
 I hate poverty.
 I hate sickness.
 I hate when my kids look me in the face and tell me a lie I know is a lie.
 I hate people that behave like they are better than I am.
 I hate people that cut in front of me when I am driving.
 I hate it when the cashier at a grocery store waits to close her line right when I am about to check out.
 I hate getting up early in the morning.
 I hate what drugs are doing to our people.
 I hate exercising and never losing weight.
 I hate hearing people bash Cleveland.
 I hate when you are talking in a group about other people; then when you leave the group they talk about you.
 I hate when children always ask the parent they know will most likely say yes.
 I hate when teachers focus on the student who seems to give all the answers.
 I hate when people blow their nose at the table.
 I hate when people are smoking and blow the smoke on you.
 I hate pulling weeds and having the stem break off.

I hate when the phone rings, you answer, and the person hangs up.
 I hate when people stare at you.
 I hate talking to boring people.
 I hate when people think they know more than you.
 I hate bill collectors.
 I hate when someone says "See you in a minute," knowing they're not going to see you for another 5 hours or so.
 I hate the saying "fast food" because it is not fast.
 I hate having no money to pay the bills.
 I hate standing in long lines at the grocery store.
 I hate when it's dark and I'm trying to find the light and hit my head.
 I hate that I didn't finish high school.

—Taylor ABLE/GED Class

It's Easy

"What is your last name?" the young man at the bakery counter asked me. I ordered the special bread there.

"My name is Matsunami," I answered.

"Give me the spelling, ma'am."

"M-A-T-S-U-N-A-M-I."

"M-A-P-S-U . . . ?"

He was confused with my Japanese accent.

"M like Marly, A, T like Tom, S, U, N like Nancy" I tried to continue my long spelling.

"Oh, wait a minute, how about your first name?" he asked.

My first name is Chizuru, but I thought if I said my first name it would make him more confused and he would ask me to spell it again, give up and finally I would not get the bread. I didn't want such a situation.

"My first name is . . . Chris." I tried to whisper my American name which I have never used since I got it.

"Is it C-H-R-I-S?" he asked me at once.

"Yes, it is."

"It's easy!"

I couldn't forget his big smile. Since that moment I became "Chris" and now I like this name. It's very convenient for everyone, every time, and everywhere.

I, "Chris," study to improve my English among American students. I am hoping that someday I can speak more fluently and say "it's easy."

—Chris Matsunami

A Good Leader

There are several things a good leader must possess. A good leader must be able to set examples, control varying situations, and be a good communicator. Through these characteristics a good leader will be an effective role model in people's lives.

By setting good examples, a leader will help others to realize that the decisions they make themselves are the right decisions. For an example, a person who decides not to drink and drive is directly setting an example for others to follow. A good leader must be able to choose right from wrong and must influence others to follow in the right path.

Another example of a characteristic of a good leader is to be able to control various situations. If a student witnesses another student cheating on a test, a good leader would be able to handle the situation properly without creating chaos in the classroom. Through controlling situations properly a leader is naturally forced to stand up and creates a better situation.

The most important quality a good leader must possess is the ability to communicate effectively with others. This ability will help those in need and guide others in the right direction. For example, if a person was thinking about sneaking out of their house, the leader would be able to persuade that person that sneaking out is wrong. The leader will help them find another solution to the situation and communicate the idea.

These are the characteristics of an effective leader. These qualities must be enforced to ensure that good leaders will always be the guiding lights for those who need that special guidance.

—Sue Fleming

It's You, Baby

it's you, baby.

it's that big, beautiful smile
that puts me in denial

it's those baby-blue eyes
that give me a surprise

it's that deep voice
that leaves me with no choice

it's that sandy blonde hair
that makes me feel like i'm being dared

it's those clothes that you wear
that make me see that you're there
baby, can't you see, it's everything
about you that pleases me?

—*Lauren Snellings*

Forever

Leah Andrews was a successful maid. She could clean a house from top to bottom in about two hours. Organization and planning was half the battle. She believed if you had a task you should jump into it at full force until you're done, then you can dilly-dally. She had cleaned houses for five years now and was quite happy with it. Sure, it had its downside just like anything else, but it made her happy when she was done. She could almost see her face in anything she cleaned. She had a certain way of folding the clothes, and you could always smell the strong yet inviting smell of Pinesol.

Her job was great. That wasn't the problem. It was her marriage. She just couldn't seem to clean that up. She and Steve just kept arguing over stupid things really, but for some reason it was important to them. They tried for months with counseling. They tried talking about what each other wanted, or needed. It just didn't work.

"Steve, honey, we have tried to salvage our marriage, but nothing seems to help. I vowed to always love you, and I know a part of me always will. It's just that I can't take the screaming and fighting. I just want to separate, and if that doesn't work we will take the next step. I don't want a divorce, though; it's so final. I just can't help remembering when we fell in love. There must have been something there."

"Why are you doing this?" Steve asked.

"Listen Steve, I can't take anymore of this bickering. I just need time alone to think. I don't know what I want anymore, and sometimes I think it's not you. You can be so sweet and then so difficult in the same breath." She answered him.

"Leah, if you leave, don't you dare bother coming back!"

"Why does everything have to be so final with you, Steve? Make up your mind, damn it!" Leah shouted at him. "Fine, Steve, if you want it that way, I'm gone. If you change your mind, here's the number where I can be reached. I'm getting out of this town, Steve. I'm moving back to Texas. Mrs. Wyatt, you remember, that lovely middle-aged woman who I started

out with. She was my first boss when I started the cleaning business. Well, we got to be fairly close and I was telling her the situation, and then she told me about her baby brother who needed a maid. She called him last week, and she gave me a good reference. I'm supposed to start on Monday; that's just three days away. If this is it, Steve, I thank you for trying with me. I know I'm not the easiest person to get along with."

At that moment she could feel a lump swelling in her throat and a deep aching in her heart. It was then she knew it was over, and she would never be back again.

She ran out to her car and started the engine. She could only pray that nothing would go wrong with her little Ford Tempo. She hadn't had the best luck with it, but she needed it to drive the 350 miles to east Texas. She drove ahead through the gravel driveway and took one last look at the birdhouse mailbox that read "Andrews." She didn't dare look back.

Leah knew this was going to be a long and difficult journey, almost an adventure, but the pain and loneliness she felt in her heart were unbearable. The loneliness devoured her whole body, and inside she felt numb. She couldn't believe what she had done. Steve had made threats before, and she had never taken him up on them, but now it was almost like she was lost. She never truly in her heart believed she would ever do it. She made the plans, but she never honestly thought she could walk out the door.

Driving down the highway, she began to think how wonderful her marriage started out to be. She met Steve at McDally's where they worked together. He approached her first and started talking to her. She was so honored to hear someone taking interest in her life. She instantly knew that they would be friends if they ever saw each other. He was working three jobs to pay for college, so who knew what shift he would be working? A couple of weeks later he called her at the children's home where she lived.

Yes, sad but true, Leah spent two years of her life there, with their strict rules. She knew she would have trouble dating anyone, especially since she was barely 17 and he had just

turned 20. She started talking to him on the phone secretly and never told anyone. Then one of the other girls overheard her and threatened to tell her caseworker, Audrey Zogas. So Leah told Audrey. Of course Audrey said no, you're not allowed to see him. The more they said no, the more she became determined to see him anyway.

See Leah was really into church and had gotten saved when she was 16. They couldn't deny her the right to go to church. Leah found it interesting that they could deny her happiness, but not her salvation.

As the months progressed, they sent letters, cards, and even tapes to each other. Then some of the head honchos decided to be sneaky. Leah had gotten grounded for losing her job. She was also caught at the mall, hand in hand with Steve. They grounded her from her boom box and television. They made her go to a different church so she wouldn't get to see the love of her life. She wasn't sure how he had become the love of her life so quickly, but that was what her heart was saying.

The good part of the whole story is that a lot of the people who worked at the children's home changed jobs, including Audrey. She was replaced by a woman named Dawn Elks. Dawn had been Leah's social worker before Audrey, when Leah had first gone into foster care. By this time, Leah and Steve were already engaged with the ring and everything. Dawn permitted them to sign out together. Before this, she could only sign out when Steve's mother supervised their visits. His mother, Corrina, had been very nice to agree to that. Now it was time to be alone. Everytime they saw each other they somehow got lost in each other's eyes. Anything they did was wonderful as long as they were together. Oh, the love they once had.

Then they got married, and everything changed pretty quickly. Friends were always over and Leah got ignored. Every weekend it was something different. Then Leah got in contact with an old boyfriend and curiosity got the best of her. She just needed a friend, but she ended up doing the worst thing she had ever done in her life. She cheated on Steve. She told

him the very same night it happened, and she could see his heart snap right in two. Leah just wanted to crawl under her chair and die. She never imagined how much the news would hurt him. She never believed someone could truly love her. She had gone through so many empty promises in her life. She just didn't know that someone could actually promise to love her and mean it.

She only had to stop at the gas station twice. She had made good time. When she arrived at Mr. Lander's house at 3 p.m. the next day, she had driven half the night and some of the day with no sleep. She was exhausted. She just grabbed all her baggage and knocked on the door. "Wait a sec!" a deep voice, shouted from inside. Mr. Landers opened the door.

"Hello, Mrs. Andrews. I wasn't expecting you until tomorrow."

"I know, but I didn't think you would mind. All I want to do is take my things up to my room. I haven't slept all night. I'm about to pass out as we speak," Leah said.

"That's fine, Mrs. Andrews," Mr. Landers said.

"Oh, please call me Leah."

"As you wish," he said with a grin. She could tell even the first time they met that he was attracted to her strawberry blonde hair and hazel eyes just by the way that he grinned. Leah had been working for Josh almost six months when she realized that she had some feelings for the six foot-four inch, dark haired, blue-eyed bachelor. She made sure she did an extra special job while she was working.

Josh was more like a friend than a boss was, and actually, Josh never did anything with anyone else. They were always talking and playing games when she wasn't working. One night they even danced to her favorite cowboy, Randy Travis. There was just something about his deep country accent that made her heart turn to mush. Josh had taught Leah how to two step and boogie kinda fast to country, a couples kind of dance.

Then the unexpected happened. After six months of working for Josh, talking with him about life and confiding in him with her past, Steve called her.

"Hello?" she answered.

"Honey, is that you?" the voice at the other end of the line said.

"Steve?" she said with shock.

"Why, yes, honey."

"What's going on? What do you need?"

"I need you, baby."

"What are you talking about, Steve?"

"I miss you so much, angel. Please come home. At first I tried to fight it, but now I know there could never be anyone else."

"Steve, I can't. I have a life here now." Leah said.

"Are you involved with that man you work for?"

"No, we're just friends, and I'm happy for the first time in a long time."

"Don't you love me anymore, Hon?" Steve asked.

"Sure, I think I always will, but I just can't leave here now. I just can't. Please don't make me feel guilty about not coming back to you." Leah said

"I'm going to go now. I can see you don't want me involved with your boss, and you don't want me to know." Steve quickly hung up.

Josh walked in from a long day at his firm while Leah was sitting there crying at the kitchen table.

"Leah, dear, what's wrong?" he asked.

"Steve just called. He wants me to go back to him. A part of me always will love him, and that part of me wants to go back. But I'm so happy to have a boss like you to listen to me, to make me feel important. But most of all you are a friend to me. I mean, our interests are so alike. You're so easy to talk to."

"Listen, Leah. If it were up to me, you would be here in this house with me forever. See, after my wife died, I shied away from the rest of the world, except for the people I worked with. I used to come home and eat a TV dinner, and then at night when the first star came out I would wish for a compan-

ion. A friend for life, you know, someone who believed in me, someone who listened. It's totally up to you Leah."

"I don't know what I want to do," Leah said.

The evening was a quiet one. Neither one of them felt like talking. He didn't want her to go, and he was afraid she would. Leah didn't want to leave Josh behind. He was her best friend. The next day she tended to her daily chores. She was constantly thinking about what she was going to do. In her heart she knew what she wanted. She wanted to stay with Josh. He wasn't just her best friend; she was falling in love with him. He could never know that. "He probably doesn't want to mix business with pleasure. I don't know if he feels that way about me. I'm separated. He wouldn't want to get involved in that mess. I mean, a successful man like him would not want to get involved with his maid. Sure, I love my job, but a man being the owner of his own firm being involved with his maid. That sounds so bizarre." She kept thinking to herself. She decided to fix supper. After all, it was almost five. Josh got home everyday at six. She decided to make fried chicken, home-made biscuits, mashed potatoes, and gravy. It just happened to be his favorite meal.

"What's cooking, Leah?" Josh asked when he got home.

"Your favorite!"

"Oh, Leah, you're so good to me. I've never had a maid like you. Course, I never had a maid before you, but still, you're great."

They sat down to eat the delectable dinner she had made. He talked about his day, his business, and his co-workers. She was always excited to hear his stories. She loved hearing about his work, something she never cared about with Steve.

"Well, Josh, I'm going to start the dishes," Leah said.

"OK, I want to see myself in them when you're done."

"Ha, Ha," Leah said with a smile.

Leah walked over, started her dishwasher and put the dishes in the sink. She began to wash them. Josh came up behind her, and grabbed her by the waist. He turned her around. "You're not leaving are you?" he asked with tears in his eyes.

"No, Josh, I'm not going to leave. How could I? I'm happier than I have ever been."

Their lips softly met with a delicate kiss, then again with a more passionate one. He picked her up and carried her to his bedroom. They made love that night and confessed their love for each other. She was surprised to hear how he felt about her. It was overwhelming, the passionate poetry that come out of his mouth. The love he had had for her all along. She could sense he was attracted, but she never imagined he was in love with her.

After a while Steve stopped calling. Eventually he sent her divorce papers through the mail. It was a celebration when the divorce was final. After their night together, Josh and Leah were inseparable. Two years later, they got married, and what a beautiful ceremony it was. She had a candle-light dress with a long train. She held roses in her hands, and somehow she sensed this would be forever. The song that played at the reception was, of course, Randy Travis. A couple years after that they had twins, Joshua Andrew and Leanne Noel. And they all lived happily ever after.

—Regina Mulkey

Success

Success is accomplishing a dream.
 Success is overcoming obstacles as language and math.
 Success is feeling good about myself and others.
 Success is feeling good about me.
 Success is knowing that I can do it.
 Success is depending on myself.
 Success is having a career and making it in life.
 Success is getting a good job in today's world.
 Success is all that a person wants to be in life and attaining it.
 Success is accomplishing a dream that I thought was
 going to be hard.
 Success is believing that a person can be whatever their
 heart desires if they put their heart into it.
 That is what success is to me.

—*Ivonne Burnett*

Woodcarving—A Hobby

I first became interested in woodcarving through another hobby, collecting carousel horses, a hobby that my wife and I share an interest in.

We are fortunate to live near a large amusement park, Cedar Point, that has several magnificent carousels. These are some of the finest examples of the carousel builders' art.

The Carousel Museum in Sandusky, Ohio, is also near our house, and it displays many of the colorful, elaborately decorated, jeweled horses and other animals that were carved by the master carvers of a bygone era. Their works brought thrills and enjoyment to generations of carousel riders.

After studying the works of these master carvers and examining many examples from my wife's miniature collection, I decided I'd like to try carving a small carousel horse.

At work I had heard of a man who did woodcarving, and I looked him up. Al was just the right person to get me started. As well as being an excellent woodcarver, Al was an enthusiastic advocate for woodcarving. Al thought everyone should be a woodcarver.

Al Clark had a shop in Bellevue, Ohio, where he stocked woodcarving supplies. He also taught carving classes and brought in talented carvers from other parts of the country to put on carving seminars.

I told Al of my desire to carve a miniature carousel horse, and he thought I should start with something simpler. He gave me a piece of wood, roughly shaped like a shoe, and told me to carve a boot out of it. I learned later that this is how he starts all his students. At the time, I really didn't want to carve a boot; I wanted to carve a carousel horse. I started without much enthusiasm, but after I got into it, it wasn't so bad. After a few days I had carved a pretty nice cowboy boot. I took it to Al. He looked at it and told me I'd done an excellent job. I told him I wanted to do a horse now. He still thought a horse was too advanced for a beginner, but I told him I was determined to carve one.

I got some wood and cut out a blank. In about a week I had carved a very nice carousel horse. I presented my carving to Al, and he was amazed at the quality of my work. To tell the truth, I had amazed myself. Al said I had a natural talent, and I guess I must have, because I have surprised myself many times since.

I've carved many miniature carousel horses and several menagerie animals that have become additions to my wife's collection. I've also carved several figures, cigar store Indians, and Civil War soldiers.

Ohio has become a center of the resurgent interest in carousels, the restoration of old machines, and the manufacturing of new ones. In Mansfield, Ohio, two prominent companies restore carousels and carve new figures, Carousel Magic Co. and the Carousel Works. In Garrettsville, Ohio, lives a man, Joe Leonard, who was chosen by the Walt Disney Co. to carve 30 new horses for the carousel at their new park near Paris, France.

Woodcarving can be both a hobby and a business. I now have an 8-foot log in my garage, curing. I hope, time permitting, to carve it into a life size cigar store Indian.

—*Bob Evans*