

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain, and inspire.

Navigating the 'Before' and 'After' in the New Year And the Resolution YOU Can Make This Year to Help

As we start a new year, many people are hopeful and excited for new opportunities, fresh starts, and second chances. It's a time for introspection, where we reflect on the different stages of our lives, the changes we've gone through, and the transformations that await us. In our areas of law, we often represent clients who have experienced significant changes in their lives due to unforeseen accidents and life-altering injuries.

For many, these accidents serve as a clear dividing line separating their lives into two distinct phases — "before" and "after." Whether it was a sudden change or a gradual onset of disability that eventually disrupts their lives, many of our clients struggle not only with physical challenges but also with the emotional pain of letting go of the lives they once knew.

And I see how much these changes affect my clients in real-time. I'll never forget a moment I had with one client — a woman who used to find happiness in dancing, as it was a huge part of her Latin culture and social life. As we discussed medical treatments in my office, she realized dancing was no longer a possibility for her. This left her in tears, wondering what that meant for her.

"Your value is not determined by what you can or cannot do. You are human being, and that alone makes you incredibly valuable."

Another client, who was dealing with a disability after his accident, expressed his sadness over his inability to lift his grandkids. "I used to be the strong and capable man in the family," he told me with tears in his eyes, "and now I'm not."

Now, I'm no pastor, mentor, or priest, but I am legal counsel. And, as legal counsel, it's my job to counsel my clients through life's challenging transitions — *whatever* that looks like to them.

So, for those feeling uncertain about their self-worth due to life's changes this new year, my counsel is simple: Your value is not determined by what you can or cannot do. You are human



being, and that alone makes you incredibly valuable. Despite your challenges, you can still be a great spouse, a loving parent, a caring sibling, or a friendly community member, and you can continue to contribute to those relationships.

That's why if I were to suggest a resolution for 2024 and beyond, it would be to be kind and accepting of ourselves when things change. And that change doesn't have to come from an accident or injury, of course. It's a resolution I think any of us can benefit from. As we face the unknowns of the future, it's important to remember that our value as individuals is not dependent on what happens to us or our abilities. Instead, being open to change allows us to appreciate and enjoy the present and grow and improve our ability to love, be happy, and impart respect. Life may be different, but it's certainly not over.

I hope this New Year brings a fresh perspective on your current situation, whether recovering from an injury or tackling a challenge you've been facing. May you find the courage to move toward a future full of endless possibilities. Happy New Year from our family here at The Packard Law Firm to yours!

—Michael Packard

Bumbling Burglars Prove Crime Doesn't Pay

Committing a crime will never be a get-rich-quick scheme or a successful career path, but we've had plenty of would-be criminals who had to learn that lesson the hard way!

One example is James Sorby, a Scottish man who decided he wanted to cash in on the rising price of copper. As he thought about how to get his hands on the metal prized for its ability to conduct electricity, he decided it would be a good idea to go right to the source, so he targeted a local power plant in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England.

As he started to carry out his mission, he forgot he was in a truly electric environment. He ignored the signs warning of the dangerous high-voltage lines in the plant. But as he collected coils of copper and prepared to make off with them, he was instantly jolted with an estimated 22,000 volts of electricity, and around 400 homes were left without power. He miraculously managed to survive, though with severe burns and a damaged skull, and was given 12 months of community service.

Another man, Nicholas Mark, entered a Pennsylvania pizzeria looking for work, but he found something else instead. A tip jar containing over \$200 caught his eye, so after filling out the application, Mark left. A few hours later, he returned, snatched the tip jar, and ran out of the restaurant. However, his getaway was short-lived, as his completed application had provided his real name and address. Plus, he left behind a backpack that verified his identity, so he was eventually caught by police.

Finally, Alberto Saavedra Lopez demonstrated why you can't go back home to the scene of your crime. While living in Cottonwood, Arizona, he stole \$5,000 from the bank where he worked. For two years, he got away with it by moving to Phoenix. In time, however, he moved back to Cottonwood and applied for a new job — at the local police station. But, as he applied to become a dispatcher, officials did a background check, discovering he was an at-large suspect in the theft. So, when he showed up for his job interview, they greeted him with handcuffs.



Legal Reality Check

Common Myths About Disability and Injury Claims — Debunked

As a law firm specializing in personal injury and disability cases, we frequently come across clients who have a lot of misunderstandings about how these claims work. Whether they've learned something from a friend, the media, or the internet, many people come into a case with expectations or beliefs that are just plain wrong.

So, we thought it would be helpful to clear up some common personal injury and disability myths and misconceptions we've heard. That way, everyone can better understand what it takes to pursue justice in these situations.

Disability Myths

Myth No. 1: My lawyer can speed up the government process.

Lawyers don't have any special tricks to speed up the process of getting Social Security Disability benefits. In the last two years, there has been a slowdown at the SSA offices, causing the waiting time for disability cases to double. It can even take up to a year to get the first ruling on your claim. And most people have to appeal that ruling.

Myth No. 2: The inability to work your previous job equals disability.

Disability is not just about being unable to do your previous job. People with disabilities can often find other jobs they can do within their abilities. To receive disability, you must prove you are unable to work any job.

Myth No. 3: More severe disability equals more benefits.

Social Security benefits are not based on the severity of disability, unlike VA benefits. So, no, you don't receive more money for having a more severe or limiting disability.

Injury Law Myths

Myth No. 1: Insurance companies will take care of you.

Insurance companies are businesses that aim to make a profit. They're only looking out for their bottom line, *not* your best interests.

Myth No. 2: Pain will go away after an accident.

If you have been in an accident, it's essential to know that injuries from accidents can be different from usual aches and pains. They can last longer and even become worse over time. After a car wreck, always seek medical help immediately. This is good for your health, and it helps to protect your legal rights.

Myth No. 3: Giving a recorded statement to the insurance company is mandatory.

You are not required to give a recorded statement to insurance adjusters. It's completely optional, and the only reason the insurance company wants it recorded is to use it against you later in court.

Surviving the Teen Driving Years: A Comprehensive Guide for Worried Parents

January is Teen Driving Awareness Month, and it's a topic close to my heart because I have a daughter who was in a wreck as a teen driver. Of course, as someone who works in the field of law, I have seen many cases like this, but as a parent, I understand the fear of letting your child get behind the wheel.

That's why Teen Driving Awareness Month reminds us of how crucial it is to



teach responsible driving habits to our teenagers. Even though it's daunting, it's our responsibility to do everything in our power to provide our teens with the tools to stay safe. So, whether your teen is already driving or will be driving soon, here are four things to help them stay responsible on the road.

No texting and driving — for anyone

The main rule (after wearing your seatbelt, of course!) that every teen should remember is never to use a cellphone while driving. Explain to your teen that if they need to use their phone, they should pull over or give the phone to someone responsible in the car.

As parents, it's also essential to set a good example by not using our own phones while we're driving. Our children are always watching us and will likely follow our lead.

Consider a 'student driver' decal.

If your teenager is learning to drive, it's a good idea for you to get a student driver magnet or sticker for their car. This decal is a simple yet effective way to let other drivers

know there's a new driver on the road, which can encourage them to be more cautious around your teen.

Teach teens the standard protocol for accidents.

In case of a car accident involving your teen, instruct them to follow the same standard procedures you would. They must still collect all necessary information, contact the police, and exchange insurance details with the other drivers. The law treats accidents involving teenage drivers the same as accidents involving adults.

Expect mistakes.

Most teenagers make mistakes when they first start driving. So, while teaching them responsible driving is essential, we should also be patient and understanding during this learning process. Driving can be a scary thing to learn for the first time!

—*Michael Packard*

TAKE A BREAK

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Boots
Candles
Carnation
Furnace

Garnet
Hockey
Insulate
Janus

Opposite
Resolution
Skating
Sweater



Bell Pepper Sandwich

Inspired by TheSpruceEats.com

Ingredients

- 1 medium bell pepper, any color
- 2-3 tbsp cream cheese
- 1 tsp whole-grain mustard
- 2 oz ham (or other deli meat), thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 oz Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small cucumber, cut into 6-8 thin slices
- 2 tbsp guacamole or a few slices of avocado
- Dash of salt and pepper

Directions

1. On a cutting board, remove the stem of the bell pepper with a sharp knife. Cut the pepper in half lengthwise and remove the ribs and seeds.
2. Lay the pepper halves on the cutting board and spread cream cheese inside each half. Spread whole-grain mustard on top of the cream cheese.
3. Layer your deli meat, cheese, cucumbers, and guacamole on each bell pepper half. Add a dash of salt and pepper, then combine both halves and serve!

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1. A 2024 Resolution I Wish Everyone Would Make
2. 3 Not-So-Bright Burglars
6 Myths That Could Derail Your Claim
3. Must-Know Tips for Parenting a Teen Driver
Bell Pepper Sandwich
4. The Secrets of the Zone of Silence

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THE ZONE OF SILENCE: WHERE SCIENCE AND CONSPIRACY CONVERGE

Nestled in northern Mexico near Durango lies a mysterious tract of land that has baffled some scientists and hobbyists for years: the Zone of Silence.

According to urban myth, this enigmatic area is where radio signals and telecommunications mysteriously vanish into thin air. It all started in 1970 when a U.S. White Sands Missile Base missile veered off its predetermined path and crashed into this strange dead zone — 400 miles from its designated target.



U.S. Air Force authorities employed local residents to recover the missile, all while keeping the specifics and location of the missile under wraps.

When the rocket was eventually discovered in a sand mound, a complex retrieval system was established, which included extending a railroad track to the dune. Though the objective was to maintain secrecy, this incident might have sparked even more questions about the area's secrets.

Since that time, theories and conspiracies about the area have grown. They range from odd UFO sightings and alien encounters to unexplained fossils and natural phenomena.

Scientists in the area say there is no truth to these rumors, and those with expert knowledge of the area's local flora and fauna can explain each discrepancy. Despite these rebuttals, though, conspiracy theorists continue to flock to the zone in search of "answers."