

The PACKARD PRESS

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

Unlock Your Inner Artist

Creativity Is a Gift We Can Share With the World

In an alternate universe, I would have been an artist. I took art classes in high school, and though I never went very far with them, I've always considered myself a creative person, and it has helped me in almost every aspect of my life. With it, I am able to come up with out-of-the-box solutions to all sorts of problems. January is International Creativity Month, and it's an excellent time to connect with our artistic sides.

I love tapping into my creativity, and a few of my favorite outlets are the ones where I get to break the rules a little. In last month's newsletter, I wrote about my love of board games, and this is definitely a creative outlet for me. (My nickname during game nights is "Journey Boy" because I'm there for the adventure, not necessarily the win.)

Music is another creative outlet for me. I like to create little jingles to help me remember things, such as simple recipes, scripture verses, or even a new address. I'm bad at remembering the actual lyrics to songs, so I just fill in with my own words. My kids roll their eyes, but I am certain that deep down, they appreciate my creative abilities.



Creativity gives us a new perspective and can help us explain or understand larger concepts. One of my favorite art forms is storytelling. I often use stories and metaphors when describing or explaining something. It is much easier to grasp a concept if it relates to something we are familiar with. Creativity also helps us find solutions to problems, whether it's negotiating a win-win for parties in a case or finding compromises in my family.

Engaging in creative acts is good for your brain, and ensures that your cognitive function stays strong throughout your life. Sitting down to paint or play a musical instrument is healthy for us. We all are born with creativity, but as we grow older, a fear of judgment pushes us to step back and shy away from expressing our creative side. As a species, our creativity has helped us evolve, stay alive, and flourish. Creative thinking is what advances humankind. It's not just beneficial for us as individuals; it's good for us as a whole — as a community, a family, a nation, and a world.

As we continue to advance, a part of me feels sad that Artificial Intelligence may one day draw better than any human could. But I don't believe we will ever stop creating, even in a world with "better" AI-generated music, paintings, or books. I think kids will still want to perform in their middle school plays, and parents will still show up to watch. Humankind will forever feel compelled to create art in all genres, even new ones. AI can have a positive side: Artists and the rest of us can use it as a tool to trigger our creativity without replacing it entirely.

We all have this spark of creativity, but it can be unintentionally stomped out. So, if you ever see your kid, sibling, neighbor, or loved one flexing their creative skills, encourage them. Don't compare them to others; don't snuff it out. By nurturing creativity in ourselves and others, we foster innovation, joy, connection, and problem solving. This month, I encourage you to get creative, whatever form it may be! The world will always need our unique touch.

—Michael Packard



THE GREAT FRENCH MUSTACHE STRIKE OF 1907

Workers usually go on strike to improve wages and working conditions. Leave it to the French to mount a historic strike for the right to grow a mustache.

A full mustache was a prestigious mark of men's social class in Europe in the early 20th century. Policemen were **required** to grow them to project authority and masculinity. Waiters rebelled when restaurant owners forced servers to shave their faces clean as a sign of their lower-class social status. During the dinner hour on April 17, 1907, an estimated 500 servers stopped dishing food, took off their aprons, and walked out, clustering on the street as diners looked on.

The waiters also demanded a share of diners' tips and the right to take one day off a week. They had support in Parliament, where one socialist deputy proposed a bill to outlaw mustache bans (which also applied to domestic servants and priests). The deputy called the restaurants' mustache rule "grotesque and humiliating."

After 16 days, restaurant owners caved to servers' mustache demands and implemented a fairer pay structure. The waiters, however, lost their bid for one day off each week.

The French have long been famously quick to stage work stoppages. At 112 days on average, the country leads the industrialized West in days lost to strikes each year. The nation's strike culture is linked to its history of revolt, including the 1789 French Revolution. Withholding one's labor is a constitutional right in France, whether you are a union member or not.

And the mustache had long been a mark of status in Europe. Centuries earlier, Germany only permitted soldiers who had distinguished themselves in battle to grow mustaches. In France, the military requirement to wear mustaches became so strict that soldiers who couldn't grow one had to wear a fake mustache.

No wonder the French waiters took their facial hair so seriously. Being required to shave relegated them to the domestic servant class. As one French newspaper of the time declared, the waiters' victory secured the right "to finally show that they are men, free men ... who can wear at their ease this symbol of the all-powerful male, the mustache. Oh! The beautiful independence!"

Capture the Truth

Dashcams Are Your Silent Witness in Accident Cases

A picture is worth a thousand words, and having a dashcam installed in your vehicle can be worth even more in a personal injury case. Dashcam videos can be your silent witness on the road, capturing key details when you are involved in an accident. They can provide a real-time account of the events, making it easier to show what caused the collision and injuries.

Evidence of Fault

Dashcams can provide video evidence of all the actions of the drivers involved in an accident, which makes them a beneficial tool for determining fault. If you were hit by another driver, your dashcam will capture footage of the behavior of the driver that led to the accident. Additionally, the dashcam can prove you were driving safely.

An Unbiased Account

In the chaos of an accident, it may be difficult to remember all the details of what transpired. Dashcams offer an objective account of what happened during the crash. This kind of evidence can be a game-changer in "he said, she said" cases or a dispute over what caused the accident. Eyewitness testimonies can be based on personal bias or may not reflect the whole scope of what occurred. The dashcam can also capture road and weather conditions that may have played a role in the collision.

Faster Results

Dashcam footage can speed up the entire process of your claim. With this unbiased evidence, your lawyer will have more ease and negotiating power when determining fault. The insurance company will also have difficulty pushing back on strong video evidence. This makes it more likely that your claim will be processed quicker. Footage like this can decrease the chances of your case going through prolonged legal disputes.

A dashcam can be invaluable when you are involved in a crash, providing clear, real-time evidence of the events. If you have been hurt in a car accident, contact us at the Packard Law Firm for a free case evaluation.

—Michael Packard



Simplify Your Resolutions

Why the 'One Thing' Exercise Is a Game-Changer

As the new year begins, many of us set a long list of resolutions in an effort to overhaul our lives. While this may seem like a good idea, it can actually be counterproductive. When our to-do lists get too large, they can become overwhelming. This leads us to abandon our resolutions quickly. What if you could instead focus on just one thing?

Setting goals is a powerful tool for growth, but sometimes, it takes vulnerability to get to the heart of what we need to work on. During this year's partnership meeting, we used a unique trust-building activity called "the one thing exercise." This practice helps identify your focus based on feedback from your team members. Not only is it helpful for organizations, but it can also help you narrow down your resolutions.

For this exercise to work, you must be around people you trust, like your coworkers, family, or friends, because

it requires vulnerability. Each group member will write down two things about everyone else: 1) what they think is their greatest contribution or strength and 2) the one thing they should stop or start doing in the next year.

Once you have all the "one thing" answers from everyone, reflect on the areas you need to improve and where you excel. You can take that information to inspire what your goals are going to be in 2025 and how you will commit to achieving them. It could be as simple as deciding to be more punctual this year or stop drinking soda. Maybe you'll start an exercise routine or put money away for retirement.

The "one thing" exercise relies on giving and receiving thoughtful feedback to help one another grow. By doing this activity, you can gain powerful insights into what you should strive for throughout the



year. Check in with yourself, your team, or trusted group each quarter to see the progress you are making on your goals, even if it's just simply determining if you are doing "better," "worse," or "the same."

As you work to achieve that "one thing" this year, remember growth takes time, effort, and patience. By surrounding yourself with trusted voices and tracking your progress, you can take meaningful steps to change.

—Michael Packard

TAKE A BREAK

X	I	W	Y	K	Z	U	Y	L	B	Q	N	N	T	K
H	V	Z	H	K	S	H	Y	O	E	T	F	Y	E	S
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N	S	V	I	A	Y	G	O	V	C	E	P	N	G	K
N	O	I	T	U	L	O	S	E	R	V	V	F	S	O

Beginnings
Blankets
Carnation
Capricorn

Garnet
Healthy
Icicle
Penguin

Planning
Resolution
Snowboard
Soupy

CITRUS OLIVE OIL CAKE

Ingredients

Inspired by GimmeSomeOven.com

- 1 cup almond flour
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup medium-grind cornmeal
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- Zest of 1 lemon, plus 2 tbsp juice
- Zest of 1 orange, plus 2 tbsp juice
- Powdered sugar, optional

Directions

1. Heat oven to 350 F. Line the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan with parchment and lightly grease the sides with cooking spray.
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk almond flour, sugar, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt until combined.
3. In another bowl, whisk eggs, olive oil, vanilla, almond extract, and lemon and orange zest and juice. Combine the wet ingredients with dry ingredients.
4. Pour batter into the springform pan. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool for 15 minutes.
5. Run a knife gently around the edges of the cake, then remove the sides of the pan. If desired, dust cake with powdered sugar using a fine-mesh strainer.

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1100 NW Loop 410, Ste 100
San Antonio, TX 78213
210-340-8877 | PackardFirm.com/newsletter

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1. Music, Games, and Out-of-the-Box Thinking
2. Remembering the Great French Mustache Strike

The Secret Weapon for a Stronger Injury Claim
3. Turn Feedback Into Fuel With This Activity

Citrus Olive Oil Cake
4. Sugar's Hidden Dangers

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Sweet Tooth, Sour Health

SUGAR'S SNEAKY SIDE EFFECTS

When did you last sit down, grab a spoon, and eat a heaping pile of sugar? If the thought makes you wince, you may be surprised to learn how much sugar you actually consume but don't realize it. Here are startling facts about the potential dangers of this popular additive.

The Sweet Road to Addiction

Most of us think of sugar as the sweet stuff we add to our coffee or grapefruit, but we consume it in many forms. While some fruits and dairy products naturally contain sugar, processing makes many foods on store shelves loaded with added sugars. According to neuroscientist Nicole Avena, over 60% of items found in supermarkets contain added sugar — with beverages like energy drinks and iced teas among the unhealthiest. In addition to being linked to diabetes and cardiovascular disease, high sugar consumption impacts how we *think* as

much as how we feel. Avena cautions that sugar can be just as addictive — if not more — than illicit drugs.

“One of the hallmarks of drug addiction is this release in dopamine that occurs, and that's why people often get hooked,” she told ABC News. “They end up getting addicted and feel this compulsion to use alcohol and drugs over and over again. Well, we've seen the exact same thing happening with sugar.”

Sugar addiction can have a particularly devastating effect on men, as a study of nearly 23,000 males over nine years revealed a link between the consumption of sugary drinks and a heightened risk of prostate cancer.

Deceptive Delights

While we'd expect a doughnut or a fudge brownie to be packed with sugar,



some of the supposed healthy foods and drinks we enjoy are just as bad for us. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns that some protein bars, canned fruits, yogurts, granola products, ketchup, and salad dressings could contain added sugars. Take the time to read food labels, and you'll be shocked.

Suppose you absolutely must satisfy your taste for sugar. In that case, Johns Hopkins Medicine recommends eating whole fruits — for example, mashing a banana into your bowl of oatmeal instead of reaching for a spoonful of the white stuff — and stevia as alternative sweeteners. No matter how you do it, reducing your sugar intake is essential in ensuring your long-term health.