

The PACKARD PRESS

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

GRIT AND GRACE

The Unyielding Spirit My Dad Taught Me

When you get knocked down, always get back up.

My father has taught me many great life lessons and the concept of grit over the years. He had to learn these crucial teachings himself from a young age. Since Father's Day is in June, I can't help but reflect on the things I admire about my dad — his positive traits, his quirky personality, and everything he taught me throughout my life.

My dad is 85, and he has lived a long, wonderful life. Now don't get me wrong, not every moment was rosy. He experienced an incredible amount of hardship and challenges, especially when it came to his own dad. My Grandpa Forrest Packard was offered a civilian construction job to help build airfields on Wake Island in the Pacific. This was in mid-1941, just a few months before the U.S. joined WW2. The six-month job paid well, and it would provide enough money to save the family farm. A few weeks before the job ended, Pearl Harbor was attacked and he was taken as a prisoner of war when Wake Island fell to the Japanese. He was released four years later after the war ended. One of my dad's earliest memories was as a 5-year-old, waiting at the train station to meet his father. Grandpa Forrest suffered from severe PTSD and seemed more like a brother to my dad than a father. Twelve years later, my dad's parents were in a plane crash. Grandma succumbed to her injuries, and Grandpa had serious brain trauma. When my dad was 17, he essentially became an orphan and was on his own.

There were many moments when my dad had been knocked down and had to pick himself up. After losing his parents, he found himself living in a new city where he knew no one. He remembers, at 17, walking the streets late one night making decisions about what kind of person he would be. That night, he made the deliberate decision to do whatever he could to be a good person. While attending law school, he faced another disappointment when he got put on academic probation. He felt his world crumbling. He thought he wasn't smart enough, and that he couldn't cut it as a lawyer. But he pushed through and had a successful law career that lasted over 40 years. In the early 1980s, he faced the ultimate nightmare when he lost his oldest daughter in a house fire. He had to balance his own grief with the responsibility he had to the rest of us. In the mid-1990s, my mother passed away and he again had to do the same thing. He had five children still at home, and he couldn't just crawl into a hole to escape. He had to get back up again.

Almost all the great things I do as a father, I learned from him. One thing he taught me was to "take the good and leave the bad." He told me that I can find the good in almost anything, but it takes work. He believed there is no sense in carrying negative emotions, grudges, or resentments. Dad also showed me what it means to be a great communicator. He taught me not to make conversations difficult by belittling or making fun of someone. And, when speaking with someone, be present and give them my full attention.

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From Injury to Victory

How to Build a Rock-Solid Damages Case

When recovering from an accident, it can feel like a balancing act of doctor appointments and meetings. But if you want to receive compensation for your injuries, it's crucial not to miss any important medical-related visits. To solidify your claim, you need a strategic approach and meticulous documentation. From being an excellent patient to keeping an injury journal, here are six essential steps to fortify your damages case.

BE A GOOD PATIENT.

Ensure you make all of your doctor's appointments and always continue to receive treatment or care until medically given the okay to stop. Missed appointments will be used against you to suggest that your injury may not be as severe as you claimed.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR DOCTOR.

Don't downplay your feelings or injuries. Being honest with your doctor is crucial to getting the necessary care and building credibility for your case. If you minimize your situation, it will appear that you are not as injured as you actually are.

SAVE PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES.

If you have any medication for your injuries related to an accident, save your empty prescription bottles. They indicate your out-of-pocket costs and the severity of your pain.

KEEP DOCUMENTATION OF EVERYTHING.

Documentation will strengthen your case by giving a timeline of events and proof of your expenses. Hold onto any medical bills, insurance statements, repair estimates, photos, and receipts related to your accident.

MAKE AN INJURY JOURNAL.

Getting the best results for your claim depends on a solid paper trail of what you encountered during and after the accident and the intensity of your physical symptoms. You can create a journal or log describing how this accident impacts your daily life emotionally and physically. This can help prove the pain and suffering you are experiencing.

LAY LOW ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

As tempting as it may be to jump on social media, remember that insurance companies usually monitor your online activity. They want evidence to use against you and reduce your compensation amount. An adjuster could even spin a harmless photo of you smiling at an outdoor event into a sign that you aren't experiencing pain or suffering. Lay low online until your claim is all settled.

You can build a stronger personal injury claim by gathering as much documentation and evidence as possible and following a consistent medical care routine. If you have been injured, contact Packard Law Firm for an evaluation today at **210-899-6142**.

—Michael Packard



MY WORD!

EXPLORING THE RICH HISTORY OF SCRABBLE

In 1931, the Great Depression — the worst economic crisis in American history — had thoroughly dampened the country's spirit. Amidst the crisis, Alfred M. Butts, an out-of-work New York architect, decided to create a game to take his mind off the economy. Aspiring to develop a classic to join the ranks of other timeless card and board games, Butts came up with the idea for a board-and-tile game he non-committedly named "Crisis Cross," which we now know as Scrabble.

THE ARCHITECT'S PLAN

At its core, Scrabble was inspired by crossword puzzles and always featured the iconic lettered tiles, each with separate quantities and point values. Butts determined the point values by surfing through his collection of local newspapers and counting how often each letter appeared. To prevent players from creating too many cheap plurals, he included only four "S" tiles in each box and assigned the letter a measly 1 point.

Butts was eager to share his idea with the world, but the world was not as eager to receive it. He pitched the game to several publishers and retailers, but all rejected it. Butts had to retail it on a small scale, and the game did not become the surefire hit he expected it to be. It wasn't until fellow New Yorker James Brunot discovered the game that things changed for the better. Brunot offered to mass-produce the game and, in exchange, would provide Butts with a portion of the profits, which Butts happily agreed to.

BRUNOT'S BARGAIN

As soon as Brunot secured the rights to the game, he began making significant changes to it. These included redesigning the board, its color, players' starting position, and the location of various score multiplier tiles. But his most important contribution was changing its name to Scrabble!

The owner of Macy's then discovered the game and offered to carry it in his stores. Brunot went from creating 12 copies of the game an hour when he first acquired the rights to 2,000 sets per week by 1952. By 1954, *millions* of copies were sold. Today, the game has been translated into over 20 languages and has sold over 100 million copies. People play the game worldwide, in tournaments and living rooms alike, and it has allowed millions to share in the joy initially envisioned by a down-on-his-luck architect in a time when hope was a distant prospect.



PEN TO PAPER

The Emotional and Cognitive Benefits of Handwriting

There's nothing quite like receiving a handwritten card or thank you note. It makes it more meaningful to know that someone took the time to put their thoughts to paper with their hands and a pen. What is interesting, is that it's just as rewarding to be the person writing the letter.

The benefits of handwriting go beyond happy feelings — it can strengthen our memories, improve comprehension, help us stay motivated, and even ease anxiety. National Ballpoint Pen Day is in June, and it's the perfect time to uncap your favorite pen and start scribbling on a page. From thank you letters to freestyle writing in the morning, here are some of my favorite

ways to use handwriting and some of the perks of pens!

LETTERS AND CARDS

Handwritten letters and cards benefit both the sender and recipient. Writing a thoughtful message shows you care and makes people in your life feel valued. With the constant texts and emails, handwritten notes stand out and beg to be opened. Writing by hand has been shown to improve memory and information retention. So, anytime you jot something down with a pen, you are likely to remember it.

MORNING PAGES

One of my favorite handwriting rituals is my "morning pages." I put pen to paper and write until I've covered two pages. This is typically stream-of-consciousness, and it isn't polished. This activity just gets my mind working and creative energies flowing. It's almost a form of meditation, and handwriting helps me process my

thoughts. It's a bit of a journaling exercise, so it can also be therapeutic.

TO-DO LISTS

If you want to become more productive and organized, handwriting to-do lists is an excellent way to stay on track. Jotting down your tasks by hand helps you remember and prioritize tasks better, and it can hold you more personally accountable. Crossing off a completed item from your list is a rewarding feeling. You can also use your handwritten to-do lists to help you strategize more long-term goals.

My trusty Pilot gel pen is the perfect tool for showing people I care through handwritten notes or preparing my mind for the day ahead. Though handwriting may seem like a thing of the past in today's digital world, it's a beautiful and beneficial practice.

—Michael Packard

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Also, thanks to Dad, I have a deep appreciation for grit and hard work. I'll never forget when we lived on 32 acres of mostly forested land and he decided to clear it all for cattle. A logging company came in and did quick work of the usable timber, but for the next two summers, it looked like a battleground. There were knocked-down trees and splintered branches everywhere! Every day after Dad got home from work (and all day on Saturdays), Sam and I would join Dad and work our tails off with machetes, axes and chainsaws, piling up the trees and debris into burn piles. When it was eventually finished, we had a cleared, grassy meadow that was beautiful. Dad could have paid someone to do that labor, but he wanted us to do it ourselves, mainly because it was hard. Having grit means taking on the hard tasks, and even feeling motivated by the challenge. When it comes to hard work, he told me, "Be a finisher, son. When you start a project, you have to stick with it and see it through to completion."

My dad taught me so much of everything I know today. He taught us to be fiercely loyal to our loved ones. He showed me what a great lawyer can do. And he proved that determination and the ability to get back up can take me further than I might think, especially when life punches me in the face. I'm grateful for everything my dad has done (and continues to do) to help me grow into the best person I can be.

—Michael Packard



Sheet Pan Shrimp Fajitas

Inspired by DamnDelicious.net

Ingredients

- 2 lbs shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 bell peppers, sliced
- 1 onion, sliced
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Tortillas

Topping Options

- Sliced avocado
- Salsa
- Sour cream
- Chopped cilantro

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, combine chili powder, cumin, paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
3. Place bell pepper and onion on the baking sheet.
4. Drizzle evenly with 2 tbsp of olive oil and sprinkle with the chili powder mixture; reserve some for shrimp. Bake for 12 minutes.
5. Remove sheet pan from oven and push veggies to one side. Add shrimp to the empty side. Drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil and spices. Return sheet pan to oven and bake for another 6 minutes, until shrimp are pink.
6. Serve on warm tortillas with desired toppings.

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1. The Power of Getting Back Up
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Sheet Pan Shrimp Fajitas
4. How a Pet Husky Prevented Disaster

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HERO HUSKY SAVES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

On Dec. 15, 2023, pet owner Chanell Bell of Philadelphia was taken aback when she noticed that Kobe, her 4-year-old miniature Alaskan husky, had dug a hole in her home's front yard. This was a stark departure from Kobe's usual behavior, which Bell initially dismissed as boredom and promptly refilled the hole. However, when Kobe began to dig again in the same spot, Chanell realized something was amiss.

"We've been here at our home for a while now, and he never digs holes," Bell told USA Today. "So, I knew something was up."

She investigated further, reviewing footage from the family home's security camera overlooking Kobe's newfound digspot. Then, she witnessed Kobe sniff the air around the area before digging the hole in the same spot again.

Thinking something Kobe smelled must have alarmed him, Bell phoned Philadelphia Gas Works, which sent a crew out to investigate. The engineers discovered that the gas lines beneath the Bell household were old, dilapidated, and

beginning to leak. After fixing the issue, the company told Bell that if Kobe had not discovered the leak, the line would have posed significant health and safety concerns for the whole neighborhood.

"They told me something as simple as a light switch turning on could've caused an explosion," Bell told USA Today.

After Bell shared Kobe's story on social media, it caught the attention of PETA, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, who awarded the young husky the Heroic Dog Award. Inspired by Kobe's efforts, Bell wrote a children's book dedicated to him called "The Dog That Saved the Block Before Christmas."

