

# ***Janet's Journal***

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February 2022

## **Tales of the Heart**

Dear [FirstName],

Can you believe it's already the second month of the new year? I've been off to a great start, and I hope the same goes for you! This month's newsletter offers innovative business ideas, ways to release expectations and become more present, and of course, an ode to Valentine's Day.

For some of us, what we really want is a change. If a change of environment is what you're craving and you feel it's time to buy or sell your home, please connect with me. I would love to help. I am sending warm wishes to you and your loved ones until then.

All the best to you and yours,

Janet Browning

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### **The Secret to Peace**

A teacher and his student were walking through the forest. The student asked, "Why are most people's minds restless?" The teacher smiled and told his student a story:

One beautiful day, an elephant was standing by the shade of a tree, eating leaves. Suddenly, a small fly came buzzing and landed on the elephant's ear. The elephant stayed calm and

continued to eat. The fly flew around the elephant's ear, buzzing noisily, but the elephant seemed to be unaffected.

This bewildered the fly, and it asked, "Are you deaf?" "No," the elephant answered. "Then why aren't you bothered by my buzz? What is your secret? How can you stay so calm and still?"

The elephant stopped eating and said, "My five senses do not disturb my peace, because they do not rule my attention. I am in control of my mind and my thoughts, and therefore, I can direct my attention where I want, and ignore any disturbances, including your buzz. Therefore I can stay peaceful."

At the end of the story, the student's eyes opened wide, and a smile appeared on his face. "Now I understand! If I am in command of my five senses, my mind will become calm, and I will be able to disregard the restlessness."

"That's right," answered the teacher.

"The mind is restless and goes wherever the attention goes. Control your attention, and you control your mind."

## Groundhog Day History

How did the Groundhog Day tradition start? Many historians believe that it's related to Candlemas Day, a medieval celebration that falls on Feb. 2. An old sailor's saying from English lore states:

*"If Candlemas Day is clear and bright, winter will have another bite. If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain, winter is gone and will not come again."*

Another possible source for the belief may be that the first official day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere's western lands comes almost seven weeks after Feb. 2, while under the early Julian calendar, the spring equinox fell on March 16— exactly six weeks after.



Groundhog Day, Feb 2nd

## February Question

**Q: What is Cupid's Greek name?**

### Jan Question

**Q: What globally broadcast parade takes place in Pasadena, California every January?**

**A: Rose Parade**

## Business Advice NOT to Follow

The internet is full of advice on how to succeed, but not all of it's good. *Inc. Magazine* points at some common "words of wisdom" that aren't all that wise...

•**"Don't get too close to people."** Relationships are the key to success. If you hold yourself at arm's length, people won't trust you. Keep your friendships on a professional level, but don't shy away from building strong, long-lasting relationships with employees, co-workers, managers, and customers.

•**"Stick to your business plan."** No matter how good your plan is, it shouldn't be set in stone. Situations change, and if you're not willing and able to adapt and adjust, you'll run your career into the ground. Stay on top of trends and developments in your industry so you can react quickly.

•**"Do what you love."** You probably shouldn't pursue a career in a field or position you absolutely hate, but just because you love to cook doesn't mean you'll be able to open and run a 5-star restaurant. Figure out what you do best, and look for a career that fits your talents. You'll be happier and more successful in the long run.



## The Power of Appreciation

A university professor began reflecting on the people who'd had a positive impact on his life. In particular he remembered a schoolteacher who'd gone out of her way to instill in him a love of poetry. He hadn't seen or spoken to her in many years, but he located her address and sent her a letter of thanks.

A short time later, he received this reply: "I cannot tell you how much your note meant to me. I am in my 80s, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and, like the last leaf of autumn, lingering behind. You will be interested to know that I taught school for 50 years and yours is the first note of appreciation I ever received. It came on a blue-cold morning, and it cheered me as nothing has in many years." The teacher's note brought the professor to tears—and then he began searching for others who'd shaped his life, just to say thanks.

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•**"Never say no."** The customer isn't always right, or reasonable. You may think you can't afford to turn down an opportunity, but take the time to consider whether a request is reasonable, and if you're the right person (or organization) to do it. You'll last longer by being judicious about where to invest your energy and resources instead of trying to please absolutely everybody.

# Famous Couples in History

Valentine's Day celebrates love and happiness, and although real life offers plenty of true stories with happily-ever-after endings, many of us look to literature for inspiring tales of passion's power.



- Romeo and Juliet.** Teenagers from feuding families meet, fall in love, marry, and ultimately end their lives rather than live without each other.
- Odysseus and Penelope.** Penelope remains faithful to her absent husband for 20 long years; Odysseus persists in his quest to return home after the Trojan War. Both overcome temptations and obstacles to be reunited at last.
- Jane Eyre and Mr. Rochester.** Charlotte Brontë's classic 19th century novel tells the tale of a young governess and a gruff, lonely landowner with a dark secret. But love triumphs in the end.

## Free Reports!

- How Sellers Price Their Homes
- Making the Move Easy On the Kids
- Five Big Mistakes Home Sellers Make
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# Help Employees Succeed Remotely

Many organizations and employees are seeing the benefits of remote working—less expense on office space, better work/life balance, increased flexibility, and so on. That means working from home isn't likely to go away entirely, even as the COVID-19 pandemic ebbs.

•**Adjust your expectations.** Even now, some managers may struggle with keeping track of employees who aren't just down the hall. You don't have to see each employee every minute of every day to know that they're doing their job—you can't do that anyway. Focus on KPIs, benchmarks, and deadlines to monitor performance at a distance.

•**Share successes.** When a remote employee lands a new client or does a great job on a project, don't keep the news to yourself. Recognize positive accomplishments with a group email or in a Zoom staff meeting so everyone knows what is possible to achieve. This sends the message that you trust people and value their work when they succeed.

•**Use technology for connection and accountability.** You may not communicate every day, but don't let that be an excuse to neglect your employees. Use email and other tools to check in often—not so much that you overwhelm them, but just enough to make sure they're on track.

•**Ask for feedback.** Communication shouldn't be one-way, especially when you're distanced. Ask employees what they need from you in terms of time and resources. They may want more frequent or less frequent communication, or better access to information, to do their jobs. Respond as best you can to make the relationship flow easily.

## Eye Protection For Kids

Schools may be opening up, but some remote e-learning will no doubt continue until the pandemic is well and truly gone. Online classes will remain, so be careful of the strain too much screen time can put on a young person's eyes. Follow this guidance from *U.S. News & World Report*.

- Take regular breaks.** Set a timer to remind kids to look away from the screen every 20 minutes or so.
- Mark book chapters.** Use paperclips to mark real books every few chapters to again encourage kids to rest their eyes.
- Keep screens at arm's length.** The screen of your child's laptop or tablet should be 18–24 inches from their eyes.
- Reduce glare.** Place the light source behind your child's back; not behind the screen. Use the monitor's controls to adjust brightness and contrast so it's easy on the eyes. Don't keep the room too dark, or the screen's brightness can aggravate after-images and cause eye discomfort.
- Stop before bedtime.** Kids should discontinue screen watching 30–60 minutes before going to bed.
- Spend time outdoors.** After doing their school work, or during breaks, have children spend some time outdoors. Exposure to natural light can slow the development of nearsightedness, especially in younger children.

## Heart Health For Adults

- Eat more plants.** Fruits and vegetables contain fiber, antioxidants, and lots of vitamins and minerals.
- Limit animal fat.** Stick to mono-unsaturated fats found in olive oil, avocados, and many nuts, along with polyunsaturated fats from fish like wild salmon and sardines.
- Watch your sugar intake.** Americans consume roughly 22 teaspoons per day. Limit sugar intake by checking the labels on everything you buy.
- Exercise often.** *The American Heart Association* advises about 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week.
- Watch your stress.** Stress can heighten your heart disease risk. Try yoga and meditation!

## A Humbling Lesson

Of all the creatures that came to the watering hole, Frog was the only one that did not have a tail. The other animals taunted him over it, making him feel inferior and ugly. So Frog visited the Sun God and asked him for a tail. The Sun God granted Frog his wish on the condition that Frog watch over the Sun God's special lagoon. Frog agreed. Soon a terrible drought seized the area, and the Sun God's lagoon was the only watering hole available for many miles.

Creatures from all over the land came to Frog's new home in need of water. But Frog was very full of himself with his new long tail and his powerful position as keeper of the only watering hole. His sense of entitlement had mushroomed, as had his self-esteem. And because he had never forgotten how the other creatures used to tease him, he turned away every animal from the lagoon without giving them so much as a sip. After a while, word of Frog's antics reached the Sun God, who decided to verify this behavior firsthand.

He found Frog swishing through the water, gleefully flaunting his tail. As the Sun God approached the water's edge, he heard Frog shout, "Whoever you are, move along! This water is not for you! This special lagoon is mine to do with as I please —because I am the most beautiful of all creatures." Angered, the Sun God exiled Frog and cursed him for the rest of his days. Now, every spring Frog is born a tadpole with a long tail. As he grows, the tail shrinks until it disappears—to remind Frog that the only reward for spiteful and arrogant behavior is the loss of things one truly cherishes in life.



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## Emphasize Effort, Not Success

To succeed on the job, you first have to land that job. Aside from your skills and qualifications, most interviewers look for an attitude they like in a candidate. A study published in the journal *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* suggests that the best way to do that is by emphasizing not what you've accomplished, but how you accomplished it.

In a series of experiments in the United States and the Netherlands, subjects participated in a mock job interview. "Candidates" were told to talk positively about themselves, but receivers found themselves more interested in the efforts and struggles the candidates had to deal with, rather than the final results they achieved.



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# Janet's Journal

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