

Janet's Journal

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March 2022

New Season!

Dear [FirstName],

The first day of Spring is March 20th, 2022, a time to clean up, clean out, and get inspired! This letter offers fun and innovative ways to spark creativity and shake up your daily routine for the new season. I sure hope these stories help you get out of your head and into your imagination!

Also inside, you'll find:

- An ode to Women's History Month
- Some good news for coffee lovers
- Silly anecdotes to lift your spirits!

I hope you enjoy reading this letter, and I do hope it energizes you in some way, somehow. I'd also like to remind you that if you happen to find yourself at a fork in the road and you might want to buy or sell a home, please contact me. I would love to help.

All the best to you and yours,
Janet Browning

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The Marble Statue

A marble statue stood in the middle of a large city, surrounded by hundreds of marble tiles that visitors from all over the world stood on to admire the statue's beauty. One night, when the city square was empty, one of the marble tiles right in front of the statue spoke.

"Hey statue, don't you think it's unfair that people from all over the world come here to admire you, while ignoring and stepping on me?"

The statue replied, "Don't you remember we were actually cut from the same block of marble?"

"Yes, I do! That's why it's even more unfair. Both of us came from that block, and yet the world treats you so differently now!"

The statue said, "Do you remember the day the sculptor tried to work on you, but you resisted his tools?"

"Yes, it hurt! I was mad at him! How could he use those nasty tools on me?"

The statue continued, "Well, because you resisted his tools, he couldn't work on you, so he decided to give up and work on me instead. I knew at once that I would be something different and unique after his efforts, so I bore all the painful tools he used on me and allowed him to craft me as he wanted."

The tile exclaimed, "But those tools were so painful!"

The statue said, "My brother, there is a price for everything in life. You decided to resist and give up, so you can't blame anybody who steps on you now."

The marble tile silently listened to the statue's words and started to reflect on them.

March Question

Q: What is the smallest country in the world?

Feb Question

Q: What is Cupid's Greek name?

A: Eros

Habits for Success

It's never too late to get started on success in your career, or in your personal life. *The Ladders* website offers these tips for moving forward:

- **Start small.** Don't set too many big goals for yourself. Instead of eating healthy at every single meal, start by vowing to eat just one nutritious meal every day. Increase only when you get used to it.
- **Read more.** You're busy, but stop making excuses. It should be possible to carve out 20–30 minutes a day to read something new and different. Find a business or motivational book to read at lunch or just before you go to bed.
- **Get high-quality sleep.** You need six to eight hours of sleep every night to maintain good physical and mental health. Establish a nighttime routine that helps you drift off to dreamland. Go to bed at the same time every night, don't eat right before bed, turn off the TV for at least half an hour before bedtime, and try meditation to relax. 
- **Start the day right.** Identify your most important priority for the day and start with that. You'll get a sense of accomplishment and confidence that will help you press on through the other tasks ahead of you.
- **Exercise regularly.** Like sleep, exercise is good for the body and the mind. Instead of trying to tackle long, tough workouts... start on a plan you can stick to - like fifteen minutes every other day.

March Line-Up

World Wildlife Day, March 3rd. A day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.

Pi Day, March 14th. Divide any circle's circumference by its diameter; the answer is always approximately 3.14, a number represented by the Greek letter π . Keep calculating its digits and you'll discover they go on forever.... literally!

St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. May the luck and joy of the Irish be with you.

World Storytelling Day, March 20th. A global celebration of the art of oral storytelling celebrated every year on the March equinox.

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The Vanishing Cookies

Two boys walk into a bakery on a dare. They have no money in their pockets, but are determined to score a few treats. When the baker isn't looking, the first boy, Tyler, swipes three cookies from a tray on the counter and sticks them in his jacket pocket.

"Guess I won this challenge," he says to his friend Chuck.

"Watch and learn," Chuck replies as he walks to the counter and rings the bell.

"What can I get for you?" the baker asks.

"Just your undivided attention," Chuck answers.



"Gather around folks. I am the Amazing Chuck, and I know magic."

A small crowd assembles around Chuck and Tyler. Chuck turns to the baker and says, "If you would be so kind as to give me a cookie, I will show you all a trick."

The curious baker obliges and hands Chuck a cookie from the tray on the counter. Chuck takes the cookie, looks it over, and then stuffs it in his mouth. When he is finished, he says, "That was pretty tasty. Might I have another?"

The baker is becoming skeptical and says, "This isn't much of a trick as far as I can tell." He hands Chuck another cookie and watches as Chuck gobbles it down, as he did with the first one.

While smacking his lips, Chuck says, "Trust me, this is going to be the most amazing magic trick you ever witnessed. I know you have your doubts, but please, sir, I just need one more cookie for this trick to work."

"This better be a heck of a good trick," the baker says as he hands a third cookie to Chuck.

Just as before, Chuck devours the cookie. He then pats his belly and rubs his hands together. He rolls up his shirtsleeves and shows his palms to the baker and says, "Abracadabra!"

"I don't see anything," the baker says.

Chuck points to Tyler and says, "Let's check his pocket."

Happy Birthday, Julie!

March is Women's History Month. During this month, we celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of women. One such woman is Julie-Victoire Daubié.

Born in France in 1824, Daubié grew to adulthood frustrated by the constraints limiting women's roles in society. An essay she wrote about the opportunities denied to women during that era earned her a spot in a baccalaureate program. In 1861, she became the first woman to graduate from a French university.

Julie-Victoire Daubié spent her adult life engaged in activism focused on gender equality. March 26 is the 195th anniversary of her birth.

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Spark Creativity with Art

Drawing can spur your creativity and you don't have to be a Picasso. Just try some of these games with your friends, from the *My Modern Met* website.

- **The Exquisite Corpse.** In this game, developed by the 20th-century Surrealist artists, one person begins a drawing at the top of a sheet of paper, then folds it over or covers it up so only a bit of the bottom is showing. The next person continues the drawing, folds it down, and so on. Unfolding it to reveal the completed drawing should produce surprises, laughs, and even some ideas.
- **Paper Telephone.** One person writes a short, descriptive phrase on a piece of paper, then passes it to the next person, who then draws a picture based on the phrase. The next person looks only at the picture and then writes a phrase or sentence describing it. The following person then draws a picture of that phrase, and so on. By the end, the final picture and the original phrase may have nothing to do with each other.
- **Blind Contour.** In this exercise, you and a friend draw something around you, but without looking at the paper—just the subject of your drawing. Keep your pen or pencil on the paper at all times. You might be surprised at what you see.
- **Scribbles.** One person scribbles on a piece of paper, eyes closed. The next person has to turn that doodle into a drawing. This forces your mind to make sense of nonsense.

Three Hacks for Inspiration

Creativity may seem as if it springs from nowhere, but the truth is, you've got to work at it. Here are three tricks from the *Creative Boom* website to get your imagination into shape:

1. Develop a ritual. Don't just sit around waiting for ideas to strike. Train yourself to think creatively by developing a routine. A painter might set up his or her paints and pencils, doodle for a bit, then start on a new work of art. Other people take baths or showers before getting to work; some focus on simply making the perfect cup of tea. Whatever you do, make creativity a deliberate habit.

2. Look for bad ideas. Looking for the perfect solution often means sorting through imperfect ideas first. Instead of focusing on what will work, start by figuring out what won't work. Generate bad ideas and analyze them to find out why they're bad. You may be able to eliminate the flaws and find the diamond underneath. (You'll also get rid of your fear of failure by embracing the worst ideas you can think of, knowing you'll eventually find something better.)

3. Think like a child. Children have no assumptions or preconceptions about how the world works. To tap into your inner child, remember the kinds of ways you used to play when you were young—and then do them. Fly a kite, build a sandcastle, make paper airplanes, play a game, or whatever strikes your fancy. You'll loosen up your mind and see the world in a different light.

Calling All Coffee Lovers!

Some studies have suggested that drinking too much coffee can cause stiffening of the arteries, increasing the chance of suffering a heart attack or stroke. However, a new study from the British Heart Association, reported that drinking 3 cups of coffee or more a day is no worse for arteries than drinking a single cup.

Researchers studied more than 8,000 people in the UK, some of whom drank 1 cup of coffee or less a day, others who drank 1 to 3 cups, and a third group who reported consuming up to 20 cups of coffee a day.

All participants were given extensive tests and the findings appear to show that drinking 3 cups or more a day doesn't significantly increase artery stiffness compared with consuming just one cup.

No one is recommending having 20 cups or more per day! However, if you do enjoy a cup or two maybe even three per day, you should not be at any additional risk of heart issues.



The Boulder in the Road

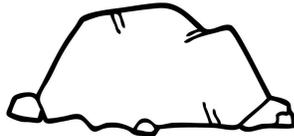
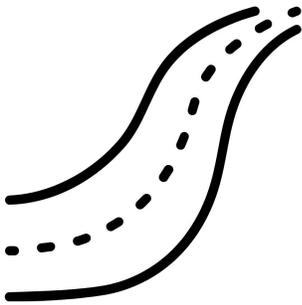
A king had a boulder placed on a roadway, then hid and watched to see if anyone would move the boulder out of the way.

Some of the kingdom's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many of them loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear.

Then a peasant came along, pushing a cart of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant set his cart aside and tried to push the stone out of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded.

Then he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king, explaining that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.

Every obstacle we come across in life gives us an opportunity to improve our circumstances.



Without ambition, one starts nothing. Without work, one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



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