

# People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



## ACTS OF KINDNESS

# Rainbows for God's Children

Suzy Yehl Marta, a divorced mother of three boys, gave up the security of three jobs to do something she knew in her heart had to be done for children grieving over the loss of a parent through death, divorce, separation or a painful transition. She established Rainbows, a not-for-profit organization for single parents and step-family children.

"It was not until several months after my divorce that I realized that it was not only about me, and that my friend's words were not true! They said: don't worry about your youngsters. Kids are resilient; they'll bounce back. Just don't let them see you cry, or let them know you're scared."

When I asked my children how they felt about the divorce, they first were silent, but after few encouragement notes they said: "Don't tell our teachers, Mom. They'll flunk us if they find out you and Dad are divorced." "Yeah, and don't tell the neighbors, they won't let their kids play with us," and my little one said "I know it's my fault you and Dad broke up."

Suzy realized her sons were hurting as much as she was. She tried to locate a support group for them -- similar to the adult group she had joined at the church -- but found nothing. "My fear was multiplied by the reality I came across about children from homes divided, which highlights extra susceptibility



***"God doesn't call the qualified, Suzy, He qualifies the called."***

to delinquency, school problems, drugs and suicide. On top of that, most kids whose parents have divorced say they feel at fault for the breakup."

Working with other concerned single parents, Suzy began organizing weekend retreats for children in single parent and step family situations. She began work on a formal curriculum for children who had experienced family loss which evolved into the foundation named "Rainbows". The curriculum was designed to provide grieving children with a method to adjust to their new family units, build a sense of self-esteem, and to aid in accepting the changes.

When I used to have second thoughts, father Medard repeated the same sentence: "God doesn't call the qualified, Suzy, He qualifies the called."

Today, thousands of public and private schools, as well as churches of all faiths throughout the United States and 16 countries around the world have Rainbows. More than 1.6 million participants have been already helped

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## FAMILY AND PARENTING

# Helping Kids Learn to Pray

**Mark 10:13-14** says, “People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come unto me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

Prayer can bring peace to children. When kids learn to pray, they learn to channel negative feelings on to a greater universe of hope. This can ease tensions and enable them to feel a larger presence that can comfort and watch over them. Your children may already know how to pray, but may be shy about applying prayer in everyday situations. Following are some suggestions that may help children become more comfortable with prayer, no matter what your faith.

*Begin talking about prayer with the same enthusiasm you use to talk about other interests...*

### Validate Your Child's Intuition

Every child, even the most rebellious teen, has an innate sense that there is an unseen presence greater than themselves. Acknowledge and validate their intuition of the warm and comforting presence that lives very near them, maybe even inside them. Encourage the communication of their thoughts to the Divine for a few moments every day. It may not need to be more than a few simple sentences: “Hi, I'm Stephen. Things aren't going well. I'm very sad. Please hold me and help me fall asleep.” Through this practice, they will realize they do not have to be in a formal setting like a church, mosque, or temple in order to pray.

They can pray in their room, outside, as they walk, take a break from their homework, or anywhere at all.

### Use Established Prayers

It helps to learn passages like the Lord's Prayer, or the 23rd Psalm for example.

Kids may not believe they possess the right words to present their little concerns to the greatest power in the universe. They need to learn the skill to become more comfortable. Such passages show how other people, like Jesus and the mother Mary, opened their feelings up to God. Help your child to choose a nice prayer and suggest they repeat it whenever they feel anxious.

### Help Them Find Their Own Words

Kids may need help communicating their feelings to the Supreme. Teach them when they feel happy, thankful, blessed, hurt, sad, alone, or helpless, whenever life seems mean and cruel, they can plead, “Oh God, everything is so awful, just help me!” Then, help them transform that plea into a request. If your child has been teased by a classmate and comes home in tears, ask “If you don't like feeling like this, how could you feel better?” Help them understand God can heal all hurts and wounds and is capable of anything. Suggest they pray not just for themselves, but also for the person who has injured them. Pray they may realize their hurtfulness and become a better person. Confirm prayer can reach into and energize the deeper reaches of your child's being. It can help them plug into a greater power at work in the universe.

### Talk About Prayer at Home

Begin talking about prayer with the same enthusiasm you use to talk



about other interests with your family. Be cautious about over promoting prayer at first as this could turn a child in the opposite direction. But there is no harm in stating you are praying for Grandma who is in the hospital with cancer or for the people who lost their homes in Hurricane Katrina. Show your children that when they pray, their own voice can make a difference and Jesus' words can come true. “Knock, and it shall be opened.” Prayer can help your child realize their capacity for seeing how their own feelings matter greatly and they are never alone. The more you talk about prayer, the more you inculcate the reservoir of hope. Through prayer, your child will begin to perceive situations which they felt helpless and despairing in the past with confidence and strength.

### Include Other People Who Pray

Seek out friends who practice prayer. Invite them to pray, say grace, or attend mass together. Your children will appreciate praying even more when everyone around them prays along with them.

*Source: Stephen Ruppenthal, stayathomemomsonline.com*

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

# Does Carbonated Water Harm Bones?

Warnings about the harmful effects of carbonated beverages on bone calcium emerge from time to time. The theory is phosphoric acid, also known as phosphate, which is used to enhance flavor in some carbonated beverages, can interfere with calcium absorption and result in the loss of bone calcium. Fortunately, there is no strong evidence to support the idea that high phosphate intake will affect bone metabolism or bone density.

Still, carbonated beverages have long been associated with low bone density and fractures in adolescent girls. To investigate this association in adults, researchers at Tufts University examined data from 2,500 women and men ages 49 to 69 involved in the Framingham Osteoporosis Study. They assessed dietary intake and measured bone mineral density (BMD) of the spine and hip.

Non-cola carbonated drinks were not associated with low BMD. However, cola intake was associated with lower BMD at the hip (though not the spine) in women, but not in the men who participated in the study. The more cola a woman drank, the lower her BMD. Women who drank more cola were not drinking less milk, but they did show a lower intake of calcium.

In 2005, the British Journal of Nutrition published the results of a small clinical trial comparing healthy post-menopausal women who drank about one quart of non-carbonated mineral water daily with those who drank the same amount of carbonated mineral water. After eight weeks, blood and urine test results for bone turnover showed no difference between the two groups.

Evidence does not support that drinking seltzer water contributes to osteoporosis or increases fracture risk in women. The authors of the cola study suggested the caffeine in the colas may account for the cola-drinkers' lower BMD. Other studies also reported an association between caffeine and lower BMD. In some cases, soft drinks displace calcium-rich beverages, such as milk, and experts think this, rather than any direct effect of soft drinks on bone, may explain the effect on BMD in adolescent girls.



Feel free to enjoy seltzer water without worry, but avoid too many caffeinated beverages, whether carbonated or not. If you suspect drinking seltzer water, coffee, colas, or other soft drinks may be replacing your intake of healthy beverages — such as calcium-fortified juices or vitamin D fortified low-fat or skim milk — be sure to supplement your diet with enough calcium (1,200 to 1,500 mg per day) from other sources.

*Source: Celeste Robb-Nicholson, M.D., Harvard Women's Health Watch, [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu)*

## Inspiring Things to Say to Children About Prayer:

- Prayer is just like talking to your mom and dad, but God is in Heaven, not here on earth.
- God hears your every prayer, and even though you can't see Him, He's in Heaven listening to you!
- Pray for others, like "Uncle Joseph" who is sick.
- God likes to hear from you a lot! You can pray at other times during the day, not just at bedtime.
- Thank God for what He has given you...like your home, your family, your "stuff".
- Tell God about the things that make you scared or worried.
- Tell God you're angry! He'll show you what to do.
- Ask God how He wants you to treat others...like the bully at school.
- Ask God to forgive you of doing wrong to other people, or to their stuff. God is a God of second chances.
- Ask God how you can show His love to other kids or adults.

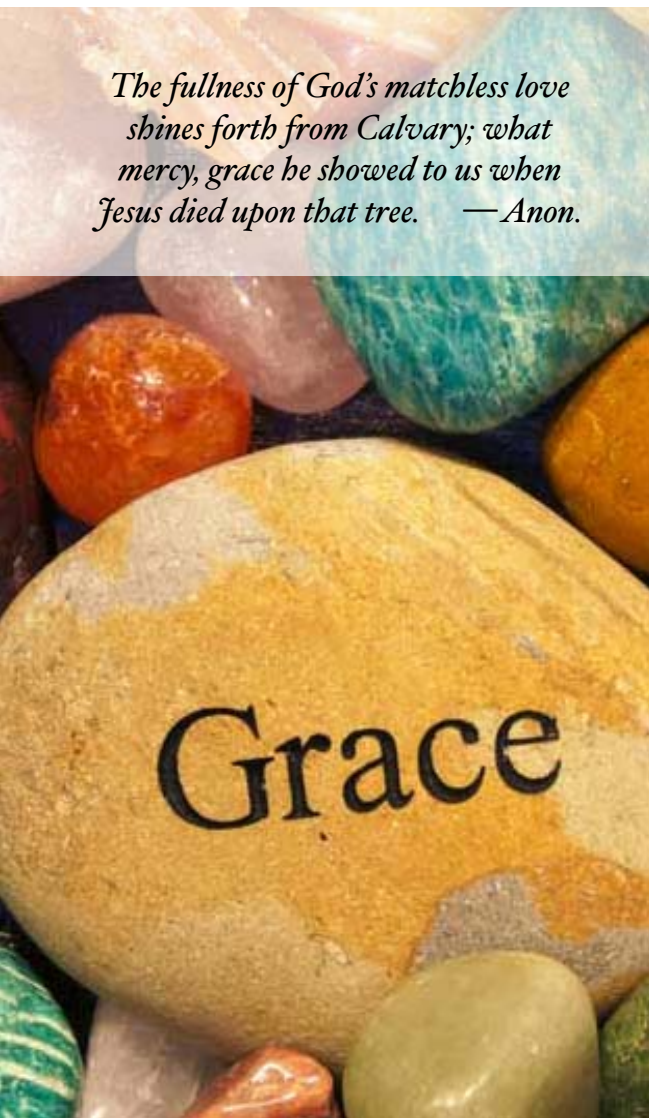
*Source: [associatedcontent.com](http://associatedcontent.com)*



## CHECKING IN WITH THE BIBLE

## A Steward of Grace

*The fullness of God's matchless love shines forth from Calvary; what mercy, grace he showed to us when Jesus died upon that tree. —Anon.*

**READ: Corinthians 15:1-11**

*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. —1 Peter 4:10*

**Bible in a Year: 2 Chronicles 28-29; John 17**

Last week I had several opportunities to show grace. I wasn't perfect, but I was pleased with the way I handled one situation in particular. Instead of getting angry, I said, "I understand how that could have happened. I've certainly made my share of mistakes." and I left it at that.

According to my own grading scale, I deserved a high score. Not perfect, but close. Lurking in the back of my mind (I hate to admit) was the thought that maybe by being gracious I could expect to be treated that way at some future date.

The following Sunday morning our congregation was singing "Amazing Grace," and suddenly the audacity of my attitude came through to me in the words, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."

What in the world was I thinking?! The grace we show to others is not our own. The only reason we can "give" grace to anyone is because God has already given it to us. We can pass along only that which we have received from Him.

Good stewards look for opportunities to pass along to others what we have received from the Lord. May all of us be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

When you know God's grace, you'll want to show God's grace.

*Source: Julie Ackerman Link, Our Daily Bread, obd.org*

**RAINBOWS** continued from page 1

through this initiative. Rainbows has become the nation's largest not-for-profit organization and is dedicated solely to helping families cope with loss. Rainbows offers specialized curricula for preschool children (SunBeams), elementary age school children (Rainbows), adolescents (Spectrum), single and stepparents (Prism) and adults (Kaleidoscope), as well as a Community Crisis Response Program (Silver Linings).

In 2003, Suzy's book *Healing the Hurt, Restoring the Hope* was published to provide guidance

for caregivers of children and teens experiencing challenging times such as divorce, death, and crisis using the Rainbows approach.

Rainbows programs offer coping tools to build the confidence and self-esteem of these hurting children, improve communication in their families and peer relationships, prevent destructive behaviors such as involvement with gangs, alcohol and drug abuse, and ultimately improve school attendance and academic performance.

*Source: Suzy Yehl Marta, rainbows.org*

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH

# 12 Ways to Help a Grieving Friend

Losing a loved one can be an extremely difficult time in a person's life. Death is not an easy topic to talk about. The unfortunate truth is, at some point, we will all be faced with the uncomfortable reality of losing a loved one. Our friends and family play a big part in how we deal with this loss and their love and support can make all the difference.

The NCF presents the following article meant to inspire thoughtful ways to provide support for someone you care about through the journey of restoring balance to their life after a loss. The article is adapted from the e-book "25 Supportive Things You Can Do For Someone That Has Lost a Loved One" by Lori A. Pederson, founder of IDidNotKnowWhatToSay.com, which is available for download.

## Be a Good Listener

Listen, Listen, Listen. One of the most important things you can do is to make yourself available and truly listen.

## Send a Heartfelt Note

Send a card or letter letting the person know you care. Be sure to write a note in the card. Just signing a sympathy card can be perceived as being impersonal. Your note can be as simple as letting your loved one know that you are thinking about them and you will be there for them through this journey.

## Reach Out

Make a phone call or stop by to see how your loved one is doing. Be sure to give them an opportunity to talk about their feelings and to tell their story.

## Prepare a Comforting Meal

In the early stages of grief the bereaved can forget to eat. Having meals handled by someone else will encourage the family to eat regularly. Be sure to ask if the family has any dietary restrictions, food allergies or favorite foods they would like you to prepare.

## Be the Messenger

Help the person call family and friends to let them know about the funeral/memorial service. Telling people over and over again about the passing of a loved one can be extremely difficult for the bereaved. Having a few close friends and family members help with this task can lift a heavy burden.

## Attend the Funeral or Memorial Service

Unless it is a private family funeral, attend the funeral or memorial service. Having friends and family around at this very difficult time can mean a great deal to your love one.

## Help Take Care of Everyday Tasks

Take out their trash, wash their dishes, clean their house, go grocery shopping, take their dog for a walk, wash their

car, mow their lawn, take the kids to school, wash their clothes, etc. Taking care of everyday tasks can allow the family time to grieve and handle the many responsibilities of planning a funeral and readjusting their lives.

## Share Your Expertise

If you have a special expertise (lawyer, insurance agent, financial planner, banker, etc.) or if you have already been through the loss of a spouse or relative, assist them with the paperwork that they will need to manage (i.e. making sure life insurance claims are filed, obtaining a death certificate, cancelling all credit cards and bank accounts, understanding their will, and going through all the accounts to be sure that they are aware of all the deceased's finances.) Having someone assist with the paperwork that is familiar with the process can remove a great deal of stress from the bereaved.

## Get Them Moving

Exercise can be a great energy booster. Walking, bike riding, yoga, golf, running, swimming, playing tennis, or whatever brings them joy. Make a regular date with them to get a little exercise; this will help them get the endorphins going as well as encourage them to get out of the house.

## Be Understanding and Patient

Your friend or family member may not know what they need right now. Your willingness to be ready, willing and able to assist when they need support will be a cherished gift.

## Take Them on an Inspirational Adventure

What do they love to do? What have they always wanted to do? Help them reconnect with life and joy through the simple pleasures in life. Do they love going to the movies? Going to the beach? Walking through the park? Going to Disneyland? Did they always want to learn how to dance? Help them understand that they are allowed to have fun, even though they are grieving.

## Help Them Find the Support They Need

If they are experiencing deep emotional grief, assist them in finding a grief support group or a professional grief counselor that can assist them. You may want to offer to attend a grief support group with them to give them emotional support.

Source: Lori A. Pederson, [beliefnet.org](http://beliefnet.org)



**ROAD SAFETY**

# Say NO to Texting While Driving

Have you ever wondered how much time you spend in your car? Many people use their cars everyday and for many purposes; some use it as a dresser, others a lunch or breakfast area, some people use it as a party lounge while others consider it a getaway place. Sadly millions die every year around the world of preventable accidents due to simple distractions that takes away the driver's focus off the driving process. Texting while driving is one of them.

Driving while texting on an electronic device is the newest driver distraction danger. A recent study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) revealed that 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some form of driver distraction occurring within three seconds before the vehicle crash.

Use of text messaging while driving is a dangerous habit. Drivers who engage in mobile texting spend about 400 percent more time taking their eyes off the road and are 70 percent less likely to stay in their lane, according to an Australian study.

It is not uncommon to see drivers resting a BlackBerry on top of the steering wheel while using their thumbs to tap in a text message. A driver talking on a cell phone can watch the road, but someone responding to a text message must stare at his or her hands. Text messaging is fine when you're sitting at an airport or at home, but not while driving. Countries around the world just like the biggest number of the American states need to get ahead of the curve and proactively prohibit

this activity through applying new laws that ban this dangerous behavior.

Drivers need to be placed on notice by any government that there is zero tolerance to use these devices while driving a vehicle. Additionally, families need to talk about these issues with their children, and schools need to raise awareness among their student about this danger. We all have a responsibility to fight this dangerous behavior that is taking people's lives every single day. Say NO to texting while driving!

Source: [automotivefleet.com](http://automotivefleet.com)

## How to Stop the Habit of Texting While Driving

- Plan ahead – send the message before you get in the car to confirm a meeting, find an address...etc.
- Focus on driving while driving. Accomplishing loose ends from work cannot be done in the car while operating a vehicle.
- Consider turning the telephone off while driving.
- Put the cell phone in the backseat while driving – or set it as silent while driving.
- Pull over if it is essential to reply or read a message.
- Instant technology creates its own sense of urgency but at the end of the day, most text messages probably can wait.

**PRAYER CORNER**

*Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow; the same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then Put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations, and say continually: "The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart has trusted in Him and I am helped. He is not only with me but in me, and I in Him."*

St. Francis de Sales

## Share your story with us!

Do you have a story that lifts spirits, motivates and inspires people to hold on to their dreams, to change their lives and surpass obstacles? Share your story with us today!  
Your story can help others!

[NCF@najicherfanfoundation.org](mailto:NCF@najicherfanfoundation.org)

## Quoteable!

Do not ask the Lord to guide your footsteps, if you are not willing to move your feet.



THE NAJI CHERFAN FOUNDATION

# Naji's Books are Finally Within Your Reach and in Your Own Language!

At the age of seventeen, Naji suffered a traumatic brain injury due to a motorbike accident. He was in a coma for two months, and when he woke up, he was unable to move, speak or see.

His rehabilitation period of nearly eleven years was a journey of courage, faith, and determination, which Naji chose to write about in the three books below made available for you today in various languages! Please visit

the website of The Naji Cherfan Foundation to download the books [www.najicherfanfoundation.org](http://www.najicherfanfoundation.org)

"We Are All Born To Shine!" is the message Naji wanted to communicate to patients, families, and therapists affected by brain injuries. He encourages those suffering from an illness or disability to be proactive and change their destiny by believing in themselves and going beyond what they are told they can do.

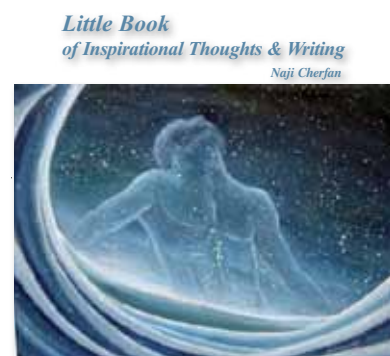
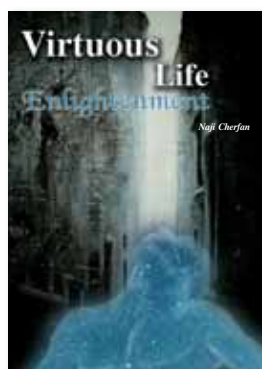
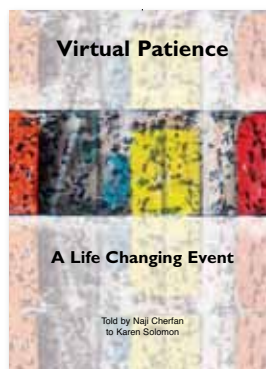
## GET INSPIRED BY NAJI'S BOOKS!

Imagine going to sleep and waking up two months later in a new world!

Imagine your family and friends speaking to you and making plans while you lie there in silence. Your mother knits a sweater; your girlfriend shares all the news from high school and your father tells you three things every day:

Patience is a virtue; There is a time for everything, and Fear not.

They never doubt you will wake up, even though the doctors say that if you do, you won't walk, talk or see.



### Virtual Patience

Before the accident up to a certain stage of recovery. Naji believed that his accident gave him the experience of being a baby twice. However, the second time he was conscious and had to mature in a more difficult way.

### Virtuous Life - Enlightenment

Travel with Naji as he offers quirky observations on the road to mental and physical recovery after being in coma due to a brain injury.

### Little Book Of Inspirational Thoughts & Writings

This book contains thoughts and writings that inspired Naji as he recovered from the traumatic brain injury. This is one person's message of hope and encouragement to anyone who passes through those difficult times that change our lives.

**DOWNLOAD NAJI'S BOOKS ONLINE!**  
[www.najicherfanfoundation.org/publications](http://www.najicherfanfoundation.org/publications)

## HOW I REMEMBER NAJI...

## Put Your Faith in the Light!

I met Naji in November 1997 when his mother brought us together; in our second session, he said "I want to tell my story and I want you to write it". That's how we started...Naji reaching back to his earliest memories and bringing everything forward with great attention to detail... and me writing every word on a big, yellow legal pad. In some unconscious way he knew that talking the whole experience out was a way of healing and that would start him on his new journey towards enlightenment. I believe he arrived in that place when he wrote the last line of his "Little Book of Inspirational Thoughts and Writings": We are all born to shine...



summer I walked in and he said "Hey Carrie, I want you to see something". He had taken pages and pages of his writings and ideas about life and edited them into his second book; we devoted our next year's sessions to that project. One of my favorite quotes that he sent me is this: "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but the present is a gift".

And shine he did...not just in that beautiful physical way with his gorgeous smile and handsome face, but with that inner light. He was born with that light and spent his whole life discovering it. He wrote ..."When I discovered the light within, I let it grow. Now I've come to understand what Jesus said, "Put your faith in the light..."

Naji loved people so much that he wanted to use his experience to encourage and change others. During the 11 years that we worked on his books I was privileged to see his transformation...not only from boy to man but to see his spiritual transformation as well. With Naji, every day was an adventure and he was the mastermind of that adventure. One of his best surprises for me was the "Little Book of Inspirational Thoughts and Writing". One

was something his father said to him at the beginning of his journey "Patience is a virtue. Fear not and there is time for everything". Naji was the living example of all of this... I treasure the time I was given to have Naji Cherfan in my life. He has been a source of inspiration and love to me for more than a decade. He challenged me, made me laugh, and fed me, both physically and emotionally. I am truly blessed to have been warmed by his light. With Naji's passing we have gained our own personal angel who will guide and inspire us through our days on this earth. Young in years, wise in the soul and with a heart as big as it was brave, Naji's capacity for love and life will always be ours to use everyday until we see him again...

*Karen Solomon*

## People Are Born To Shine!

*People are Born To Shine* is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Naji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to those affected by brain injuries.

The content has been carefully selected from sources considered reliable and accurate, however The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information.

For subscriptions, comments, contributions and suggestions please contact us: [info@najicherfanfoundation.org](mailto:info@najicherfanfoundation.org)

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