

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

EXCERPTS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

Greg Robinson: An Act of Kindness to Make a Community Smile

“Our hope is that the finders of the envelopes will feel a wee rush of happiness and that it will bring a smile to their face.”

From sausage rolls to sweets and a coffee with a bun, there were many things that made Greg Robinson smile.

But none more so than his family, who he adored, and in particular his grandson, who allowed him to be a big kid.

When the father-of-two, who was in his 50s, died suddenly in March 2021, his family's life was turned upside down.

“Granda Greg” was fit and healthy and along with his wife, Nikki, ran a gift shop in his hometown of Donaghadee in County Down.

Whether it was at work, walking the dog, with his local flute band or just out in his beloved town, his family say Greg made time for everyone.

After his death, the community rallied around his family—particularly Nikki and their two daughters, Jess and Sam.

Now, on the week of the first anniversary of his passing, they are giving back to their community by sharing some of the things that made him smile.

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Let's build healthier festive relationships.

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Highlighting your risk of cardiovascular disease.

Teen Driver Safety

Tips to reduce deaths and injuries among teens.

Have a 'Green' Christmas

Take extra care of the environment during this season of celebration.

www.najicherfanfoundation.org

Strengthening Relationships During the Holidays

The holidays are a time when our already hectic lives become even more frenzied—Ahhhh the joys! But among our duties, is there a better time to let our friends and family know that we're thinking of them?

Last minute planning, late hours and disagreements can definitely put strain on relationships, but with the right mindset and a few simple tools, you can build healthier festive relationships!

COMMUNICATE MORE

Communication is the golden rule of strong relationships, and the funny thing is, people tend to overlook it. Being honest, vulnerable and openly sharing intimate feelings with your other half will foster trust, closeness and ease any tension in your relationship.

So, this Christmas, talk! Talk to your partner, your parents, your children, your neighbors; talk to anyone with whom you want to develop a stronger relationship. Communication does not only keep people in each other's hearts, it helps us to better understand each other, so, speak up!

DO THE LITTLE THINGS

Here is another big win for happy and robust relationships: doing little things. The sweetest things don't always come from the most expensive acts or gifts. In fact, staying with a friend when she or he is having a bad day this Christmas can mean a lot more than buying an expensive present when it isn't needed. Do those little things that your friend, partner or family member may not expect.

FORGIVE

There and there is no better time to forgive than during Christmas. Forgiveness means letting go of the past and "living in the now." Forgiveness is a key part of successful long-term relationships and although forgiving is often portrayed as a sign of weakness in society, it is quite the opposite... Only the strong of mind forgive.

There is no peace without forgiveness.

—Marianne Williamson



Think of it this way: a perfect relationship is a friendship between two forgivers—you let go, and they also let go.

TRY NEW THINGS

This Christmas, take your friends or your family on a trip they never expected and see how much fun it brings. Trying new things doesn't necessarily have to involve a long distance trip, it could be visiting a place you never thought you would go or eating something your friends are sure you would never eat. Lasting memories are created when you partake in new adventures which can be shared among family and friends for years to come.

VISIT OLD MEMORIES

Revisiting cherished memories is a great way to reconnect with friends and family over the holidays. Walk through an old restaurant in your hometown or have a drink in an old pub you once loved.

When you sit in an old place with your friend, chances are you will both start talking about all the times you shared, leaving you both feeling thankful and happy.

Source: myhomevitality.com

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Medical Myths: All About Cholesterol

Cholesterol is essential for life. But, when present in high levels in the blood, it increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.



occurs in two main ways.

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) carries cholesterol from the liver to cells, where it is used in several processes.

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is often referred to as “good” cholesterol, because it transports cholesterol back to the liver. Once there, cholesterol is removed from the body, thereby reducing cardiovascular risk.

MYTH 2: I AM A HEALTHY WEIGHT, SO I CAN'T HAVE HIGH CHOLESTEROL

Oh, yes you can! Cholesterol balance is really a function of what we eat but also our genetics. Familial hypercholesterolemia might be as common as 1 in 200 people. Weight is more a function of your inherited metabolism and the balance between calories consumed and calories expended.

Cholesterol, along with other substances, such as fat and calcium, builds up in plaques on the walls of arteries. Over time, this narrows the blood vessels and can lead to complications, including stroke and heart attack.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that raised cholesterol levels are responsible for 2.6 million deaths each year.

MYTH 1: ALL CHOLESTEROL IS BAD

Cholesterol is a vital component of cell membranes. It's also vital in the production of steroid hormones, vitamin D, and bile acid. So, although high levels are a risk factor for disease, without any cholesterol, we could not survive.

Cholesterol is moved around the body by lipoproteins, which are substances that consist of fat and protein. This transport

Additionally, people who have a healthy weight might have high cholesterol levels, while some people who are overweight may not have high cholesterol. Cholesterol levels are affected by genetics, thyroid function, medications, exercise, sleep and diet.

There are also factors you cannot modify which can contribute to high cholesterol, like your age and your genetics.

MYTH 3: I WOULD HAVE SYMPTOMS IF I HAD HIGH CHOLESTEROL

In most cases, high cholesterol will not cause symptoms. That's why it is recommended to get periodic blood testing to screen for high cholesterol. The age you start screening and the frequency of screening is determined by your individual risk factors. High cholesterol leads to silent buildup of plaque in arteries until it is so severe that strokes or heart attacks occur.

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MYTH 4: IF I EAT LOTS OF CHOLESTEROL, I WILL HAVE HIGH CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

This topic is a little more complex than one might expect. The cholesterol one consumes does not necessarily directly correlate with cholesterol levels. Eating sugars or simple carbohydrates, can result in higher cholesterol levels, even if someone doesn't eat much cholesterol. However, if we consume more cholesterol, we will most likely increase cholesterol.

MYTH 5: EVERYONE SHOULD AIM FOR THE SAME CHOLESTEROL TARGETS

Not true. Your target level of cholesterol is based on whether you have a history of certain diseases—like heart attack and stroke—and your risk of developing these issues, which is based on things like age and whether you have high blood pressure.

For those of us who have not had any cardiovascular problems, the LDL cholesterol (the 'bad' cholesterol) should be less than 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl). But if you have heart or vascular disease—history of heart attack, stroke, or other arterial vascular disease—and especially if you have diabetes, the LDL cholesterol target should be less than 70 mg/dl, if not lower.

MYTH 6: ONLY MEN NEED TO WORRY ABOUT CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

This is a persistent myth, but it is not true. According to the CDC, during 2015–2018, the prevalence of high total cholesterol was 10.5% in men and 12.1% in women. After losing the protective effects of estrogen, women begin to accelerate their risk of heart disease and develop the same risk as men.

In fact, because women develop heart disease at a later age and live longer, more heart attacks are recorded annually in the female population.

MYTH 7: THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT MY CHOLESTEROL LEVEL

This, thankfully, is untrue. Aside from taking medications to lower your cholesterol, you can also improve your cholesterol by maintaining a healthy weight, eating the right foods, exercising, avoiding smoking, and avoiding excessive alcohol use.

There is so much that can be done with an abnormally high cholesterol level. Diet and exercise are always the first steps and remain extremely important. Statins are very effective in lowering cholesterol and are safe.



MYTH 8: I TAKE STATINS, SO I CAN EAT WHAT I WANT

Wouldn't that be nice if it were true? But it isn't. If you eat what you want and consume calories to excess, you will gain weight. When you gain too much weight, especially around your belly area, you can develop a condition called metabolic syndrome, which is a prediabetic state.

Statins are not weight reducing drugs. Their job is to lower the 'bad' LDL cholesterol, and your job is to treat your body with respect, which includes what you eat.

MYTH 9: I'M UNDER 40, SO I DON'T NEED TO HAVE MY CHOLESTEROL CHECKED

Although there is some debate about when to start screening for elevated cholesterol, many societies, such as the AHA, recommend screening as early as age 20. The longer your blood vessels are bathed in blood that contains too high a cholesterol level, your risk of cardiovascular disease later in life increases. The recommendations state that the first cholesterol check should be performed during teenage life, and if you have a strong family history, it should be checked sooner. For individuals with homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia, cholesterol should be checked by age two.

Source: medicalnewstoday.com

ROAD SAFETY

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Teen Driver Safety Tips

Motor vehicle crash deaths and injuries among teens can be prevented. Always buckle up, drive at safe speeds, and never drive impaired to help everyone stay safe on the road during the holiday season.

- Did you know the leading causes of teen crashes and injuries include driver inexperience, driving with teen passengers, nighttime driving, and not using seat belts?
- Discuss the rules of the road with your teen. Consider creating a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement that puts the rules in writing so that limits and expectations are clear.
- Know your state's laws. All states have graduated driver licensing (GDL) systems, which help ensure teens can build driving skills under lower-risk conditions.
- Get in supervised driving time with your teen over the holidays while they are not in school. Practicing driving under your supervision in different kinds of weather is helpful for providing your teen with valuable driving experience in varied conditions (when the weather is not too severe or dangerous).
- Require your teen to buckle up in every seating position and on every trip. Set a good example by doing the same. Using seat belts can reduce the risk of death or serious injury in a crash by about half.

Source: cdc.gov

GO GREEN

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How to Have a 'Green' Christmas

Let's show extra care for the environment during this season of celebration.

Christmas doesn't have to be a burden on the planet. With a little effort and imagination, we can reduce the environmental impact of the holiday season. Here are some ideas to help celebrate the season while caring for the earth.

BUY LESS

Some holiday gifts fill a practical need and need to be bought new. But many gifts are really gestures of thoughtfulness. You can give more while spending less.

NOT ALL GIFTS HAVE TO BE STORE-BOUGHT

You can give more while spending less by giving gifts that are personal and unique. While young children may favor the bright, shiny store-bought item, most adults appreciate anything that shows thoughtfulness.

SIMPLIFY THE 'GIFT-GO-ROUND'

Feeling overwhelmed by a gift list that's just too long? Here's an idea to help shorten your list and simplify the family gift-giving ritual. Rather than buying gifts for everyone on your list, draw names from a hat so each person buys only one gift. An agreed on spending limit will also help everyone from feeling they have to go overboard with a fabulous gift for the person whose name they chose.

Source: learn.eartheasy.com

The Love of God

*Great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.*

— Psalm 57:10

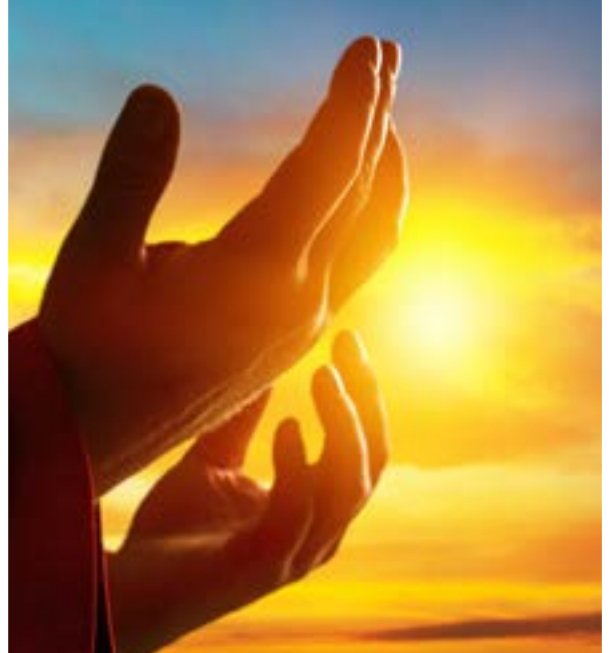
In 1917, Frederick Lehman, a California businessman beset by financial setbacks, wrote the lyrics to the hymn, “The Love of God.” His inspiration led him quickly to pen the first two stanzas, but he got stuck on the third. He recalled a poem that had been discovered years earlier, written on the walls of a prison. A prisoner had scratched it there into the stone, expressing a deep awareness of God’s love. The poem happened to be in the same meter as Lehman’s hymn. He made it his third stanza.

There are times when we face difficult setbacks as did Lehman and the poet in the prison cell. In times of despair, we do well to echo the psalmist David’s words and “take refuge in the shadow of [God’s] wings” (Psalm 57:1). It’s okay to “cry out to God” with our troubles, to speak to Him of our current ordeal and the fears we have when “in the midst of lions”. We’re soon reminded of the reality of God’s provision in times past, and join David who says, “I will sing and make music... I will awaken the dawn”.

“The love of God is greater far,” this hymn proclaims, adding “it goes beyond the highest star.” It’s precisely in our time of greatest need when we’re to embrace how great God’s love really is—indeed “reaching to the heavens”.

—Kenneth Petersen

Source: odb.org



REFLECT & PRAY

What are the difficulties you face today? How has God provided for you in times past?

Loving God, I am facing difficult matters, but I am reminded of Your love for me and Your provision throughout my life. Thank You.

Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work.

The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of all ages, both those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information at +961 (0)4 522221.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quotable!

“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you’ve got to put up with the rain.”

— Dolly Parton

SMILE continued from page 1

The little gifts have been being found around the town, each with a simple message: “An act of kindness in memory of Greg Robinson”.

“We—Nikki, Jess and Sam—wanted to plan something together that allowed us to put our energy into something positive and give us something practical to do which we knew would have an impact on others,” they told BBC News NI.

“We knew that by making others smile that we, in turn, would feel the benefit of that, too.

“We wanted to give back to the community of Donaghadee that helped us.

“We have realized the importance of little things that have made us smile throughout the past year.”

As Greg was “a Donaghadee man, he loved his town and the community”, all the gifts were purchased locally.

Among them are chocolate bars, scents from the family’s gift shop, flowers, vouchers for a bakery for some of his favorite sausage rolls, an ice-cream shop where he used to buy a quarter of sweets on a Saturday night, and a cafe because “a wee coffee and a bun would have made dad’s face light up with excitement”.

Many recipients, including some who did not know Greg, have posted photos of their finds on a local Facebook page, prompting others to share memories.

“When someone dies, it is often the case that people are scared to mention the loved one in case it makes you sad, but the grief journey has taught us that this isn’t the case and that the wonderful stories and chat about dad brings so much comfort,” his family said.

“We love those times when we hear how dad had impacted their lives, from showing kindness as a teenager at high school, to chatting away to customers in his shop.”

‘A TRUE GENTLEMAN’

Nikki remembers her husband as being “a true gentleman” who was always making

people laugh.

“He was so charismatic, lighting up the room whenever he walked in,” she added.

For Jess and Sam, they will be forever grateful for him teaching them “to focus on the positive parts of the day, looking for ways that we can express gratitude for everyday things”.

Greg’s wife and daughters have decided that they will continue to mark his anniversary in this way.

“Our hope is that the finders of the envelopes will feel a wee rush of happiness and that it will bring a smile to their face.

“It would also be our hope that it sparks conversations about dad and how his legacy can live on in the community of Donaghadee.”

“Greg Robinson loved “the simple things”, like spending time with his family”

Source: bbc.com

PRAYER FOR GRATITUDE

Lord, thank you for your abundant, abounding grace. Thank you that we don't have to earn a drop of the mighty river of grace that flows freely for us today. Thank you for the unexpected, unmerited favor you've showered on my life. Help me put myself in the path of your love and grace. Help me not neglect the disciplines I need to meet with you regularly and to drink from the water of life. Thank you for your rich love. Amen.

— DAVID MATHIS

Prayer Corner

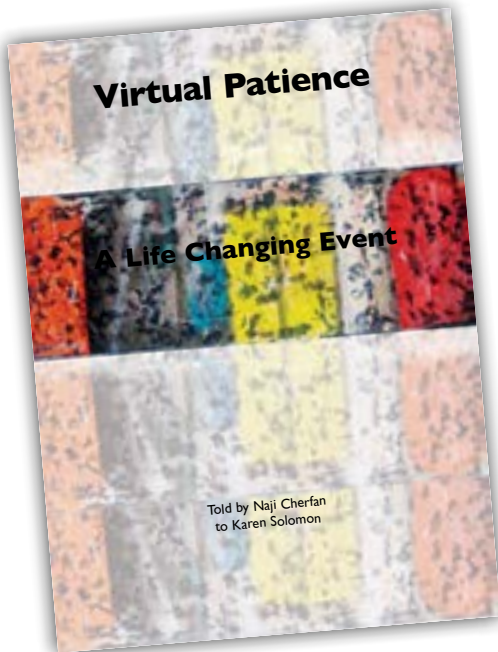
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How I Remember Naji...

Excerpt from *Virtual Patience*



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While recovering, Naji Cherfan considered himself a miracle in the making. After undergoing intensive therapy in Greece, Germany and Canada, he began achieving the goals he set for himself so long ago. Realizing what he had accomplished through therapy and personal effort, this courageous teenager moved forward and lived with his disability. "You just consider yourself normal and say forget it, man. It was only a two-second accident. You don't need intensive therapy or

serious help anymore. The best therapy is attending college and living a normal life like everyone else. Forget the past. I have the chance to make it like most of my friends. I can walk, think and most of all I'm conscious. Honestly. I don't mind. It could have been worse. Life is my therapy."

Three years earlier, Naji could not have imagined saying those words. Life may not be fair, but it always gives the opportunity for growth and learning. He wrote in his journal the following words: "Picture yourself two



years from now and consider yourself normal, unless a very important handicap privilege is needed." During some of his darker moments, he would go to the mountain to breathe for a while. Then he would say to himself "Never, never, never let people feel sorry for you unless you like this feeling. Always have your pride and dignity." During these moments he considered other people less fortunate than himself and realized that he had the ability to make himself happier. He began appreciating what he had and where he was in his life.

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 people of all ages, those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind resulting from accident, stroke, etc.

The content has been carefully selected from internet sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual well being. However The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information. The NCF would like to recognize the devoted work of its volunteers, mainly Marianne Debs, Me. Kamal Rahal, Me. Harold Alvarez, Zeina Costantine, Joyce Abou Jaoude, Rita Kassis, Marleine Nassrany, Diala Ghostine Nassrany, Dima Rbeiz, Father Joseph Abdel Sater, Father Joseph Soueid, Reine Kassis, Nabil Khoury, Roland Khoury, Father Elia Chalhoub, Valéria de Proença, Athena and Christina Georgotas, Violette Nakhle, and all the field volunteers who are supporting NCF in spreading the words of Jesus through their institutions, churches, hospitals, establishments, etc.

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