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STORY OF THE WEEK - Tips on How to Make a Good Life Even Better!

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The mission of Kidstown International is to help abandoned children living in indigenously-operated Christian orphanages in developing countries so that they may be alleviated of their suffering, have hope for the future, and become productive adults who love the Lord and who will contribute positively to their society.

7 Daily Habits of Rich People That You Should Copy!

1) Read. A Lot

According to author and speaker Grant Cardone, the most successful CEOs read an average of 60 books a year, whereas the average American worker reads just one—and earns 319 times less.

2) Practice Affirmations

The key to successful affirmations is choosing a mantra that's tied to a dream and a realistic goal. For example, if you want to bank six figures, you wouldn't say: "I make \$100,000 a year" because that creates an inner conflict between your subconscious and conscious minds, and the programming won't stick.

3) Exercise

Certified Financial Planner and author Tom Corley found that rich people exercised an average of 30 minutes, four days a week. So whether it's a high-intensity CrossFit workout or a walk with my wife, I dedicate an hour a day to fitness.

4) Build Relationships

Relationships are the currency of the wealthy, Corley says. I keep a running list of positive influencers in my life and regularly connect with them. I call to say hello and listen to what's going on in their lives.

5) Visualize Your Goals

Daymond John from "Shark Tank" has shared that he looks at his list of seven goals—each with an expiration date and action plan—when he wakes up and before bed. I wanted to attack my goals with the same intensity.

6) Volunteer

In his study, Corley found that 72% of the wealthy volunteer for at least five hours a week, compared with just

12% of the poor. Of course, there are many reasons to volunteer, but he says the rich use the opportunity to expand their network of like-minded people.

7) Confide in a Mentor Who's Been in Your Shoes

Even the most successful people on earth value mentors who've walked in their shoes and made it to the other side. Mark Zuckerberg credits Steve Jobs as his mentor, and Bill Gates has talked about how Warren Buffett mentored him through challenges at Microsoft.

(Source: MarketWatch)



'Granny Pods' Become a Solution for Retirees With Limited Budgets

The micro-living trend has found a receptive audience in seniors, who need affordable living options

"Granny pods" are 400-square-foot houses with all the trimmings of a real house, but can fit in a backyard

Like many boomers, Jane Baldwin faced a difficult question: "Where do I go next?"

The 67-year-old retiree was living alone in Wyoming, and had grown tired of cold winters. She wanted to be closer to her family in Oakland, California.

Not ready to give up her independence entirely by sharing a roof with family — but also unable to purchase another property thanks in part to the Bay Area's notoriously high cost of housing — Baldwin decided to look no further than the backyard. Her answer was to build a 400-square-foot "granny pod."

"I am in love with it," said Baldwin. "I can't foresee leaving here until I'm dead."

"If people can age in place and age at home it's much healthier, and the family is happier, but it can be very expensive," said Carolyn McClanahan, a financial planner at Life Planning Partners in Jacksonville, Florida. "Granny pods can cost anywhere from \$100,000 to \$250,000. So you got to weigh longevity in there with it."

With the cost of skilled nursing care reaching nearly \$93,000 a year, a granny pod may make more financial sense if you expect the person living there to stay for several years.

However, it's important to also weigh the individual's cognitive health. Someone with dementia or in need of help with daily tasks is not a good granny pod candidate, McClanahan added.

(Source: CNBC)

Average Person's Social Security Check Exceeds \$1,400 per Month

In the 12-month period ending June 2017, over 2.9 million Americans signed up for Social Security benefits. On average, **these retired workers were awarded \$1,413.08 in monthly benefits**, but the average benefits payable were quite different for men and women.

In the period, 1.4 million **women** filed for Social Security benefits, and their average award was **\$1,231.50**. **Men**, however, were **awarded \$1,583.77, on average**.

Wage inequality arguably plays a role in women's lower average payment, but so too does Social Security's formula, which penalizes individuals who take time off from their career to raise children. Social Security calculates benefits using the 35-highest income earning years, but if someone doesn't have 35 years of work history, it uses zeros in its calculation for any years without income.

Boosting Your Benefits

The best way to boost your Social Security benefits is to ask for a raise at work. If you have fewer than 35 years of work history, more high-income-earning years will help offset any zeros in your history. If you have more than 35 years of work history, you should know that high-income-earning years replace low-income years in the calculation, which also increases the amount you receive in benefits.

Another way to boost your benefits is to plan on retiring later, so that you have fewer zeros in your calculation. Retiring later also provides the benefit of delayed retirement credits, which are awarded to individuals who hold off on claiming Social Security benefits until after they've reached full retirement age, or the age at which a person can receive 100% of their benefit amount.

If you do claim early, don't fall into the Social Security trap of earning too much money while collecting Social Security benefits. If you're receiving benefits and you haven't reached full retirement age, your monthly Social Security check will be reduced by \$1 for every \$2 you earn above \$16,920. You won't lose this money, however. It will be added back into your benefit calculation, and it will increase your payment once you reach full retirement age.

[\(Source: USA Today\)](#)



6 Ways to Protect Yourself Against Cognitive Decline

1) Become Financially Literate

I have heard too many stories that started with “my spouse is the money person, I just let them take care of it”. Educate and empower yourself around everything financial. Start somewhere and keep learning.

2) Educate Yourself on the Aging Process

Talk to your elder family members as to what they are experiencing. Embrace and make the most out of it. Do the best you can with your choices to maximize your health in all areas of your life during this season.

3) Build Trusted Relationships

That includes your relationships with friends, family and advisers (health, spiritual, financial). Make sure everyone has your best interest in mind and communicate with each other. Transparency, integrity and honesty will serve you well.

[\(Source: MarketWatch\)](#)



10 Simple Daily Practices That Will Make You Happier

1) Meditating

Research has shown that regularly practicing meditation increases daily experiences of positive emotions. This, in turn, increases general life satisfaction and decreases depressive symptoms.

2) Getting a Full Night's Sleep

Getting a full night's sleep really does improve your overall life satisfaction. In fact, over 90 percent of people who consider themselves "perfectly happy" average at least seven hours and six minutes of shut-eye a night.

3) Exercising

Exercising regularly doesn't just improve your physical well-being; it improves your mental well-being as well. Taking just three 20-minute walks a week can have a dramatic effect.

4) Drinking Plenty of Water

People who drink a glass of water as soon as they wake up, then drink one every other hour throughout the day, have been shown to have higher levels of energy and more positive emotions than people who don't drink as much water.

5) Learning

Taking the time to learn something new every day can also contribute to overall happiness. Researchers have found that making an effort to learn new things boosts feelings of happiness and self-esteem in the majority of adults.

6) Teaching

(Successfully teaching someone something new has been shown to boost self-confidence and happiness in about 63 percent of adults. Anyone who has been involved in teaching will recognize this -- it's hard to beat the happiness associated with seeing someone understand a new concept with your guidance.)

7) Using Positive Words

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania discovered that using at least three positive phrases per day showing gratitude builds happiness and satisfaction in over two-thirds of adults.

8) Being Selfless

Studies have also shown that, on average, 78 percent of people who spend time helping others -- specifically, spending money on others -- actually promote their own happiness.

9) Developing Hobbies

A recent study found that respondents who valued their hobbies more than their jobs reported higher levels of happiness than those who did not.

10) Unplugging From Social Media

In a recent study, 45 percent of people who were not able to access their social networks or email felt worried or uncomfortable, but placing these digital platforms on the back burner generally boosted feelings of calm and happiness in the long term.

[\(Source: Entrepreneur\)](#)



6 Ways Well Organized People Get More Done Every Day

1) They Have Morning and Evening Rituals

Waking up before everyone else to prepare their day without being pulled into a million different directions.

Not checking their phone immediately to avoid getting lost in emails and social media.

Doing something they enjoy, such as reading a book or meditating, to clear their minds. They only do this for around ten minutes though.

2) They Clear Their Brain

“Shift the burden of organizing from our brains to the external world,” writes Daniel J. Levitin. “Writing them down gets them out of your head. This clears your brain of the clutter that is interfering with being able to focus on.”

3) They Downsize

Organized individuals constantly evaluate their belongings. If it’s no longer working for them they ditch it. This avoids marathon purging sessions since they de-clutter in small doses.

4) They Make Use of Tools, Technology and Furniture

Anything from kitchen timers, time tracking tools, apps like Evernote and multipurpose furniture are used by those who are organized. They use these items for reminders, to visualize time more effectively and remain on-track.

5) They Aren’t Bogged Down by Perfectionism

“There is a common misperception that all organized people are perfectionists,” writes Nicole Anzia. “Most organized people realize they can’t possibly do everything perfectly and get everything done. They prioritize tasks and learn where and how to take shortcuts and how to complete tasks quickly.”

6) They Maintain

Maintenance is required, says Lisa Zaslow, founder of Gotham Organizers. “You don’t go to the gym, get in shape, then cancel your membership,” she says. “Being organized is the same.”

Organized individuals spend the time daily to put things back in their dedicated places. They also do tasks like archiving emails or filing papers.

[\(Source: Entrepreneur\)](#)

Americans Still Rushing Back into the Job Market

A vibrant labor market in which employers are struggling to find workers continues to draw hundreds of thousands of Americans back into the labor force, which includes people working and looking for jobs. The shift is especially lifting less-educated workers in their prime working years -- many of whom had grown discouraged and stopped job-hunting -- teens, older workers and the disabled, Labor Department and UBS figures show.

“The strong economy and labor market are bringing more people back to the labor force,” says UBS economist Robert Sockin.

The trend could have significant implications for wage growth and interest rates. The workers returning from the sidelines are keeping the low 4.3% unemployment rate from falling even more rapidly and supplying employers a shadow labor force that may be preventing average pay increases from accelerating more sharply. That’s helping temper inflation, which could prompt the Federal Reserve to put off an anticipated third interest rate hike in 2017.

Perhaps most encouraging is that participation for Americans age 25-54 in their prime working years has climbed to 81.8% from 81.3% over the past 12 months. While the rate for prime-age men has been stable during that period after falling for several years, the rate for prime-age women has jumped nearly a percentage point to 75.3%. Driving the rise is increased participation by women with less than a college degree, according to UBS and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

[\(Source: USA Today\)](#)