

A NEWSLETTER FROM

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MAY ISSUE

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How to Break the Ice at a Party

Crossing the Threshold

Some people walk into a room and are greeted like Norm walking into Cheers. The rest of us have to find a seamless way to get over the threshold and into the party. Here are a few tips:

- First, take 8 beats to breathe – in for a count of four, out for a count of four. Now, smile and do a quick scan of the room.
- Do you see your host?

SEE 'BREAK THE ICE' PAGE 6



Preparing a Parent's Financial Affairs

A guardianship is often expensive, time-consuming, and heart-wrenching. But you can easily avoid needing one for your parent by planning ahead and taking action

before incapacity occurs. To accomplish this, you may use a variety of tools to gain legal authority over your parent's financial affairs.

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A Financial Durable Power of Attorney provides broad authority

A Financial Durable Power of Attorney ("FDPOA") grants you general fiduciary authority over your parent's financial affairs. With it, you may access financial accounts to pay bills, sign contracts for the nursing home, or even sell the house. If your parent is (wisely) concerned about granting such broad authority outright, remember that your fiduciary status obligates you to act in your parent's best interest. If you abuse your authority for selfish gain, you could face civil or criminal consequences.

In some states, your attorney can draft the FDPOA so that it becomes effective only when incapacity occurs. This is called a "springing power" of attorney. That way, Mom can sign it while she still has capacity, thereby rendering it valid, and also enjoy peace of mind knowing that you can help her in the future when needed. However, you should know that financial institutions are sometimes wary of springing powers and will probably require proof of incapacity, such as a doctor's letter. Another option is to allow Mom to keep the document and promise her that you will use it only if necessary. Make sure she keeps it in a secure location

that you can get to when the time comes.

Co-signer designations are great for routine banking transactions

With a co-signer designation, your parent gives you unrestricted access to a bank account without transferring ownership. This comparably limited authority is a great solution when Dad only needs help managing basic finances. Though limited in scope, it is free to set up at your bank and does not require drafting formal documents. However, informality is risky. Specifically, a co-signer does not assume fiduciary status, so an ill-intentioned co-signer could conceivably empty the account and not face legal consequences.

Joint ownership is very effective, but beware of shared liability and tax consequences

If your parent names you as a joint owner with right of survivorship on a bank account, you will not only have unrestricted access, but you will also own it after your





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parent’s death. This provides convenience, but be cautious. Even if the account consists solely of Mom’s savings, joint-ownership exposes it to your personal liabilities from debts or lawsuits. If your parent tolerates that risk, joint-ownership is free to set up on certain bank accounts, but is not available for IRAs or 401(k)s. Further, if you wish to jointly-own titled assets such as vehicles or real estate, you will need to formally re-title them. Also, you must consider the tax consequences. For

example, if you jointly-own real estate, your parent could lose property tax exemption benefits available for the elderly.

Payable-on-death designations will not help

Mom can ensure that her bank account passes to you by designating you as a payable-on-death (“POD”) beneficiary. However, as the name indicates, a POD designation becomes effective only after your parent’s death. Without a death certificate, the bank

will not release any funds. Consequently, you should not rely on POD designations if you seek to avoid a guardianship. Although this might seem obvious, some people do unfortunately confuse them with co-signer and joint owner designations, so they are important to distinguish.

With a trust, you can dodge a guardianship and also avoid probate

A revocable living trust (RLT)

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Do It Yourself

DIY Recipes for Common Household Items

The term “DIY” can conjure up images of messy craft tables, confusing Pinterest boards, and tools you don’t know how to use. However, do-it-yourself projects don’t have to involve scissors, paper and time-consuming instructions, but rather, can simply be a way to save money and another trip to the store.

Take a look at some of these easy DIY recipes for common household items.

Toothpaste

Making your own toothpaste can save you money, time, and also from that pesky plastic packaging, giving you all the more reason to smile.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons of baking soda
- 2 tablespoons of coconut oil
- 15 drops of the essential oil of your choice.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix all of the ingredients together until you get a smooth texture.

- Add to a sealed container.

Cleaning solution

If you’re looking to protect yourself and your loved ones from exposure to harmful chemicals, making your own

cleaning solution can be just that—a great solution.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hydrogen peroxide
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup distilled white vinegar





- 1 tsp liquid castile soap
- 20 drops of the essential oil of your choice.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix ingredients together.
- Add to spray bottle.
- Shake before use.

Shampoo

Keeping your hair clean can get expensive, and with all of the chemicals in today's mainstream brands, can also dry out your locks—but did you know you can even make your own shampoo?

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup of water
- ½ cup of liquid castile soap
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- Your choice of essential oil.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Combine the ingredients
- Mix well
- Place in a reusable bottle.

Deodorant

If you find yourself in a sticky situation where you've run out of deodorant and can't make it to the store, it might be time to make your own deodorant (and also avoid having a stockpile of half empty deodorant containers in your bathroom).

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup baking soda
- ½ cup arrowroot powder (or cornstarch)
- 5 tbsp coconut oil
- 15 drops of the essential oil of your choice.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix the baking soda and arrowroot powder first
- Add the coconut oil and essential oil.
- Mix well.
- Pour into a sealed container and allow to solidify in a cool area. 📌

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Great! Go say hello and, if you brought something with you, deliver it. If you have nothing to deliver, thank your host for the invitation and ask if there is anyone you should meet or if she needs help with anything.



- Do you see someone you know? Great! Go say hello.
- If neither of those options is available or appealing to you, simply turn to the nearest person and ask a question, e.g., “Hi! I’m Jane. Can you tell me where the [bar/kitchen/bathroom/host] is? Now you have a someplace to go. Step into the party. You have officially arrived.

Finding Someone To Talk To

Whatever your goal for the evening, it requires that you talk with the other partygoers, but approaching a stranger can be intimidating. Try this:

- Once more, pause eight beats to breathe, smile and scan the room.

- Do you see anyone flying solo? Go say hello. He or she will be grateful for your effort and your company.
- Approach a small group. Look for an opening – literally. Is there physical space to insert yourself into the conversation? If so, introduce yourself. You might say, “Excuse me. I didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but I heard you mention [the concert series in the park]. I’ve always wanted to go. How was it?”

If you are not ready to approach others, then make yourself approachable. (Fair warning: This may be the most difficult part of

the entire evening.) Find a central place to sit or stand. Put your phone away. Smile and make eye contact. As you do this, pay attention to your body language:

- If you are seated, sit up straight.
- If you are standing, practice your best Wonder Woman or Superman pose: Stand tall, with your chin up, shoulders back, chest out. When you strike a “power pose” like this you exude confidence (and may even feel more confident). See <https://jamesclear.com/body-language-how-to-be-confident>.
- Don’t cross your arms. Put your hands in your

pockets or wrap your hands around a drink (not your phone).

If no one approaches you, find the food. Wander over to the buffet or the bar or the kitchen. You will always find someone to talk to and something to talk about (e.g., “Have you tried the mushrooms?” or “I’m not much of a cook at home. Do you like to cook?”) If you find the host scurrying around the kitchen, ask “What can I do to help?”

(Note: If you came to the party with your spouse or a friend, you might be tempted to cling to that person all night. Don’t make that mistake. You put a lot of effort into getting yourself to the party; that effort is wasted if spend the entire night talking with people you know. Strike your best superhero pose and go meet someone new.)


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combines incapacity planning and estate planning, providing an elegant solution to numerous challenges.

While healthy, Dad can transfer his assets to an RLT and maintain possession and control as trustee. In the trust agreement he designates a successor trustee to take over when incapacity strikes. If designated, you (or another other adult) may serve as such. Alternatively, a bank or attorney may serve (and the associated fees might be worthwhile if your family desires third-party management). When Dad dies, the successor trustee manages the

trust for the alternate beneficiaries. If Dad properly drafted and funded the trust during his life, the successor trustee may distribute the assets to the alternate beneficiaries outright—no probate necessary.

If your parent creates a RLT to achieve these goals, he or she needs to understand that a successor trustee has authority only over the specific assets transferred to the trust. The successor trustee has zero control over anything outside of the trust, even if your parent owned it. 

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Mindful Meditation

There's a good chance that you've heard the word "mindfulness" being discussed as mindful meditation has swept the nation. Why all the buzz about this? What is it?

With people so busy moving through their day-to-day lives, it's easy to lose focus on what you're doing and make it through the day by simply going through the motions. This is where mindfulness can help. Practicing mindfulness is about being present in the moment.

Practicing mindful meditation doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming. Take five to ten minutes and try it today.

1. Sit somewhere comfortable and quiet.

Too many noises or distractions will make it difficult to focus.

2. Relax your arms and legs.

This will allow you to focus instead on your breathing.


3. Inhale and exhale deeply,

focusing on your breath and the way your body feels.

4. Keep returning your thoughts to your breatheven when your mind wanders.

If you need to take a more comfortable position, do so.

5. Pause before ending your session.

How do you feel? Set some intentions to do this again when you need to recenter your mind. 

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