

# Dan's Letter™

"Please...let me introduce you to my mind...one article at a time."



## FROM THE DESK OF DAN ANDERSON

### Selling Yourself Without Selling Out

It's one of the oldest clichés in the business: Sell yourself.

But lots of people loathe the idea of selling at all. They associate it with con-artistry and insincerity.

The biggest problem with the concept of selling is that it puts the focus on something that is outside rather than inside.

It poses the impossible task of climbing into the heads of clients or customers and pretending to know what they want.

But if you want to improve your career opportunities, you'll want to start with a clear focus on yourself.

The first step is to know yourself. You do this by knowing what you want and where you want to go.

Ask yourself some clarifying questions. What strengths do I possess? What are my most common stumbling blocks? How can I enhance my effectiveness? What is my biggest challenge?

You also need to know your value. What accomplishments are you most proud of? What do you do best? How are you unique?

Once you know what you want and what your value is, the next step is to communicate. True communication will reveal a genuine passion and

will be conveyed clearly and honestly.

When you do this, you might be surprised how things start "falling into place."

- Dan A.



### FOSTERING INDEPENDANT PLAY is more important than ever before

(BPT) - Across the country, temporary school closures are forcing kids into instant distance learning environments for the remainder of the school year. Parents are trying to work their day job while simultaneously educating kids. For most, there isn't ever enough time in a day to handle both. They're stressed, and in the scramble to pick up where teachers left off, the whole family's emotional well-being is taking a hit.

Parents - and kids - could use a break from the pressure of outsized expectations. And, during this time, there are hands-on life lessons we can give kids that build lasting social, physical and cognitive skills. These same lessons can nurture their curiosity, strengthen their ability to problem solve, and give them the tools to push through whatever challenges they face as a learner.

"Every parent is looking for reliable ways to occupy and engage their kids during the day, and we all want our kids to learn and thrive," says Meghan Fitzgerald, co-founder and Chief Learning Officer of Tinkergarten. "Well-designed play experiences provide an ideal way for children to learn a whole range of skills. And, when kids get lost in play, they can maintain joyful focus and give us the free time we need."

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Fitzgerald and her team of educational experts at Tinkergarten, offer ideas for parents to foster independent play (imagine long stretches of silence while your kids are busy!) and promote stable mental health at home.

**Set up your home for independent play.** Learning isn't all worksheets and tests. Research shows children learn best through play, especially in the first 8 years of life. Parents and children also need some time to themselves, especially when sharing close quarters. Independent play can provide that time and, even better, can provide an enriching balance for kids in conjunction with high-quality screen resources such as Khan Academy Kids, Sesame Street and Wide Open School.

Best of all, there are simple, powerful things parents can do using what they already have on hand to inspire independent play. For example, stacking a few blocks in the block area creates the start of a design that children won't be able to resist finishing off. Set up a play tent with household items inside (spoons, bowls, blankets) and - ta-da! - instant kid camp-out. Or, just start with a bin of water, some measuring cups and lots of time to pretend they are "at the beach." A small corner of the house or yard can inspire a wonderful afternoon of independent play with a bit of strategy and imagination.

**Teach what you want them to learn.** Most parents are not professional teachers and it is neither fair nor possible to become one overnight. But, shift the goal and realize that some of the most important things to teach children can be extracted from daily life, and these are lessons for which parents are the best teachers. Think about what to do each day and the skills needed to do it. Then invite children to learn in age-appropriate ways. Cooking, for example, is a marvelous way to connect with kids, and activate their senses.

**Enjoy the outdoors.** Even if families can't go to popular parks, they can still enjoy more quiet nature spaces in their own backyard to learn and support their child's (and the parents') well-being. According to a study by the

University of Exeter, a total of just two hours per week outside helps adults and children experience the stress-reducing, healing benefits of nature.

Outside not an option right now? Bring the outdoors in. Tinkergarten's simple definition of nature is it's anywhere earth, sky and other living things can be found. No matter the setting, parents can provide kids with a connection to the outdoors, even while practicing social distancing. Move the craft table outside, turn on a recording of nature sounds during the day or make a new habit of cuddling on the stoop each evening. Just make it feel special.

Parents can get ideas like this and inspiration from Tinkergarten at Home, a complimentary newsletter that provides parents with a week's worth of DIY activities. The activities are simple, fun, and designed for learning for any age. Plus, parents can access parenting insights that help navigate this challenging stay-at-home time by helping kids learn and grow at home.

**Pick something positive each day.** Every family is weathering a storm right now, and one person's rainstorm could be another's devastating hurricane. When possible, parents should ask their kids what they're grateful for. Write down each family member's contribution and display it in the kitchen or use sidewalk chalk to design a positive message and artwork for neighbors to see.

Some days will be easier than others. As you are navigating the unknown, every parent deserves a break from the guilt of not being their best self every day. Remember, it's the climate, not the weather in your house that matters in the long run. This storm, too, will pass.



## Create a Bedroom Oasis That Gives You Excellent Sleep

(BPT) - Can't sleep? You're not alone. Only 11% of Americans say they get excellent sleep on a regular basis, while 18% report poor or not good sleep quality, and the rest are somewhere in between.\*

With all of the stress today, your bedroom should be a sanctuary you can retreat to - a place where you can rest and relax before drifting off to sleep. Here are a few things to consider when creating your own bedroom oasis that's optimal for sleep.

**Bed and bedding** - There's nothing like a comfortable mattress, soft sheets, plush pillows and a cozy blanket to calm you. Another way to enhance relaxation is adding a weighted blanket, like Tranquility, while resting or sleeping. Weighted blankets are designed to help you relax, fall asleep, stay asleep and wake up rested by applying deep touch pressure that can help reduce stress and promote a feeling of calm.

**Lighting** - Lighting is just as important. Opt for lamps with soft-white bulbs instead of overhead lights for a more soothing glow. Overhead lights can be harsh and uninviting.

**Décor** - From shag rugs and furniture to accent pillows, artwork and wall paint, keep the color scheme of your room light and airy. It's soothing on the eyes and makes for a more tranquil atmosphere.



**Aromatherapy** - Scientific studies have proven that some scents, like lavender and jasmine, have a calming, relaxing effect and can be great in the bedroom to help soothe you before bedtime. Consider adding a diffuser and essential oils.

**Decluttering and eliminating "noise"** - Did you know clutter can actually magnify emotions of stress, anger or exhaustion? Clutter can be considered "visual noise" and a huge distractor when settling down to relax and recharge. Try clearing items off your dresser, nightstands and other surfaces by using organizers or containers.

Experts also recommend cooling temperatures and cutting back on electronics in the bedroom.

"Creating an optimal sleep environment is the key to falling asleep faster and staying asleep throughout the night," says lifestyle expert Jenn Falik. "I find keeping my bedroom a cool 65 degrees, eliminating electronics in the room and having cozy bedding and my Tranquility weighted blanket, sets me up for the best night's sleep possible."

\*Survey methodology: An omnibus survey of American adults 18+ conducted online by Finn Partners Research between May 15 and May 18, 2019, on behalf of Tranquility/American Textile Company.



# MAKE FITNESS A PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Here are four strategies that will help you get active. They're inspired by Cat Kom, a working mom, physical trainer, and CEO:

1. Make it a part of your day. Check your schedule and you're sure to find 30-minutes to an hour you can set aside for a workout. It might not be the same time each day, but surely you have free time you can commit doing something for your health.

2. Do what you love, and then some. Start with an activity you like and will be easy for you to commit to. Once you've found your groove and your plan is become a consistent part of your routine, begin to incorporate some different workouts to make sure you are addressing all muscle groups. Don't forget to make warm ups, cool downs, and stretching a part of your routines.

3. Try something new. There are so many different ways to stay active these days and you should try some of them.

Consider spinning, hula hooping, working out with resistance bands, or a cardio trampoline class. You'll never get bored trying new things, and it will help you continually develop fun and diverse goals.

4. Be reasonable. Some weeks will be more challenging than others, and there just won't seem like there is enough time to squeeze in a workout, but you can. If you only have 15 minutes you can jump rope, hula hoop, walk/jog around the block, or repeat a circuit of push-ups, planks, and burpees. The point is to do something physical every day.



## TAKE A BREAK!

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### Easy Shrimp Ceviche

2 pounds raw shrimp, peeled, deveined, tails removed  
 1/2 cup red onion, diced  
 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced  
 1 seedless cucumber, diced  
 2 tomatoes seeded and diced  
 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped finely  
 1/2 cup lime juice  
 1/4 cup lemon juice  
 1/3 cup orange juice  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 1 large avocado peeled, seeded and chopped

Chop the shrimp into 1/2 inch pieces.

Place the shrimp, red onion, jalapeño, cucumber, tomatoes, and cilantro in a large bowl.

In a smaller bowl, mix the lime, lemon and orange juices. Pour over the shrimp and vegetable mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste and mix gently to combine.

Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Add the chopped avocado and gently mix to combine. Serve.

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## Beautify Your Outdoor Space



(BPT) - Whether it's a quaint patio or a simple garden, the backyard is the perfect place to unwind. As people spend more time at home, creating a personal outdoor sanctuary is more important than ever before.

Fortunately you don't need a lot of time or space to create an outdoor escape you'll enjoy. Here are some simple, affordable ideas for transforming any space into an outdoor oasis:

#### Step 1: Pull up a chair

A place to sit and relax is essential so you can fully enjoy your outdoor space. This doesn't

mean you have to order a whole new set of patio furniture though. Just one or two chairs along with a table for your favorite beverage can be a start. You could even update a worn outdoor chair with a fresh coat of outdoor paint and new cushions to get a brand new look for less.

#### Step 2: Define the space

You can create an outdoor room by defining the space strategically. You can create a sense of enclosure with potted plants lined in the corners or along the sides to create the visual illusion of a wall.

#### Step 3: Add decorative accents

To make an outdoor space feel like your own, add a few thoughtful decorations. Outdoor mirrors are trending and an affordable, upscale addition to your outdoor areas. To add elements of relaxation, consider a rock garden, fountain or wind chimes, which will help you escape stress while stimulating the senses.

#### Step 4: Enjoy daily

Create a routine to enjoy your outdoor space daily. Schedule a morning meditation, afternoon escape or evening happy hour. Raise a glass of your favorite Flat Top Hills wine and toast to living life to the fullest, even from the comfort of your backyard.

#### Get started today

There's no better time than the present to begin your backyard transformation. Start by entering the Flat Top Hills Backyard Sanctuary sweepstakes, which will award one winner with a makeover for a patio, garden or balcony. Other prizes include gift cards for meal delivery, a Flat Top Hills wine glass and wine bucket set, and mini corn hole games. Open now through May 31, enter the Flat Top Hills Backyard Sanctuary sweepstakes at [www.facebook.com/FlatTopWines](http://www.facebook.com/FlatTopWines) or [woobox.com/4tfvnj](http://woobox.com/4tfvnj). Visit [www.flattopwines.com](http://www.flattopwines.com) for complete details and official rules.