

# Dan's Letter™

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



## FROM THE DESK OF DAN ANDERSON

### Echoes of Wisdom

While wandering through the mountains, a young boy stumbled and cried out in fear, "I'm afraid!" To his astonishment, the mountains echoed back, "I'm afraid."

Puzzled and a bit scared, he yelled, "Who is there?" only to hear the same question echoed back. Confused, he turned to his grandfather for answers. The old man, with a knowing smile, shouted into the mountains, "You are wonderful!" The echo returned the compliment.

The boy, still baffled, looked to his grandfather. "I don't get it, grandpa," he said.

Chuckling, the grandfather explained, "It's an echo, but it's also like life. Whatever you say or do, life echoes back. If you're kind and positive, that's what you'll receive in return. Life is a reflection of your actions and thoughts."

"So, if I want good things to happen, I should do good things?" the boy asked.

"Exactly," replied the grandfather. "Be the best you can be, and life will be good to you. It's all about what you put into it."

- Dan A.



## 2024 SAFETY BLUEPRINT:

5 Actions for Family Peace of Mind



(BPT) - As the New Year begins, it's crucial for families to prioritize household safety and emergency preparedness. With startling statistics from the CDC revealing that 48% of Americans lack first aid kits and 52% don't have copies of important personal documents, there's a clear need for improved safety habits and plans.

Here are five key actions to enhance your family's safety:

**Create a home safety checklist.** Establish a checklist that includes checking and maintaining smoke and CO detectors, securing windows, having fire extinguishers accessible, and safely storing household chemicals. Regular updates and reviews of this checklist are essential for a secure home environment.

**Enroll in hands-free safety services.** With only 28.7% of U.S. households having a landline, contacting emergency services can be challenging, particularly for children. Alexa Emergency Assist, a subscription-based safety service, provides a solution. By saying, "Alexa, call for help," users can quickly connect to trained agents capable of dispatching police, fire, or ambulance services. These agents have access to pre-saved critical information, ensuring a swift and informed response.

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**Teach personal safety habits.** Encourage and empower your family members to develop personal safety habits. Emphasize the importance of staying aware of surroundings, exercising caution when speaking with strangers.

When talking with your family about safety habits, underscore the importance of paying attention to smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms, and to never ignore them. If you subscribe to Alexa Emergency Assist, Smart Alerts allow Alexa to detect signs of trouble - like if your smoke or CO alarm is ringing - and will notify you so you can take action whether you're at home or away.

Don't forget to highlight the importance of trusting your instincts and foster open communication so everyone feels comfortable voicing their concerns. By learning and practicing personal safety habits, you'll equip your loved ones (and yourself!) with the tools they need to confidently navigate changing situations.

**Develop a trusted network.** When it comes to keeping your family safe, you don't have to do it alone. Cultivate relationships with neighbors, friends, extended family, and community members to build a strong mutual support network. A network of trusted individuals is an invaluable resource that can help provide assistance during times of need.

If you subscribe to Alexa Emergency Assist, you can quickly notify your network in case of an emergency. The Emergency Contacts feature allows you to save up to 25 family members, friends, or loved ones to be automatically notified and informed when a call is placed to Urgent Response. A reliable network not only improves your family's safety, it also fosters a sense of belonging and community.

**Create an emergency plan.** A detailed and thorough emergency plan can make a huge difference in a crisis. Sit down with your family to discuss evacuation routes, emergency contact numbers, and designated meeting points. Talk about each family member's responsibilities during different types of emergencies. Even young children and teens have a role to play in an emergency, just by taking care of themselves.

Once you have a plan in place, review and practice the plan so everyone is familiar with the procedures in case of an emergency. By preparing for unexpected moments, you'll foster a sense of security and resilience.

Use these five tips to kick-start the new year with a focus on family safety. In doing so, you're laying the foundation for a safe and secure future and creating peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

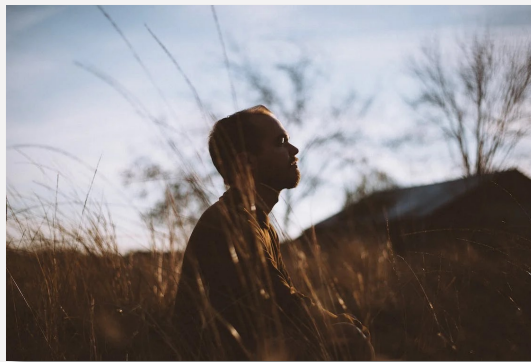
## Short and Sweet: Mini-Relaxations for Quick Calm

Feeling scared, stressed or annoyed? Researchers at Harvard Medical School say there are really some quick fixes. Here are some of their recommendations:

- **A one-minute mini-relaxation.**

Put your hand just beneath your navel. Breathe and feel the rise and fall of your breath. Then breathe in slowly—pause to the count of three—and exhale for a count of three. Practice this technique for a full minute. Take note if your body starts to relax. Notice how when you change your breathing, you change your body and mind-set as well.

- **A two-minute mini-relaxation.** Count down backward from 10 to zero—and while doing so fully inhale and exhale to each number. Here's how: Say "Ten" to yourself—and breathe in deeply. Then



breathe out slowly. Next say "Nine" to yourself and repeat the practice until you reach zero. When you reach zero you should feel more relaxed. Repeat until you feel changes in your body and mind.

- **A three-minute mini-relaxation.** Take a deep breath and note where you're feeling

tension in your body. Relax your face, allowing your jaw to drop open slightly. Drop your shoulders. Feel the weight of your arms at your sides. Loosen your hands so that spaces open up between your fingers. If you're sitting with your legs or ankles crossed, uncross them. Let your thighs sink into the chair and feel their weight. Feel the heaviness of your shins and calves, and visualize your feet growing roots into the floor. Breathe in and out slowly.



# The Best Leaders Listen



Cecil Greg, in "Exceeding Expectations," emphasizes that showing undivided attention is crucial for demonstrating good listening. Here's how to convey that you're fully engaged in a conversation:

- **Echo important points:** By restating key aspects of the dialogue, you show you're actively processing the information.
- **Seek clarification:** Don't hesitate to ask for more details if something isn't clear.
- **Inquire deeper:** Pose questions that deepen your understanding of the other person's needs or perspective.
- **Maintain eye contact:** This non-verbal cue is vital for showing your focus and engagement.
- **Offer reassurance:** Let the speaker know you're comprehending their message.

This approach is known as reflexive listening. It's not just about hearing words, but about actively participating in the exchange. Through this method, you can communicate your points more clearly and directly, enhancing the overall quality of the conversation.

## TAKE A BREAK!

9				1		2		8
1	8			2				4
	2	5			3	7		
8		2			5	6		3
	9						2	
3		6	4			1		9
		8	7			3	1	
7				5			8	2
4		1		3				6

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**Roasted Tomato Basil Soup**

### Ingredients

3 pounds tomatoes, fresh, cut into 2" pieces  
 1/2 onion diced (1 cup)  
 5 cloves garlic peeled and chopped  
 2 Tablespoons olive oil  
 1/2tsp fine sea salt  
 1/4 freshly ground black pepper  
 1/4 cup fresh basil  
 2 Tablespoons salted butter  
 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour  
 1 Tablespoon granulated sugar  
 1 quart vegetable broth

### Instructions

Preheat your oven to 450°F and grease a large baking sheet. In a bowl, mix tomatoes, onion, and garlic with olive oil, salt, and pepper, then spread on the baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes, stir, and roast for another 15 minutes, broiling for the last 3 minutes for a slight char. Blend this roasted mixture with fresh basil until smooth. In a pot, melt butter and add flour, cooking until golden. Add broth and sugar, whisking well. Incorporate the blended tomato mix and simmer for 15 minutes. Season to taste. Serve with croutons and fresh basil. Enjoy!

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#### SOLUTION

9	4	3	5	1	7	2	6	8
1	8	7	6	2	9	5	3	4
6	2	3	8	4	3	7	9	1
8	1	2	9	7	5	6	4	3
5	9	4	3	6	1	8	2	7
3	7	6	4	8	2	1	5	9
2	6	8	7	9	4	3	1	5
7	3	9	1	5	6	4	8	2
4	5	1	2	3	8	9	7	6

## Dan's Letter™

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



### I Forgot...



Three brothers, aged 92, 94, and 96, live together. One night, the 96-year-old draws a bath. He puts his foot in and pauses, yelling down the stairs, "Was I getting in or out of the bath?"

The 94-year-old yells back, "I don't know, I'll come up and see." He starts up the stairs and pauses, then shouts, "Was I going up the stairs or coming down?"

The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen table having tea, listening to his brothers. He shakes his head and says to himself, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful," knocking on wood for good measure. He then yells, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door."

*Wanna hear the music?*



*Check out*  
**Dan's Blog™**

