



**MONAST**  
LAW OFFICE

# Workers' COMPanion

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## DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

### *Why Unplugging Is the Secret to a Happier, Balanced Life*

Do you ever feel like your phone has taken over your life? Between the endless pings of notifications, nonstop scrolling through social media, and unrelenting email inbox, it can feel like there's barely a moment to breathe. March 7 is National Day of Unplugging, and honestly, it is the perfect invitation to reclaim your time and reconnect with what truly matters.

Imagine this: less screen time, more quality moments, and a chance to rediscover the simple joys that make life so beautiful. You likely spend plenty of your work hours looking at a screen, so why don't we all try spending our limited free time differently? Let me share how my family and I take a break from technology, and it might inspire you to do the same.

Evenings at my house are generally screenless. My wife and I have always gravitated toward unplugged activities — reading, talking, and enjoying each other's company. While I admit this isn't necessarily the case during college football season or the fact that my Kindle technically counts as a device, it feels worlds apart from the glow of a phone or computer. We find a balance. I can't even remember the last time we binge-watched a TV series! Recently, my wife has taken up word searches, a hobby that started with puzzle books inherited from her mom. Now, it's a nightly ritual that brings a sense of calm and nostalgia to our evenings (and a few laughs at how we're clearly getting older).

When we feel like stepping out, we head to our favorite places to eat — a local Mexican restaurant, an Amish restaurant, a Hilliard hole in the wall, or Jason's Deli. Honestly, we don't just make the trip for the food but also because we've grown to know the people so well. The staff even knows our go-to drink order: an iced tea and a diet Coke! We get the chance to catch

up and chat with people, and these outings remind me how powerful small connections can be — something we miss entirely when we're glued to our screens and ordering delivery.

Lastly, family time is when the real magic happens. With five kids and six grandkids, our lives are wonderfully chaotic. When the grandkids visit, it's all about board games, storytelling, and backyard adventures with the dogs. Walking around the neighborhood becomes an event, with dogs pulling on leashes and neighbors stopping to chat. These unplugged moments remind me what genuine connection feels like.

I admit that I still scroll once in a while, but more often than not, I feel worse after doom scrolling than before I picked up my phone. We all want to stay updated and up to date, but social media can quickly become a black hole of hate, negativity, and division. Of course, unplugging is not about ditching technology entirely — it is about finding balance. It's about choosing to spend your time on things that bring joy, strengthen relationships, and remind you why life is worth living. Whether it is sitting by a crackling fireplace, sharing a meal with loved ones, or simply listening to birds in your backyard, these moments matter.

So, let's trade our screens for sunsets, laughter, and conversation. Let's remember what it feels like to live unfiltered and savor the small moments that make life extraordinary. Trust me, the emails can wait — life can't.

*- Jim Monast*



# DATE NIGHT TO DEBT-FREE

## TURN MONEY MATTERS INTO MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

Creating a budget as a couple is more than just dollars and cents. Financial planning as a couple is also about building trust, collaboration, and a shared vision for the future. While you might not always agree on every detail, working together to craft a budget can strengthen your relationship and help you achieve your biggest goals.

### START WITH OPEN COMMUNICATION.

Take the time to discuss how each of you approaches money management. Are you a saver, while your partner is more of a spender? Knowing your styles is key to finding common ground and creating a budget that works for both of you. Honesty and openness are the foundation for success.

### CALCULATE INCOME AND SHARE THE LOAD.

Once you've established your financial styles, calculate your combined monthly income.

This includes your salaries, bonuses, and any other predictable sources of income. For fairness, consider dividing expenses based on your respective incomes rather than a 50/50 split, especially if you have a significant income difference.

Next, list shared costs, such as rent or mortgage, utilities, groceries, etc. Decide how to divvy up these expenses in a way that works for your situation. The goal is to ensure both partners feel the division is manageable and fair.

### SET FINANCIAL GOALS TOGETHER.

Whether building an emergency fund, saving for a dream vacation, or planning for retirement, identifying your shared goals can guide your budget. Prioritize these objectives together so you're aligned on what matters most. Working

toward these goals as a team will make achieving them even more rewarding.

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT BUDGETING METHOD.

Some couples thrive with the 50/30/20 rule, allocating income to essentials, non-essentials, and savings. Others prefer the envelope method for better spending discipline or the "pay yourself first" strategy to prioritize savings. Do your research and find the strategy that best works for you and your partner, and if one approach doesn't work, don't hesitate to try another until you find the perfect fit.

### SCHEDULE REGULAR CHECK-INS.

Finally, set aside time to review your progress. Whether it's a monthly meeting or a quick weekly check-in, these sessions can help you address overspending, celebrate wins, and adjust your budget as needed. Budgeting is an ongoing conversation!

With a commitment to shared success, you can transform budgeting into a tool that strengthens your partnership and helps you achieve your dreams.

## The Risks Every Landscaper Should Know

### COMMON INJURIES IN THE INDUSTRY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Once you begin to see the flowers bloom, landscape workers are already in full swing. Yet, behind the scenes of this demanding career lies a world of risks. Landscaping and horticultural workers face a unique combination of hazards that can lead to serious and even fatal injuries, disrupting their livelihoods and lives.

#### THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is fraught with risks that workers have to face daily. The tools, terrain, and chemicals essential to the job can all pose significant threats:

- **Equipment Risks:** Mowers and other heavy machinery can cause serious accidents, including deep cuts or even amputations.
- **Treacherous Terrain:** Uneven ground and slippery surfaces create an ideal environment for slips, trips, and falls.
- **Chemical Reactions:** Pesticides and fertilizers can lead to respiratory issues or severe allergic reactions, particularly in the absence of appropriate safety gear.

- **Falling Hazards:** Tree trimming poses a constant risk of falling branches, which can result in head injuries or worse if they hit from above.

These are just the immediate risks. The long-term physical toll is also significant:

- **Chronic Muscle Strain:** Frequent lifting and awkward postures result in persistent soreness and possible musculoskeletal disorders.
- **Hearing Damage:** Over time, the roar of equipment can damage workers' hearing, causing permanent impairment.
- **Respiratory Issues:** Breathing in dust or chemicals may result in serious health issues.

#### THE LIFELINE OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Accidents occur even with precautions in place, and when they do, workers' compensation serves as the safety net that every landscaping worker



should comprehend. Designed to cover medical expenses, lost wages, and rehabilitation, this lifeline allows injured workers to focus on recovery without the burden of financial uncertainty.

#### YOUR ADVOCATE IN RECOVERY

Navigating the intricate world of workers' compensation can feel like an uphill battle, particularly when facing pain and uncertainty. This is where an experienced attorney can truly make a difference.

At our firm, we understand the risks you face and the impact these injuries can have on your life. If you or someone you know has been injured on the job, let us help. Contact us today, and we will fight for your rights while you focus on what matters most — healing and getting back to the work you love.

# ONCE A POLICE DOG, ALWAYS A HERO

## 12-YEAR-OLD GERMAN SHEPHERD FINDS MISSING HIKER

Some heroes never truly retire, and Bear, a 12-year-old retired police dog in the UK, is living proof. On what was supposed to be a peaceful birthday walk through the green hills of South Downs, Bear demonstrated that his heroic instincts were as sharp as ever.

Bear, a German shepherd with a decorated career as a general police dog, retired in 2020 to enjoy his golden years with his owners, Julia and Ian Pope — both retired officers themselves. However, on Nov. 28, Bear's walk turned into a life-saving mission.

The outing was meant to help Bear rebuild his stamina following surgery to remove tumors. Little did anyone know that his sense of duty would shine once more. As they wandered through the picturesque countryside, Bear suddenly veered into thick brush, leading Julia and Ian to an unexpected discovery.

Soaked in rain, confused, and unable to move, a man lay hidden in the dense foliage. Authorities had already

been searching for him, but Bear was the one to find him first. True to his years of training, Bear's quick action ensured the man's safety, showcasing the enduring power of a police dog's instincts.

"Bear found several people during his working life who probably wouldn't have survived without him," Julia shared with *The Argus*. "But he and his handler never got any recognition at the time because they were simply doing their job."

For his incredible post-retirement heroism, Bear was awarded the Lifesaver Award from the Thin Blue Paw Foundation, a charity that supports retired police dogs and had helped fund one of Bear's surgeries. The award ceremony, held at Sussex HQ, was a proud moment for everyone involved.

"For him to get this award now, in his retirement, and for his former handler, Ian, to have been there too, is very special," Julia said. "We're all super proud of him."

Bear's story reminds us that courage and dedication never fade. Whether on duty or enjoying retirement, Bear has left a legacy of loyalty and service, proving that some heroes wear fur.



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ANSWER



## EATS WITH ELLIE NOT YOUR MOM'S CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (4 lb) corned beef brisket with spice packet
- 3 qts water
- 1 onion, quartered
- 3 carrots, cut into large chunks
- 3 celery stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 lbs red potatoes, halved
- 1 small head of cabbage, cut into eighths

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, combine corned beef, spice packet contents, water, onions, carrots, celery, and salt. Bring to a simmer (skimming off any foam on top).
2. Cover pot, reduce to low heat, and let simmer for 3 hours until meat is fork tender.
3. Add potatoes to the pot and let simmer uncovered for 30 minutes or until potatoes are al dente.
4. Add cabbage along the edges of the meat and on top. Cover and let simmer until cabbage is tender, 20–30 minutes.
5. Place meat on a cutting board and let rest for 10–15 minutes. After meat has cooled, slice against the grain.
6. Add to a large serving bowl, ladle vegetables and broth over top, and serve.

Inspired by *AllRecipes.com*

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# AGE GRACEFULLY WITH MOVEMENT YOU ENJOY NO GYM REQUIRED!

By now, you're probably tired of hearing about healthy aging. Every article says you should eat specific things and exercise regularly, but what if you've never enjoyed going to the gym or jogging? You're probably not going to start running marathons, lifting weights, or joining a sports club at this point. It can make you wonder if other options exist to add more physical activity to your daily routine.

The answer is yes. Instead of going to the gym or running through your neighborhood, you can find creative activities to provide extra movement to your day. Even better? You'll improve your physical and mental agility. Here are two creative aging activities you can explore.

### TAKE THE STAGE

Acting is an excellent activity for anyone to start, but it becomes even more beneficial to aging Americans. Through acting, you'll notice improvements in your concentration and memorization. Depending on the play, you may be required to stay moving, which will benefit your physical health. Plus, you'll get many opportunities to socialize with your castmates. Many local theaters actively look for aspiring actors to audition.

### BUST A MOVE

You may have fond memories of dancing in clubs, at weddings, or during special events, but the opportunities to boogie become rarer as we age. Thankfully, dance classes and studios love sharing the enjoyment of dance with people of all ages. Whether you like salsa, tap, waltz, swing, or some other type of dance, you can find a class or group ready to welcome you.

