



THE IDEAL TEAM

THROUGH A PANDEMIC

BY ANDREW C. JACOBS

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DEDICATION

For the first time, the dedication for one of my books does not go to a person. When we first decided to “go for it” and bring two hives of bees onto our company roof this summer, I had no idea what to expect. In the midst of the pandemic where freaking out was a daily occurrence, I wanted something around that would help keep us calm. We needed to be forced into a daily, temporary, alternate state of reality and give us something fun to talk about, research, and plan for. The bees have been everything and more. Most business days some of us walk through the plant up three flights of stairs, and by the time we are on the roof, our state of minds has already been lightened, we started breath easier, and had begun to smile. Sometimes we talk about bringing in more hives, how to care for the bees we have, guarding against diseases, or anything else that is not business related. They have been a joy; we have only been stung a total of three times and we plan on expanding to additional roofs. If we get honey, that will be a bonus. They have been a huge plus to our mental health and I am really thankful that we have them.

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INTRODUCTION

You never know how anyone will react to adversity until you are in it. I always wondered what would happen if our world was engulfed in a global disaster. What would “work” and what would break down. Could or would our business continue globally, would the world’s global supply chains function or break down? Could we still operate, could we ship products, would anyone buy and pay for them? Could we still employ our people, would they come to work? We know a lot more than we did before and one of the great things was how resilient our world could be. The pandemic did not end in 2021, but a lot did happen to answer many of my questions. I was very glad that we could be a part of the resurgence of our world and hope we are never tested like that again.



JANUARY



1/1/20

7:49am EST | Our House, NJ

Last night, Wendy and I went to Barb and Cliff's, helped babysit Max, who was amazing, and then we had dinner. We were home early and I was asleep before 10:00pm; an excellent New Year's Eve was had by all. I slept late—until 6:45am—and was about to exercise, but first I wanted to put down some dreams for this year.

2019 was excellent in that our family was well, nothing really bad happened, sales were a new record overall, and we all had a lot of fun. However, there were some clouds over the business arena, including losing one big account and our BuildTak line dropping 40% domestically. The 3D Printing market is going through radical changes and that combined with increased global competition means we can't count on even maintaining last year's sales. Therefore, as we did last year, we will have to find more business and try to increase what we have with others. This falls on my shoulders and we are already in the process of making changes.

For one thing, Don in Canada is spreading out his sales calls to the US to help me cover more of North America. I will also have Netta, Igor, and Paulina branch out more to utilize their talents in other places. We have excellent prospects globally to grow all of our teams so I will plan to be on the road as much as necessary to help that happen. I will depend on Mike more to run IJUS on a daily basis to give me the time I need to do everything else. In addition, we now have the domestic launching of the SwaddlePax line, which will start here in New Jersey, and my goal is to have twenty-five chiropractors signed up as distributors by the end of this year. John, my chiropractor, is a wildcard, as I have no idea how he will do in any area of marketing and sales, so that will be determined on a day-by-day basis. I will train him as much as he lets me. Regarding the carbon credit plan for Southeast Asia, that is another unknown, and depending how the pieces fall, it could either be a huge deal or fizzle out to nothing. Time will define that one.

Overall, the fear of losing business has got to be kept in perspective: we did better last year than in 2018. That is always hardest to remember on a holiday or

weekend when there is nothing I can directly affect. Everything is fantastic, our potential is boundless, and I have to keep that in mind. If times get rough in any or all areas, we have the capability to make immediate changes. As always, I have a healthy blend of optimism and paranoia. I must always rely on my gut because that is my conduit to God, the world, and the people within it. Its direction is seldom wrong; I just have to shut up and listen. This should all make for an amazing year—at least I know it should not be boring.

1/1/20

3:30pm EST | Our House, NJ

Nothing to Lose

I fully realize and admit that I have an ego the size of our house. Therefore, it was of no surprise when the idea came to me yesterday (Divine Intervention) that there should be a television series about me and my life. It would be entitled “Andrew Jacobs—The Rosetta Stone” with the idea being that my “advanced years” (63) and experience provide me relationship knowledge that might be of help to others and the ability to translate what other people are really saying through their body language and vocal tones. I thought the idea good enough that I sent it to my good friend who works with someone who actually packages and sells television series and movie specials. I told her that if she thought it a bad idea to go no further and I would hear nothing more about it. That was 28 hours ago and I have heard nothing back; I have to make the assumption she was not wild about the idea. Not a giant surprise, but it will not stop me from trying again. As I said, an ego the size of our house.

1/2/20

8:55pm EST | Our House, NJ

I normally keep my phone on all the time in case our family or teams need me. I got a text about 3:00am this morning from the man I plan to visit in Malaysia regarding the carbon credit project. Our plan is to monitor the burning of forests to be able to quantify how much carbon was being released in our atmosphere and set-up a system where those who burned their land were either fined, put in jail, and/or had their land confiscated. An additional carbon credit system would be created where the stored carbon in the land would be monetized like a commodity to make it more valuable if the land was not burned. By the tone of his text, he was considering this as a real project and there was preliminary talk about starting a new company. Realizing that this was quickly becoming a real “thing”, I spent part of the day working with Don regarding confirmation that the drones we hoped to use for the survey work would function. There was also software available to be able to quantify and qualify what type of vegetation was in a particular plot of land and he was checking to see if there was infrared or some other type of system available that could determine how much carbon was in the soil. At the same time, I was working with Mike, one of our graphic designers, who did a rendering of what the process of having a drone hover over land to measure

it would look like. Everything was calm and I was still thinking about how to do this when I got an email from Ben in China. It turned out he had been speaking to one of our former IJ Malaysia Board members who was involved with a large farm and might like to be involved. The issue is that we do not have anything concrete yet to propose to investors so I have put everyone into high gear to get us ready and asked God for some help to figure out an overall game plan. To that end, ideas have been coming and one is to utilize drones not only to photograph and extrapolate information from the air, but also to be able to land and take core samples for analysis of how much carbon is actually in the soil. Figuring a drone could probably handle five such operations on one flight and average one flight per hectare, we would cover a lot of land very quickly with multiple drones. This effort could be set-up in conjunction with both the Youth Party and the Army to get the job done quickly, safely, and with little interference from the land owners, who should want this anyway because of the carbon credits. I was also in contact with a man who used to work with a company who manufactured drones and did land surveying. I will contact him now for some help.

I started the Interior Annual Audit today, it will be done by next Friday. Igor Gomes and his family were in from Belgium; they all look well and he is doing a good job. I was hoping that both Don and Igor could do more traveling for sales visits this year, but I am not sure that is going to happen.

1/3/20

5:08am EST | Our House, NJ

I wrote this:

The Malaysia Declaration of Environmental Independence

Be it resolved that we, the government of Malaysia, with the sworn duty to protect and defend the environmental integrity of our forests and farmlands do hereby order that from this day forward they will be part of our new Strategic National Land Reserve and will be Protected under the following conditions:

- *Clearing forests and farmland via burning, which is already prohibited by law, will be designated as a criminal act and punishable by severe fines and or imprisonment.*
- *All landowners are responsible for whatever is done on their own land. In the event of burning, they will be responsible to pay for the environmental damage incurred, including land, water, animal life, endangered species, and especially air pollution. This in addition to the added health risks to all Malaysians and their additional health care costs. Accidental land burning is exempt from prosecution, but it must be proven that the fires were not set on purpose by the owners, their associates, or any third party companies. The bar will be high to prove innocence.*
- *Those Malaysian companies with holdings in other countries that contribute to this problem will have their Malaysian corporations assessed and taxed for the tangential effects they have across the region to help defray the health care and global pollution costs. In the event they do not pay, then their Malaysian assets will be seized and their farmlands confiscated.*
- *Our estimates of the overall health risks to all Malaysians from burning across Southeast Asia are .3% of the yearly gross national product or 4.25 billion Ringgit or about 125 Ringgit per person per year. While burning rates in Malaysia may be*

decreasing, they are increasing in other areas (many of which are owned by Malaysian companies). The overall health problems are still compounding year by year with accumulating health risks and environmental devastation that our government and all our citizens will have to bear for decades to come. These are expenses that are directly related to illegal burning.

- In the event that landowners do not pay for the damage within 120 days of being fined, their lands will be confiscated to cover the damage they inflicted and the owners subject to additional fines and other criminal penalties.
- All forest and farmland will be mapped via drone with all vegetation quantities and types to determine how much carbon and other contaminants are currently sequestered within the trees, bushes, and grasses that would be released during a fire. This does not include the carbon sequestered in the soil itself, but the cost to determine that on a hectare by hectare basis is too prohibitive at this time.
- This mapping will be done in sections starting with the Island of Borneo. However, those landowners who volunteer outside of that area will also be first in line to bid on the confiscated lands.
- As per the current intentional burnings in Malaysia and Indonesia as well as the unintentional forest fires in Australia, there is now a crisis within our atmosphere that must be dealt with now. The futures of ourselves, our children, and generations to come are counting on what we do today.

We urge immediate approval of this Declaration and the program to hold those responsible directly for devastating our country and begin the program to monitor and protect our forest and farmlands immediately from our Parliament, Cabinet and our Prime Minister.

The Plan

The Malaysian Government will declare specific regions in its domain as "Protected." Protected status means the following:

- The area will be surveyed and mapped via drone by The Company (for now known as Save Malaysia Now or SMN) to quantify all of the trees, bushes and grassland therein. The information will be tallied to determine how much carbon is sequestered (stored) within each hectare of land. Although there is additional carbon and other contaminants sequestered in the soil, it would take too long and cost too much money to have each hectare analyzed for that information.
- The entire region will be monitored by SMN via drone. In the event it is illegally burned and that carbon is released, the owners of that land will be immediately fined/prosecuted for the carbon release (calculated via carbon credits) and the ensuing land, water, and air pollution, loss of animal life. SMN will issue an invoice for the amount of fines rendered and, if not paid or appealed within 120 days, the land will be formally confiscated and the deed moved to SMN.
- "Preventative-sequestered Carbon Credits" will be issued for the stored carbon in the hectare land and will be split between the land owner, as an incentive not to burn, and SMC. The credits will be based on a 10 year life of the vegetation within each hectare and therefore split by 1/10 for each year and issued on a yearly basis. The Government of Malaysia will certify the credits as real and tradable on the international exchange.
- The landowner can clear the land, but it cannot be done via burning and the credits stop if the land is burned or cleared until new vegetation is planted.
- The credits will be issued at the end of each calendar year after it has been recertified that burning has not taken place as proven by the SMN via drone, aircraft, and our satellite imagery.

- *The land will continue to be monitored to both confirm approved clearing techniques and contain fires as quickly as possible. The Company will also monitor any site after burning and any destruction of endangered species will result in extra fines.*
- *If desired, the credits can then be bundled together and sold as bonds backed by the Malaysian Government.*
- *Accidental land burning is exempt from prosecution, but it must be proven that the fires were not set on purpose by the owners, their associates, or any third party companies.*
- *It costs approximately 20,000 Ringgit per hectare to clear the land properly. Therefore, that is the fine for those convicted of burning.*
- *SMN will collect and process all of the fines and handle all of the confiscated lands. 80% of fines will go to the government and 20% will go to SMN as a processing fee.*
- *In the event the fines are not paid for burning within 120 days, the land will be confiscated, valued by SMN, and then sold with the money split 75% to the Government and 25% as a processing fee to The Company.*
- *Costs for the services of SMN will be submitted later, but the drone service can be expanded to report on weather events, illegal fishing, poachers and anything else needed to help the Malaysian people. Expansion to other countries to monitor their lands and insure that not only Malaysian but other landowners can be found and prosecuted in all countries where burning takes place is obviously dependent on approval from their governments for our access.*

We believe that we can map the entire Malaysian land holdings in the Island of Borneo, 128,000 Square miles in 12 months. We will submit a detailed financial proposal as soon as the concept is approved. A full proposal for SMN will be coming later for an initial review and whether the government of Malaysia will fund it or it will be funded by investors.

[Editor's Note: it was later that I learned that there was no real burning issue in Malaysia. That had been completed years ago. However, it did become relevant for Indonesia so we left this in so you would understand what was going on later.]

1/3/20

3:10pm EST | Our Office, NJ

More work today on the Interior Audit and the project above. It would be really good if we could get confirmation on the carbon credit segment, but I don't have anyone else to ask in time for the meetings. I am hoping the one man gets back to us with a positive comment.

1/4/20

7:35am EST | Our House, NJ

More work on the carbon project. I was about to write that "luckily" I knew a drone specialist from when we had a publicly held company there, but I have resolved to stop saying luck has anything to do with anything. We are on a guided path and we needed someone who could confirm what a drone could do, what type of software was available, and an approximate idea about costs. I called him last night. He is interested in helping us and already gathering the information we need to put the proposal together as well as the money we will need to raise from farm investors or a contract from the government. No luck, no chances—just help from God as long as we are on the right path. This is happening way too

fast and attracting too many people to be accidental; we have been chosen to do this whether it works or not. If enough people like us charge forward to help our world, some of us will succeed. As always, it is a matter of percentages: the more of us trying to effect massive change, the better chance it will happen. One huge effort to help save our planet, whether individuals like us make it or not, is the force forward for change that matters.

1/4/20

4:55pm EST | Our House, NJ

I seem to be getting more ideas and clearer thoughts about what can be just as I am waking up or early in the morning. I don't know if that is because I'm more relaxed and rested or my mind is open to outside thoughts. I had tea with David. He is well and very supportive of both the carbon initiative as well as the SwaddlePax and potential television show projects. A lot is happening and I seem to be in the center of a vortex that is pushing me forward on multiple fronts. I am getting really excited about my trip to Asia.

I want to see my mom and told her about my ideas for Malaysia. She really liked them. I also stopped for a haircut; I want to look well-groomed for my travels. I am mostly packed for our trip to the spa for tomorrow; I am also very excited to go away for a few days. We got word that Alex and Scott got back to New York today, which is a very good thing with the increase in security concerns from our assassination of an Iranian military leader. We have very little clear information about who does what to whom, but this has obviously increased the chances of a retaliation strike to American interests somewhere. I hope everyone is alright and, as always, I will be careful when traveling.

1/4/20

6:58pm EST | Our House, NJ

Ben from China called me before. He is meeting me in KL and asked me to switch hotels. He has heard that American hotels may be targets for Iranian reprisals. I am switching three of my hotels. I am officially concerned, but I am still going.

1/5/20

2:06pm EST | Woodloch Resort Hawley, PA

Dear Mom,

I was listening to Joel Osteen, a television Evangelist who views life from the positive side, and I had an awakening regarding you, Dad, and me. For all of your adult life, Dad kept you cloistered away from the world, our business, and life in general. He dominated all areas of the people around him, but I just realized that it was all preparation for what happened a few months ago. Had you been directly involved in our family business, our relationship would have been much different. Had I known about all the great things you did for me before Dad died, how you watched out for me, it would have altered our relationship—especially with Dad—and you did not want that. It was meant to be in these years after he died that you and I have grown much closer, as have you, Irene, and Ira. It has

given me the desire to want to do something with you in business that would grow after you died. That put us on a road that led to the chance for us to directly impact the world. All of our lives have been in preparation for this moment: the good and the bad times with Dad, the help from you, the desire to work together to create real change. Therefore, we should view the past with the positive idea that it got us in position to act. Your greatest moments in business have been saved for now to combine with mine to change the world. Whether it works or not is irrelevant—we should share in the continual joy that we simply got the chance and need to continue to go as far as we can to make the differences we know are possible.

*Love you,
Andrew*

I biked this morning. It was cold but glorious, and after cleaning up, eating breakfast, and packing, we were on the road at 9:00am as scheduled. Wendy, of course, was ready early—I love that woman. The trip here was pleasant, uneventful, and punctuated by occasional snow flurries. Once here, we had a very tasty lunch, and Wendy and I split up until dinner. She will go to various classes. I have been working on the organic farm proposal because Ben called me while biking to tell me he has an old friend who owns a huge farm in central China with all of the basics we need to start the project. I was both highly surprised that someone could own land there and elated at the prospect that this idea could go forward. I will now get changed to walk outside; it is cold, but I have all the needed clothes to have a wonderful walk. Ben is supposed to send pictures of the farm so I can get a feel as to what is possible. These are very exciting times.

1/6/20

12:14pm EST | Woodloch Resort Hawley, PA

Our man in Canada, Don, is a wonderful human being. In addition to being an able mechanical engineer, he has the desire to understand everything he is involved with to the point that it sometimes slows him down. He is doing research for me for the carbon project and, in order to make him focus on what I needed, I had to scare him. I told him we had one chance with this project to help save the world. Within that, we had one main contact in the Malaysian government and we had one chance at one dinner to sell the idea of curtailing the burning of land by creating a carbon credit commodities system or fail. One chance, all or nothing, and if he did not get me the information when I needed it this week then our chances would be reduced.

1/6/20

5:35pm EST | Woodloch Resort Hawley, PA

Obsession is a Two Way Street

I am highly obsessive and, whether you label it as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or not, the rituals, tics, and unrelenting structure are always there. Whether it is for the good—where it forces me to finish tasks and attack life for my stated goals—or for the bad—when I lose time by checking whether a faucet, oven,

grill, or light switch is really turned off—I am always dealing with obsession. I am a result of things I cannot change and I have resolved to utilize the best parts and reduce the bad. My life is highly structured in that there are various people involved who help and allow me to focus my powers where it does me and everyone around me the most good. OCD is a big part of my success and the bad parts I can usually deal with—except there is one area which I have not come close to conquering. I am and always will be highly concerned about my weight. As a child, I was a little bit “chubby” and that body image imprinted on my psyche. Being ridiculed by my relatives and alleged friends did not help. The good news is that it has and will always force me to exercise in huge amounts and curtail my food groups so I can keep my weight in an acceptable range. The problem is like now when I am on vacation. I am torn between relaxing and burning enough calories so when I get home the weight scale does not tell me I failed. When I overeat, the guilt comes on me like a waterfall. I watch my phone app all day to see if it can hit that magic five mile marker and then I can relax. It is the same when I travel. It is a constant struggle to watch what I am eating and still take in enough food to produce the energy I need with less sleep and more stress. I am not complaining—only relating the information because, if you have similar issues, the good parts of being obsessive can far outweigh the negatives as long as you keep them in some type of perspective. That is the really hard part.

1/6/20

8:40pm EST | Woodloch Resort Hawley, PA

Don got me the name of a drone manufacturer in Canada and I spoke to him about the carbon project. He seems to have a good feel for our project and will get us prices tomorrow. Don also got us a software supplier, so by tomorrow night, we should be able to estimate the start-up capital needed for the new Malaysian company. Ben called while Wendy and I were at dinner, and when I returned his call, he told me about his friend’s farm in central China. When Ben originally told me about the problem with owning or long term leasing of farmland in China, I gave up on the organic farm idea. His friend was somehow able to buy land, install electricity and water, get all the necessary permits to operate, and form a great working relationship with the local government. Suddenly the idea is back in, albeit on a smaller scale, so I need to re-configure the plan to see if it can function monetarily. The first step is for me to stop freaking out that he found a possible location and rejoice in the idea that it could actually happen. The next is to check the climate in the region to see what can grow there. I already checked that it is within about thirteen hours of Shanghai and Xiamen so the products produced can be transported by truck. It is amazing what Ben can accomplish. I spoke to my children: Ben, Alex, and Kayla today. All are well and happy to be back from the holidays. They relish in their normal structure and daily life; it is where they are at their best—as am I. As much as I like it here, it is good we are going home tomorrow.

1/7/20

4:25pm EST | Our House, NJ

I woke up several times last night trying to figure out what to do with the Farm Project in China. Ben has mentioned Israeli farming technology to help them so I googled "Israeli farm technology" and found a product that might be of interest. An Israeli inventor had taken on the problem of grain spilling while in transport and he came up with the idea of creating large flexible plastic containers that would help solve that issue. It seemed like a great product to not only manufacture in China but also market there, too. I emailed Zahar and Netta for help. Netta and I Skyped to go over it. She will track down the inventor to see if it is being mass produced anywhere and check if he was to be involved in our joint venture. Amazing what can happen when you ask for Divine Intervention. In the meantime, through Wendy's urging, I found out that the city near the farm has two and a half million people so it is a potential source for buying our farm products if we decide to go that route. I got up at my usual work time, exercised in my room, and then went for a last walk before we had breakfast and left. The spa was a wonderful place, but after two days, I was getting a bit antsy to get back here and into the game of life. There were various issues in the office which, if they are not worked out soon, will result in some people having to leave. We can only do our best to keep our people happy and productive, and if they stop producing and start screwing up, then they will get warnings. Eventually, they'll have to leave. The drive home was peaceful and swift. We spoke to Ben and Kayla on the way; they are both well. Alex texted us pictures of Miss Universe wearing one of his dress designs—a very cool thing.

I went for a short bike ride; it was very pleasant. I am now waiting for an email from the Drone Company to see how much one will cost for the carbon project, it's range, and how many hectares it can map in a month.

1/7/20

9:23pm EST | Our House, NJ

Something to Think About

Not to alarm anyone, but, in my opinion, the chances of a major cyber or infrastructure attack on the domestic United States is now higher than ever before. You might want to consider storing some cash in case the banking system is suddenly hacked and all accounts frozen.

1/8/20

3:15pm | My Office, NJ

Great to be back! I worked on the internal audit, various paperwork, pricing, and the carbon project, which is almost ready to launch. I also spoke with Netta regarding the grain fumigation and transportation system. We both ended up emailing the inventor. It is now up to them to see if they want to go further.

1/9/20

4:17pm EST | My Office, NJ

The proposal for the carbon project is almost done. I will check it again tomorrow morning and then we will print copies for me to take on my trip—it looks awesome. We also bought the space for the NJ Trade Show in April to introduce the SwaddlePax Vest to local chiropractors. We will also be in their promotional booklet. We ran our quarterly Quality, Environmental, Health and Safety Meeting; all was well and I am almost done with the annual audit. I have a lot to finish out tomorrow and can then travel with a clearer mind.

1/11/20

8:41pm EST | Our House, NJ

It has been a very pleasant day. I exercised, saw Davis Williams and my brother, had lunch and dinner with Wendy, almost finished packing, and am now getting very excited for the start of tomorrow's adventure. It is not often that I get a chance to change the world. If we figured this carbon project correctly with everyone involved winning to some extent, then we have a chance to make a huge change in our world. The anticipation and excitement is fun, real, and has been building for weeks. The adrenaline has been pumping in a way that has not happened for a while and it is wonderful to have it back. We are jumping off the cliff and there is no feeling quite like it.

1/12/20

7:50am EST | Newark/Liberty Airport, NJ

I was up at 2:00am, exercised inside, then walked outside. It was in the mid 60s°F and very pleasant. It was early enough where I got to see the beginning of the sunrise, which was beautiful. Mike was early, which was great, and I got through security quickly. I am now in the lounge and have already texted Wendy that I was here. As always, it was very tough to leave her. I wrote myself a plan before to get ready if Azwan, Ben, and I agree to go forward on the Carbon Project. It would not be good if we were all ready and had no idea what to do next.

The first thing is to draft an agreement to work together.

1/13/20

2:11am SGT | In Flight

I realized on this plane that I forgot my grapes and my salad at home. Oh well, too late now. I am on the plane's internet and texting with Wendy, who saw I forgot them. It is truly amazing that we can text from plane to our house. I am going to try and stay up for a little while longer then go to sleep. At least that is my plan. In the meantime, I will listen to music and edit last year's book or maybe write a blog post or both.

People are Good

I was waiting in line to get into my flight to Singapore when the man in front of me got called to the main desk. When he got back, I had saved his place in line and we got talking. He had just flown to Newark from Australia to go to a meeting in Puerto Rico. Once he landed, he found out it was cancelled because of the earthquakes so he is turning around and going back. The whole trip should take him about 50 hours. What was really heartwarming was that he was not angry at having to make the trip for nothing—he was upset for the people whose country was destroyed first by the hurricane and now by the earthquakes. I could tell he was a nice man immediately and that simply confirmed it. The vast bulk of the people of this world are good, kind, and want to help. That is one reason I like to travel, because I get to meet them. Often, in these few minute encounters, it reinforces my faith in humanity.

1/13/20

5:32am SGT | In flight, about ten and a half hours to go

Dear Grandfather,

I am on my way to Singapore to go after the second biggest deal of my life—the first one did not make it. We are flying at 37,000 feet and I am about as close to you as I can be; I am figuring you are either in heaven or have been reincarnated already. Therefore, I would like to talk. As with your older son, sometimes I get more answers speaking with him after he passed than before, so let's try it here. I have recently come to the conclusion that I am part of a unique group of "outliers"—I am not bragging, simply stating what I believe. As a member of this group, God has worked "the percentages" figuring that some of us will get through to create global, positive change. Why do I think this? A few reasons. The first is simply that I want to and am continually willing to try. I don't think the vast majority of the people on Earth go around thinking that they can and therefore have the responsibility to make a difference. As I have gotten older, especially in the last year, I have had this incredible yearning to do something really big with a huge impact. I have had some false starts, but as I set myself upon outside ideas and feelings, which often come just as I am waking up or during my Zen time of exercising, it is happening much more frequently. The second reason is that our world is getting in a much worse state environmentally every day and sitting around and watching things deteriorate is not acceptable when I can make a difference. It seems not only incredibly wasteful and selfish but also an insult to my kids and future generations to do nothing. The third reason is that ideas and events keep falling into place as they are needed.

For instance, during the Carbon Project, I happen to:

- *Have already experienced in person the disastrous pollution created by the massive arson fires in Malaysia in past years.*
- *Have been the Chairman of a publicly held company there so we already have some influence.*
- *Already know a team of fantastic Malaysian and Chinese professionals who can set-up the new company, supply chain, financing, and do everything we need to get started.*
- *Know a very high-level Malaysian official whom I believe wants to be Prime Minister who can use this project as a springboard to get elected.*

- *Be in contact with one of the founders of the Chicago Carbon Exchange to hopefully give counsel about the validity of the project.*
- *Have Ben as a partner who can negotiate with the Chinese government to sell our carbon credits.*

Kayla has left our company, which means that I can do what I want on any scale without having to be concerned that she does not want to be saddled with a project in the future. I know people around the world who are eager and willing to join us on this quest to change the world. Most importantly, I have received all of the necessary genetic predispositions and life training that I got from you, your son, my mom, and past life experience to hopefully handle what is coming.

In other words, Grandfather, there are way too many chance happenings to be coincidences. I am being guided, and at this point in my life, I am listening and running towards the potential instead of being afraid of what could happen. There are few times in my life where a path has been laid out so clearly. In reality, I know very little about you—much of what I did know was shrouded in wonderment at your passion, drive, and energy to survive and thrive. The reason I am writing is to ask for your help. You were an amazing man with a mental force of will that was formidable. I am open to any positive thoughts and energy you can move toward me and our teams. I believe that we have everything we need to close this global project, which also scares me. If it doesn't work, then I will have not only let our global teams down but much worse: my family and generations to come. I know that my ego has to take a back seat to what is going on. The lead man for this is not going to be me and I have been saying that it was okay. I just have to keep repeating it to keep myself in line, my sights on the big picture, and stay out in front of the potential problems and opportunities as they come. You passed on your energy, Dad passed on his selling skill and ability to think in advance, and Mom gave me the ability to invent and see the world from a different perspective. God filled in the rest, which makes me even more thankful for Wendy because I must be really interesting to live with and that is not always a good thing.

Regardless, thanks for everything you have already directly and indirectly passed on to me. I hope you are having fun wherever you are and that you, Dad, and Uncle Leonard are getting along well and having fun watching what is happening here. Any help you and they could send would be greatly appreciated. As I have been praying to God, we all, together have the chance to change the world and we are going for it.

*Love,
Andrew*

1/13/20

1:32pm SGT | Two and a half hours to land

Looks like we are somewhere over Thailand. I think I got about six hours of overall sleep so I should be okay. I have an ice bag on my back and one in my bag keeping my food cool.

New idea: If the Carbon Project goes forward, set-up a carbon survey project for every company and person in Malaysia. We make the survey easy, on-line, and part of the tax reporting for the year. That way there is a much more accurate picture of what is happening within the population itself and the country as a whole, then we migrate the idea to other countries.

1/14/20

10:03am SGT | On the road for sales calls

We landed early yesterday; getting through passport control and retrieving my luggage was swift and easy. The hotel driver Yul was waiting for me and got me to my new hotel here quickly. From Ben's warning, after the newest threat issues with Iran, he suggested I stay in a non-US hotel, so I checked into the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. The buildings were gorgeous, the service and food were excellent, so I highly recommend it. I exercised in my room, which felt really good after the long plane ride, had room service, and was asleep early.

I was up before 3:00am; a robo call from the US woke me up, which was annoying, but it turned out to be okay since I had a lot of emails to answer. It was still during office hours at home, so I was able to get a lot done, including getting color issues resolved with one of our bigger customers, which was great. I exercised again in my room and then it was off to the gym downstairs. As I said, this was a really nice hotel and the workout room was gorgeous. I then ate a huge breakfast, got cleaned up, called Wendy, and went on my sales calls.

The first one was to Benchmark and I screwed up the address—not an uncommon thing to happen on the road—but I called ahead to the customer that we would be a little late, which was not a problem. Once there, I found the Benchmark office and had a very good meeting with the manager and one of his associates. We are doing more business with them globally so I wanted to stop by. As was also not uncommon, they didn't know all of our product lines, and once they saw various samples, they had a possible job for us to quote. It is really important that someone goes to see our customers and prospects at least once a year, if they allow it.

The next sales call was at Sanmina, another good customer of ours. The manager was very pleasant. He casually mentioned that he really liked that I came in person; normally they have to go after the owners to try and get better payment terms and prices. I agreed that I was an easier target for people in his position, but it also gave us the chance to get a lot more business so it was good for both of us. He agreed, we had a very pleasant meeting, and he will try to get us more sales. Yul is taking me to the airport.

1/14/20

12:27pm SGT | Changi Airport, Singapore

God, Fate, or an Accident

Like everyone else, I can't stand robo-calls. To make it worse, I am currently in Asia and got woken up by one at 2:45am local time. I keep my cell phone on 24/7 in case my family or business needs me. The ringtone startled me and I knew it would take a little while to calm down, so I checked my texts to see if anyone else had contacted me. It turned out that a very close family friend had a tragic death in their family. As I was texting him, he called me. Because of that robo-call, I was awake, present, and able to offer my sympathies and be supportive. Had it not, I

don't know how well I would have reacted. My friend needed me at 3:00am local time and God, Fate, or an accident gave me a wake up-call so I could be ready. I always like to think someone is watching over me.

1/14/20

5:16pm MYT | En route to the hotel

The flight was excellent and early. IJX is already working on the prices for the parts for Benchmark—IJUS will do the same when they open. I am jet lagged and tired but feeling very good. It is good to be back in Malaysia.

I saw in the Financial Times that there was going to be a huge influx of development money into Indonesia. I will add that expansion idea to the carbon credit proposal. If we all agree to move forward, maybe we can also expand into Indonesia where the bulk of the yearly burning is happening. The hotel cafe did not have much food that I could eat, so I asked the hotel staff and they suggested a restaurant. I didn't really want to leave the hotel, but the place seems very pleasant. A small unplanned adventure—I hope it goes well.

1/15/20

9:54am MYT | On the road in Malaysia

Last night's dinner turned out to be good—and a fun experience. I was back in my hotel room before 8:00pm, asleep before 9:15, and up at 3:15am. After answering emails—things were a lot calmer than yesterday—I went down to the hotel gym and was thrilled to find it empty. After a hearty breakfast and getting my ice bags filled, I got cleaned up and was downstairs in plenty of time to leave. I met George, my driver for the day, who had a very pleasant attitude about him. I put on my SwaddlePax Vest for the first time in more than three days—it felt great.

The first call was to a company called Coraza Systems. They were metal fabricators and did work with IJX. The first person I met was the CEO and he then brought in three others. It was a fast-paced, upbeat discussion of what each company did and how we could work together more. It helped that I had already been to and really liked Malaysia and they were interested in our path to have our company go public and then private. We have the chance for more business, which is always a good thing.

1/15/20

12:16am MYT | A Starbucks in Penang

The next call was to Advanced Contract Manufacturing. The man I was supposed to see had his new assistant come down instead. She was a pleasant, young woman who had only been there a few months and looked highly uneasy. Realizing that I had been pushed off on her, I made the best of it by being exceptionally nice, easy going, and totally understanding about her being thrown into the “deep water” of seeing me alone. By the time we finished, she was calm, happy, and ready to think of us if anything comes up. I got a text from Azwan saying he would pick Ben and I up at about 8:00pm tomorrow night.

The sunrise this morning was dazzling in its brilliance—actually too beautiful because it meant the level of pollution was quite high for the sun's reflections to give off those colors. This country, like the rest of our world, is in trouble and I am now at the point where I am extremely excited about being able to help change that situation. It will be my enduring hope that we can make the sunrises duller here and everywhere else in the world. The less colors we see the healthier our atmosphere.

There are huge complaints in San Francisco where Kayla lives regarding the incredible wealth disparity between groups of the richest and the poorest. There was another huge gathering in that city where hotel rates zoomed to \$2000.00/night while homeless people crowded the sidewalks. I was there a few months ago and the situation is indeed tragic because there is a spiraling of despair and the sense that nothing can be done. I do not and will never agree that there are no solutions to any problem. While the problem regarding homelessness is huge, it is not unsolvable if the parties involved rationally viewed the possible approaches and took action. That, however, is one of the problems with democracies; people sit around and talk—actually, bicker—until either the whole mess explodes or it gets so bad that they instill the power into one person to take action. The best and most efficient form of government is one led by a benevolent, intelligent, forward thinking, ruthless, compassionate individual who takes immediate action. Unfortunately, people like that only arise in crisis, so I guess things are not yet that bad.

1/15/20

2:29pm MYT | On our way to Penang

Appointment #3 happened late because I had the wrong address. I am not sure how that happened, but George was able to get us there only fifteen minutes late, which was amazing. The buyer was pleasant and tough—just the kind I like—and we got along well. As usual, she did not know about all of our product lines, locations, or history, and no matter how much literature we send out, it comes down to seeing her and others in person. On the way out, she introduced me to her buyers; I plan to send them all books once I get to China. While we were there, a young woman asked me what I did. I told her and she replied that she was a label applicator supplier. She was aggressive and I immediately thought of her for part-time sales at IJX. I gave her my card and told her people to call me. If she wants to go forward, she will have to make the next move. We will soon cross back over the Straits of Malacca for the second time today; it will be a very pretty ride.

1/15/20

8:10pm MYT | JEN Penang Hotel, George Town

Our fourth appointment was to Plexus and was a reminder of days past. All of the visitors were made to sit in an outdoor waiting area. It did have a ceiling fan, but the 89°F weather meant it was hot and uncomfortable. I did meet two manufacturers reps who might be a good fit for IJX part-time sales people here.

I finally got in to see two people, had a really good meeting, and headed off to a local coffee shop for an interview. I had known OH for many years and he was now a salesman for a metal fabricator. We spoke about his life and the potential to come work for IJX part-time. He will try and figure out what he wants and then get back to us. I do not have a lot of hope with this meeting coming out well, but let's see how he responds. From there, it was back to the hotel where I packed most of my stuff for tomorrow and went downstairs to have a really good dinner.

1/16/20

10:46am MYT | Plaza Lounge, Penang International Airport

I was asleep by 9:00pm and up at 3:15am. I exercised in my room, did the treadmill in the gym, had another big breakfast, filled my ice bags, and got the frozen packs for my Vest. I called Wendy after getting cleaned up; she sounded well and I got an update on our friends and family. I was checked out and ready by 8:10am.

George was ready and off we went to Jabil. We found the building without an issue and a very nice young buyer came out to escort me in. It was a bit of a walk, but it was not too warm and actually very pleasant. Once in the conference room, five people came in and another five came by to say hello. Happily, I had enough business cards with me to go around. It was a lively, fun discussion, and as usual, I simply spread our samples on the table and let everyone look through them. I promised everyone a copy of my new book. At the end, the buyer suggested I call George the driver to come to a closer entrance. The only problem was that I was not sure which telephone number in my cell memory was his and I called Wendy by mistake. When I realized, I got embarrassed because everyone at the table was listening. It was no issue—actually, just funny—and I never did find George's number, so the buyer walked me all the way back to the main reception, which gave us a chance to talk more. Once here, I checked my bags and got through security quickly. I spoke to Kayla; she is doing well and working her way through a new corporate culture, which is very different from Ideal Jacobs. She sounded happy. Both she and Wendy wished us the best of luck with the carbon project. Ben emailed me that he would meet me in the lobby at 4:30pm. I had made a draft of a business partnership proposal for Azwan, Ben, and myself. It is always good to have something ready in case things go forward quickly. On the way through the lobby, I saw the McDonald's restaurant; the last time I was there was with Kay and she had eaten chicken nuggets—one of her favorites. A lot has changed in the last year, but the bulk of it in a very good way.

I got a text from Azwan. He is bringing two friends with him. I think I located one on Google. If I am right, he is one of the leading climate experts in Malaysia. It is not like I was not nervous enough about this before. This man could actually look at our presentation and declare it unworkable, dumb, and make me look like a fool. On the other hand, if we can sell him on the idea and he endorses it, the pathway to implementation should be much easier. He might even want to join us. It is a risk I am happy to take. I love the challenge—besides there is no choice.

1/15/20

2:33pm MYT | En Route to Kuala Lumpur

The flight was a little late, which did not matter. I got my gear and now I'm on my way to my new hotel. My throat started feeling raspy an hour ago; I hope I am not sick, but it could easily be the poor air quality from the burning of the farmlands and forests. Our program to stop the burning is coming when it is really needed; I hope the people tonight agree.

1/15/20

10:43pm MYT | The RuMa Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

Azwan was delayed picking us up because of traffic and we met with two other men named Renaud and Shami. My googling about Renaud was correct. We had an excellent discussion over dinner going over all aspects of the carbon project, how it would work, who would be needed for help and support, and how it could be structured. We figured that Azwan would help with the government and industry contacts while Ben at IJX would use their supply chain to take care of the manufacturing and personnel. Between them, we had a wealth of talent and potential. My job would be liaison to everything and making sure things kept moving. Azwan, Ben, and I agreed to start a new company. As I had hoped, the other two new people, Renaud and Shami, were enthused enough that they thought they might also want to be involved. Azwan and Shami will try to get us an appointment with the person in charge of climate change for the government before I have to leave on Tuesday. This has to be a multi-level "sell" with the state and federal government in addition to as many companies who own land as possible.

1/16/20

9:45am MYT | En route Xiamen, China

I got up at 3:00am, exercised in my room, packed, and met Ben downstairs. The driver to the airport was one we have used for over a decade and it was good to see him.

Dear Wendy,

We started dating in 1983 and have now been married for thirty five years. Through all that time, you have always been content with taking care of our kids and me, acting as the glue that has kept us operating as a (mostly) well-oiled machine. Actually, you did a lot more because there were many times when oil was not needed; instead, you provided love, care, and the support necessary for all of us trying new things. Our kids have turned out to be amazing, strong, wonderful human beings, and our home is a sanctuary where we all come for peace, kindness, and rejuvenation. For me especially, coming home every night when I am not traveling is something I actively look forward to. I love going to work and I love coming home. I like to turn my mind off when I walk through our door, have dinner with you, do the dishes, and take out the garbage cans twice a week. I love to go outside during the gardening season to check our plants and flowers and simply breathe the air. You have created the sanctuary that I always wanted and needed, providing the base to let me fly, fall, fly again—and even soar.

We are at one of those moments now; if the carbon project works, we can actually positively impact the lives of millions of people and help the global environment. Without you, there can be no me. Without me and the help of God, there are no crazy ideas that most people mock but—in a rare situation—works to create global change. You married an outlier, someone with incredible extremes of behavior, thought processes, and willingness to take chances that are not always positive. But you rein me in where necessary and keep me from falling as opposed to purposely launching over cliffs. I thought I should put it “on the record” how amazing you are as a person, the influence you have, the good you have done, and the appreciation I have for you .

*Love always,
Andrew*

1/17/20

10:34pm CST | Conrad Xiamen Hotel

We landed a little late and it took some time to get through Immigration, which did not matter except that Ben had to get back to the office, so he sent me with the company driver and he took a taxi. Once here and after lunch, I had been texting with Azwan and emailing with Ben to keep the momentum going for the carbon project. After the fantastic first meeting yesterday, I knew there was a good chance for lost momentum so I pushed Azwan hard to get the details about starting the new company and working out how we would handle the feasibility study. It all worked out, and by the time we finished, Ben and I decided we would talk by tomorrow night and give an okay to Azwan to start. I figured that Don will create and handle the protocol for the study and IJX would handle the details.

I then went for a walk along the waterfront on the promenade. The temperature was cool and the walking pleasant, but I quickly got too tired to continue—especially with a headache. I came back here, drank water, then took a 60 minute nap. It was then off to the IJX Management party, which was a great deal of fun. There was lots of good food and mixing of the IJ Suzhou and IJ Xiamen Managements, as well as Yui and Netta. In addition, Ben and I were able to talk briefly about the carbon project, and it turned out that we both thought that the man who oversaw the building of IJX should handle the Feasibility Study and then set-up operations in Malaysia. I left while the party was still going on, came back here, and looked for the iPhone that we had purchased for IJX to be given to Sophy. Unfortunately, it had been in my checked luggage and someone had gone through my suitcase and stolen it. We will get Sophy another, but I am taking this as a warning not to put expensive stuff into my checked baggage. It was an annoyance, but I am almost over it already so it is not a huge deal. Time for some badly needed sleep.

1/18/20

1:11pm CST | Conrad Xiamen Hotel

I gave myself the gift of no alarm this morning and was up by 6:30am. I exercised in my room then spoke to Kayla. She continues to work her way through

her new corporate world and negotiate it well. She loved hearing about the meeting with Azwan and thinks the project will be amazing. After a hearty breakfast, I spoke to Wendy. I told her about the iPhone and she mentioned there were US Government approved locks, but I think the easiest thing to do is not carry anything valuable in a checked bag. I then signed books for the people I had seen so far and Skyped with Don. I told him that the carbon project was moving ahead and that we were going to write the protocol for the test study. He was really excited and could not wait to get started.

First Draft: Feasibility Protocol

Purpose

- *To prove that various types of field coverage in Malaysia retains different amounts of carbon and quantify these amounts.*
- *To measure levels of carbon by scanning via, drone which will be able to determine every tree, bush, and whatever grass coverage there is.*

We will select twenty hectares of various types of farmland, forest, grassland, and land that has been burned or recently cleared. Once the carbon levels are determined we will validate our estimates of how much carbon is contained in an average hectare, which can then be used to estimate how many sequestered carbon credits can be created from a specific area. To reduce the money needed and the time to get this study done, we will rent a drone with the approximate software we plan to use to simulate our program and then convert the scans to digital data. The sequestered carbon within each tree, bush, and grasses will then be added up and we can make our calculations. Once we have that information, we can prove our system works and move forward.

1/18/20

9:30pm CST | Somewhere outside of Xiamen, China.

The Chinese New Year party, like last year, was amazing. There were 180 people—the vast majority IJX employees—and there were various drawings for prizes, skits, and musical numbers by the IJX employees. I spoke briefly, as did Ben and Allan, and it was a lot of fun. Ben and Allan have built an amazing team and it is an honor to be part of it. During dinner, Ben and I spoke briefly about the agreement with Azwan and he is good to go. I will send the action plan involving Don to Azwan tomorrow. I am very tired and afraid to send it tonight; it needs at least one more proofreading.

1/19/20

8:55pm CST | Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport, Fujian Province

I was up at 3:00am. I only did half of my exercise regimen because of body aches from a cold and not having enough time. Then, I got cleaned up and sent the revised proposal and agreement to Azwan and Abel before I left the hotel. I was whisked to this airport in good time by Ben's driver, through Immigration and Security quickly, and spent some time in the lounge. I called Wendy; there is about three inches of snow on the ground. She is in for the night and we miss each other. I am now on the plane and faced with a dilemma: what do I do for

the 100th anniversary of our company? I think everyone is expecting a big party, and although it will be really expensive, I think it is a good idea. We will need to fly in Paulina, Don, Netta, Ben, Allan, Igor Gomes, Ben, Carla, and Kayla. Maybe we will throw a huge barbecue? My body is telling me to take a nap; I will listen.

1/19/20

4:46pm ICT | Siam Kempinski Hotel, Bangkok

The plane ride here was excellent—as was getting through Bangkok Airport. Thailand always reminds me of Kayla. She really loves it here and I am sure she will return as soon as she gets the chance. Happily, I have various medications with me so I am able to head off most of the effects of my cold, but I was not able to nap well so I will bring out the strong stuff later. Historically, cold and flu medicine has worked well and allowed me to sleep. I went to the hotel gym, which is gorgeous, but my legs were hurting before I started and I only lasted twenty minutes. I am not complaining; I have not had a cold in a while and I am still functioning well. I am now up in the hotel lounge; it is not cheap, but I decided it was good to get out of my room and I believe I was right. I am drinking iced tea since I have not had enough fluids today and it will help to fight my cold. They are supposed to have snacks out soon; if so, I will indulge and then go have dinner.

There is a couple sitting on the couch behind me. I can tell by their voice tones and body language they have been together a long time. They sound compatible and happy to be hanging out with each other. I miss Wendy. The good news is that when I wake up tomorrow I will head home the next day. When I spoke to her this morning, she said the temperature was supposed to rise and start to rain. Hopefully it will wash the snow away. It has been very hazy in every city I have visited this trip—not a good sign for our atmosphere.

1/20/20

2:28pm ICT | On the road in Thailand

The cough medicine worked well and I got eight hours of badly needed sleep. I exercised in my hotel room and then the gym. After a very good breakfast, it was back to the room where things got a little crazy. Now that IJUS was in charge of the testing for the carbon project, I had gone looking online and found some Malaysian drone companies that might be able to help test the sequestration theory. One guy called me out of the three I had emailed and he turned out to be “the guy”. Not only did he know what I was talking about but he also already had experience with this type of mapping. He was able to give me prices on the phone for the overall project and was able to handle the test program. All we had to do was give him the location’s latitude and longitude and he would gather the data, process it, and give the summaries we needed.

We may have to buy some software but maybe not. Elated, I texted Ben, Azwan, Dr. Renard, and Shamil about going ahead with the test and if they had any requirements to let me know otherwise Don and I would set up the protocol. Later, Ben emailed me that his friend should be able to let us use his farm and forest land, which is another issue taken care of.

Yui picked me up at 10:00am and we were off to Sanmina. It went well and we have a chance for more business. Then we went to a mall and Yui had lunch. I kept her company, but I was not hungry. She is very nice and we got along well.

From there, we headed over to Fabrinet. We had a meeting with five buyers and all was good. Yui was very excited as they told us that we have the chance for more business, which is always a very good thing to hear. Last stop is coming next. It is hot and hazy; the air quality is unfortunate and I am coughing a lot. I am not sure if it is my cold, the pollution, or a mixture of both. Yui says they also do a lot of burning here. Maybe the carbon project can work here, too.

1/20/20

3:26 ICT | En route to my hotel

The last call was to Team Precision. The buyer there has been giving IJX more business and Yui is the main reason. She is an excellent saleswoman and is respected and well-liked. We are very fortunate to have her with us.

Stop the Burning Now

I am in my last city for this latest trip to Asia. I have been to Singapore, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Xiamen in China, and finally Bangkok here in Thailand. One aspect unfortunately unites them all: haze is prevalent everywhere. If you have read the news you know the situation in Australia is even worse. Obviously, pollution is our own fault but there are some acts of man that far outweigh others. The purposeful burning of farmlands and forests throughout Southeast Asia are a huge contributor to pollution, global warming, and a myriad of health problems that are already costing billions of dollars. God did not put us here to complain; he put us here to think, act, and make things better. We have a plan to stop the burning, starting in Malaysia, and we have already begun.

1/21/20

5:56pm ICT | Emirates Lounge, Bangkok Airport

The day started in a difficult way with complaints from a customer regarding the color chips we had sent them. Printing is an art form—not just a manufacturing process. When some customers' ideas of the proper process to follow go against decades of standard color procedure, there is trouble. This has been the case for the last few months. We had been making great progress and I had hoped we were done when the emails started this morning complaining about our color matching. Since I am in Asia and they are in the US, I had time restrictions working against us, but in the end, right before I left to go meet Yui, we got part of the issues resolved. I have an email to Vinnie regarding how to respond to the balance of the issues; he is beside himself as he has been doing this type of work for 60 years and this is one of the few times where the customer is demanding things that are virtually impossible. Regardless, we will move forward and I am hoping that I either hear from him before or after this next flight.

Yui and I had two sales calls today, the first was to Delta Corporation. We had been there before and I had met with their counterparts a few months ago with

Igor in Germany. Yui is after more business there and she has a good shot at getting it. She is an extremely competent, aggressive sales associate, and the more time I spend with her, the more I like what she does. It was then to Celestica, a contract manufacturer and a very good customer of IJX. One amusing anecdote: there were three people at the table who I thought were all customers. Yui had mentioned that our new sales associate (Kate) for Eastern Thailand would be there to meet us, but I did not see her. It turned out she was one of the three, which I found out when the meeting was ending. It was a minor error, and I have no problem laughing at myself, so it was fine. Afterwards Yui, Kate, and I went out for an incredible beverage: a “mango freeze”. Kate is also very aggressive and we will see if she has what it takes to thrive in our business. Yui then dropped me off here; I went through the amazing buffet in the Lounge and grabbed a shower because it will be a while before I get home.

After speaking with Ben, I emailed the friend of the Israel inventor for the fumigation and packaging process for farm grains. Ben demanded—and rightly so—that if we got involved, there would be an ironclad agreement that we would have sole production and distribution rights in China. I am pretty sure this man does not have the power to do that so this project is probably dead. Meanwhile, I am still waiting to hear back from Don regarding his research on the carbon project software. I am hoping that he can manually do the mapping for the first 20 hectares to check the carbon content. We need to talk soon.

I did something new. I went into the prayer room to pray. I am figuring it is probably mostly used by Muslims since there were Qurans and rugs there, but I found it a comforting place. I then took a shower—it was wonderful. I spoke to Wendy; she had just woken up. She is well and we are both looking forward to seeing each other in one more day.

1/22/20

9:07pm ICT | On the plane, Bangkok Airport

We are going to take off 45 minutes late, but the ride is supposed to be 45 minutes shorter than planned, so we should be fine. Emirates is a really good airline and this flight has a lounge in the back. If possible, I will try to stay up as long as possible so that I can sleep on the way home and start to get back to New Jersey time. Before getting on board, I was texting with Renard, Ben, Shamil, and Azwan; I spoke to Don, too. It all comes down to this. We need to be able to test a hectare of land to find out and prove how much sequestered carbon is contained within all the vegetation. If we can do that, we have a product to sell. The question lies with Don. He has to find the camera and software that can do this on a mass hectare basis. We will worry about the carbon inside the ground later; if we can figure out a way to read that, there is a hidden gold mine waiting to be tapped.

Hello and welcome to the February Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

As a quick reprise from last month, we had put forth a proposal to the Chinese government to set up a group of huge, organic farms to help supply good food, plant hundreds of thousands of trees, and create thousands of jobs. As it turned out, there were

too many ministries involved and that proposal died a quick death. However, from those ashes arose another idea. I do not give up easily. This latest idea involves the huge problem of mass burnings of forest and farmland in Malaysia and all of Southeast Asia. The massive problems of air pollution in that area are apparent and the accompanying health issues are already putting a huge strain on their entire population. How are we going to make this change?

First three definitions:

1. "Sequestered carbon" is the amount of carbon that is contained/stored in trees, bushes, grasses, and soil. The carbon is stored as the vegetation gives off oxygen and absorbs CO₂, or carbon dioxide.

2. A "carbon credit" is a measurement that is equal to one ton of carbon dioxide.

3. "Carbon neutral" is defined as a person, company, or entity, like a country that wants to offset any carbon they produce by modifying their production processes to reduce their carbon emission. In addition, other options include planting trees, using solar or wind power, and purchasing carbon credits.

The idea behind our new project is to build a company that will identify those carbon deposits in Malaysia through aerial mapping and then have those deposits declared as sequestered carbon credits. We can then trade them on the International Carbon Credit exchange. In effect, we will help pay farmers to be good stewards by not burning their land to clear them for new crops.

I know this sounds like a crazy idea, but the initial meetings in Malaysia with our new team went very well. We have a few areas to work out before we run a Feasibility Study involving 20 hectares of land, and if our calculations prove out, then we will launch the idea. If this works, we should be able to help reduce the burning, which is causing a huge amount of the global air pollution problem. Stay tuned for more.

We are just about to take off. Finishing the Almanac took everything out of me. IJUS is already done for the day; I may not go onto email for this ride. For now, time for a movie and food.

1/22/20 GST | En route home, somewhere over Europe

Dear Dad,

Wendy and I look at life differently. She comes in from a rational perspective that makes perfect sense once she explains it to me. She is "normal", which is why it is so important that I am with her. I need the balance. I used to think that I was just weird or unusual, but now I know that I am wired differently than almost everyone else. I simply see the world through a different lens and that has been coming out in quantum leaps over the past few years. It lets me see events from another perspective and I now realize that is why I take so many huge risks. I "see" opportunities.

I am on my way back from Asia. I got a cold along the way and the respiratory effects were exacerbated by the high levels of pollution. I have first hand experience of how much worse being sick in a polluted atmosphere can be and it was not pleasant. I don't know who "trained" me to be unsatisfied when I saw the need to move forward—probably a combination of you, Mom, and God. I see a need for drastic divergence now and we have a very small window. There are multiple ways to bring people to a cause: money, passion, power, and fear. Put them all together and you have the chance for a tidal wave of innovation and success. That is the key: to find out the main desire for a multitude of

influential people, ignite the spark, and then get out of the way for spontaneous combustion. I have that passion for putting out the fires in Southeast Asia and have planted the spark in our potential partners who can then start the chain reaction we need. But to do that there has to be a component for extreme financial betterment for a multitude of people. It all comes down to a double level of potential. If we can quantify the sequestered carbon amounts in huge amounts of land quickly, then we can monetize the process, millions will benefit both monetarily and health-wise. We can attract millions of people to our cause. That is the positive. There's also the fear for the landholders to have their land confiscated, pay severe fines, and even face imprisonment if they burn their property. The classic carrot and stick: they will make money for doing nothing and lose everything if they act badly.

The second part of the equation is being able to quantify the amount of carbon sequestered in the soil itself. We estimate that it could be multiple times the levels of the vegetation itself, the result of centuries of degraded biomass in the soil. The amount of potential sequestered carbon credits could be the equivalent to the Alaska Gold Rush. We are talking trillions of dollars of what would amount to a global "carbon tax." Companies, cities, states, governments, and even individual people would become monetarily responsible for the environmental degradation we all cause to our planet. We have to make it less expensive to do what is right then act irresponsibly. Most people, while they like doing good deeds, will only massively shift their behavior if the fear of what could happen is worse than not. We are being moved by divine inspiration and the desperation to save ourselves before it is too late. We have to move quickly and to do that all of the buttons will have to be pushed. Our team will have to make a huge amount of money in order for people to take notice and give us the respect, power, and influence necessary to generate the opportunities around the world for systemic, rapid change.

I remember a long time ago when I was new to our business and I used to say you pushed people too hard. As time went on and I became successful, you would remind me of that and say I had become much more aggressive than you. As you are watching Dad, from Heaven, you know that levels of impatience and aggression have increased exponentially. My time of influence is finite. I don't have forever to start this change. God has put me in the right spot, with the right team to go for it. As with other outliers in the same position, a few of us will make it while most will fail. However, in the end, we will have to answer for what we did in our lives, and only then can we say we did our best. Hopefully God will look at us, smile, and tell us to go spend some time with our friends and relatives who have passed while we wait for our next assignments.

*Love you,
Andrew*

I left one of my ice bags somewhere along the way and am down to one. The nice flight attendant is filling it now, which is very good because my back is starting to ache. I am getting home later than I thought, which does not matter since I am working from home anyway and Wendy already has lunch plans. It has been an amazing trip: seeing all the customers, the party at IJX, seeing all of our people. Now we have to keep the momentum going on the carbon project. I look forward to seeing Wendy and being home.

1/22/20

3:03pm EST | Our House, NJ

We landed on time, TSA was great, and I got through very quickly—even my bags did not take long. Mike the driver had me home before 8:30am where I unpacked and Wendy came home from yoga as I started exercising. It was wonderful seeing her and being home. I was not feeling great, but I biked my short route and was glad I did. After getting cleaned up, I Skyped with Don. He will check our new Malaysian carbon mapping source and figure out what needs to be done with the tests, I am off to the supermarket and then the chiropractor.

1/23/20

4:33pm EST | My Office, NJ

It has been an excellent day of catching up. I am not completely caught up, but I should be tomorrow. Our team did great while I was away. More work on the carbon project and Don is doing a really good job. We are far enough ahead on it that I am hoping to go to Malaysia in three weeks to meet the people doing the drone mapping, the information conversion, and the carbon sampling as well as our partners to set up the company. We still need to find the source to convert how much carbon is contained in the vegetation, but hopefully there is a database we can access to do that. Worst case: I can postpone the trip a few weeks. I just emailed Igor in Belgium, telling him to take over for me to see customers in Europe for the next six months. I can always change that if needed.

1/24/20

3:15pm EST | My Office, NJ

I was able to bike this morning; it was 27°F and I would not want to go when it was much colder. It has been a day of pricing, paperwork, and getting our sample brochures and my books to go out to our new contacts. Don and I also worked on the carbon project; we are getting a lot done and—by the time the Chinese New Year Holiday is over—we should be in a good position to get moving on the Feasibility Study. There is a global virus on the move and it is spreading everywhere. So far, the amount of sickness and deaths has been relatively small, but the numbers are growing alarmingly and any number of those tragedies are bad. The Chinese government is shutting down sectors of its country with travel bans. I am still hoping to go to Malaysia in a few weeks, if we are ready, for the carbon project.

1/25/20

12:17pm EST | Our House, NJ

The rain held off this morning so I was able to get in a bike ride, which was very nice indeed. It is now raining and scheduled to do so for the remainder of the afternoon. It is much better than snow. The coronavirus is still spreading globally. No word yet on a possible vaccine. I got a proposal from Sahar from

Israel regarding developing her family land into a regenerative farm. I like the proposal and am waiting for clarification as to whether the money we send is a donation or part of a partnership. Nothing much will happen in Asia during the next week because of the Chinese New Year, but I am hoping that as soon as it is over we can hit the ground running regarding the carbon project and get all parties on board with what has to be done and how soon that it can be started.

1/26/20

3:48pm EST | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

The coronavirus is spreading around the world and, at the moment, there is no anti-dote or vaccine. In fact, no-one seems to even know how long it can stay alive once it is emitted from a carrier. The Chinese New Year holiday has been extended by their government and many millions of their citizens are locked down with transportation frozen in a bunch of huge cities. I was in China a week ago, the virus takes two weeks to incubate, and I already have been sick from someone. I am not overly fearful for myself at this time, but it is food for thought. As for business, it poses a bunch of challenges. One huge one is if IJX is forced to shut down production. There is no way IJUS can take over all of their business—they are way too big. On the other hand, if they are shut-down, then their customers in China will probably also be quarantined. I am not sure how much of IJUS production is there right now, but that is something else to consider. The worse projection is what happens if this virus spreads globally and cannot be stopped. That would mean potentially millions of people dying with tens of millions sick. The world's health system would probably be overloaded and the economy greatly hindered or stopped. It is a very wearisome possibility and can't be ignored. No matter what the critics or nationalists say, we are all one world and what affects parts of us can easily affect everyone. There is absolutely nothing I can do about the spread of the virus, except order masks and gloves for me and our people, which I have already done. Therefore, it is time to move forward with the carbon project. If people are worried in general, they are much more prone to act.

Love,

Andrew

Wendy thinks I am a little crazy with the carbon project idea—probably no more than others. But I said to her that in ten or twenty years I could not look our grandchildren (if we have any) in the eyes without having at least tried to make a major difference in the world we are leaving to them. I feel it more strongly all the time; we need to make changes now and the only way for a global shift is if people can make money from doing things better and being penalized if they don't. Call it "carbon tax" or more to the point a "world survival tax"—our time is running out and I will not sit by and do nothing. People can laugh, smirk, mock me, shake their heads, or call me crazy. I don't care. As long as I can motivate those around me to action, we will continue forward until we triumph to some degree—or we all lose.

1/27/20

5:06pm EST | Our House, NJ

Unintended Consequences

The coronavirus continues to spread around the world. Since there is no time limit set on how long the virus can stay alive in the air or on the ground, I am suspending my collection of trash while on my bike rides and walks. The potential of being unintentionally contaminated by bad germs of all types is no longer worth the risk. Hopefully people will take more care of their own surroundings and the level of trash will not get worse. When things get stabilized, I can revisit this decision.

1/27/20

3:22pm EST | My Office, NJ

It has been a good day. I was able to ride outside—a bonus in January—and a lot of paperwork got done today. The bulk of stock markets globally are down, which is a huge fear regarding the coronavirus. No one knows the extent of what could happen and the potential two week incubation period with little symptoms is causing a great deal of stress.

1/28/20

3:22pm EST | My Office, NJ

I gave the go ahead to send the first donation to Sahar at the Regenerative Farm in Israel.

Hi Sahar,

We believe in your project. I think it can make a quantum change in the way the world grows food. We are happy and proud to support you. Please get us the wire information or we can send you a check. In the past, my family has had trees planted in Israel in memory or honor for various relatives and friends through the Jewish National Fund. I would like to move that to your land. Please set up a small portion where trees can be planted with placards on them so that their relatives and friends can come see them when they come to Israel. Also, since my mom was instrumental in this effort, please send updates and photos so that she and the rest of us can watch your progress. If we do this correctly, we can create a "buzz" where your farm and efforts can become famous and pave the way for your expansion and others to follow. Please confirm when you get the first check and remind me the middle of March regarding the second. We can talk about more after that.

*Regards,
Andrew*

1/29/20

3:17pm EST | My Office, NJ

The coronavirus is getting worse. China now looks like it might be closed until February 10th; this is becoming very serious for IJX and the entire global supply chain.

1/30/20

12:59pm EST | My Office, NJ

How Worried Should We Be?

We have two plants in China and have been in almost constant contact with our people there regarding the shutdowns from the Coronavirus. Neither of our plants are in the affected area of Wuhan, but the Chinese government extended the Lunar New Year holiday, which has effectively closed the country's manufacturing base. In other words, nothing is being made or assembled and it looks like the shutdown will last at least until February 10th. If things go back to normal on that day, then the effects will be felt economically around the world but should not be too bad. However, every additional week of the lockdown will adversely affect the global supply chain to an ever-increasing degree. How bad can it be? In my opinion, if the shutdown lasts six weeks, then we will have a global recession. If it lasts four months, we will have a global depression, and if it lasts nine months, then we will have a global meltdown. This is potentially incredibly serious and will affect everyone—no matter where you live. Let's hope it ends soon.

1/30/20

3:15pm EST | My Office, NJ

Who Signs Your Paycheck?

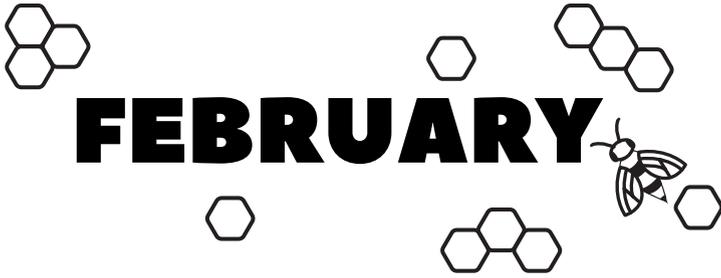
I know it may seem obvious, but the person in charge is not always the person with the title. One of our guys here in New Jersey is in charge of posting my blogs on LinkedIn. It is one of the ways I keep in touch with people and the responses can be anywhere from 500 to 2,500 people so there is a lot going on. However, if nothing is posted there is no interaction and that is not good for me or our companies. Therefore, when I asked him why he had not posted the one I gave him for today or some others last week, he said that he was busy with other work. It is not like he is lazy; rather it is simply a matter of priorities. As the person who owns the company, signs his paycheck, and is in charge of sales, you would think I would take priority. But that is not the case since I am not his immediate supervisor. Whether it is interacting here at work with our customers and suppliers or personally with my wife, kids, and friends, it is all the same. I always try to keep in mind who I have to answer to because even though I am the "boss" I am still often not at the top.

1/31/20

2:57pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The World Health Organization declared a health emergency this week regarding the coronavirus. Stock markets in North America and Europe are down. Theoretically, people in China can start trading again on Monday, back from their holiday, so it is impossible to know how their markets will react. With all this, the flu season here in the US is now in full force—a lot of people are sick and dying. The UK is leaving the European Union today; no one has any idea what will hap-

pen. There is a great deal of indecision everywhere; therefore, it's a good time to attack for more business. I have put my trip to Malaysia on hold. There is a chance I could get marooned there and it is not worth the risk.



2/2/20

4:20pm EST | Our House, NJ

Jews and Christmas Lights

It is not what you think. Growing up Jewish with lots of Christian friends, our family got a very good taste of the positive feeling of Christmas. I did not miss having a tree but the lights—oh, those lights were always a source of wonderment and joy. I always figured it was something we would never be a part of until my wonderful wife suggested we hang some on our porch. I decided to put them up today. It was then that I started appreciating the stories and comedy regarding putting up strands of electrical lights. It turned out there was an order in how they were to be hung; it took us a couple of tries. The good thing was that I had bought the removable hanger clips so I did not have to put in metal screws. They seemed to work well; hopefully they won't fall down tomorrow. After some trial and error, we now have sparkly lights on our porch. Appropriately enough, it had started snowing as we were hanging them, making it all the more festive. As long as these lights function, they will stay up; I can't wait to see them on a hot summer night and during the spring and autumn, too. Some things are eternal and meant to stay year round. I am hoping that our new twinkly lights will fit that bill.

2/3/20

1:20pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The drop in the CSI 3000 Chinese market as expected dipped a lot—almost 8%—but the markets were then frozen so they could not go down anymore for the day. As it was, most of the major markets in Asia were down along with commodities while Europe and the US were up. I challenge anyone to figure out how and why that happened, but that is why I am not a professional stock picker. The coronavirus is still increasing in China, but appears to be predominantly settled there. However, the US flu season has been very bad with over 10,000 people killed by it so far, which is three times the virus in China, so it is good to

keep some perspective. Regardless, I am not going back to Asia for at least a few months unless something major comes up. Whatever the reason, the sales for the start of this new month have been slow; I hope things perk up a lot before it is over. Today is the Iowa Caucus and the official start of the 2020 Presidential Campaign. Impeachment proceedings on President Trump appear to be winding down and look like they will end on Wednesday with no conviction.

2/4/2020

3:41pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The Iowa Caucus results are a complete disaster. It was held yesterday, there was a software glitch, and they are now promising results in about an hour. All four of the leading Democratic candidates say they did well. The truth, theoretically, will be known soon. The coronavirus, which is still spreading, may or may not be containable. My guess is that on Monday everyone will go back to work in China, and if it is going to spread, then it will show. So far, thankfully no one at IJX has been affected—I pray it stays that way. In the meantime, stock markets are zooming upward and safe havens like gold are down. As usual, nothing makes sense.

2/5/20

10:15am EST | Our Office, NJ

We are redoing our company presentation. References to Kayla and our California office have to be deleted—a sad thing to have to do but it must be done.

Where We're Headed

The challenges for our multinational company keep growing at an ever-increasing rate. They range from continuing to support our customers wherever they are located to managing new technology, dealing with increased competition, and even medical pandemics and other emergencies. We began in 2001 with our manufacturing facility in Maplewood, New Jersey. Over the next 19 years, we have increased our scope to include two additional plants in China, distribution centers in Mexico and Belgium, and sales offices in Toronto, Israel, and Thailand. We have future plans for a sales office in Malaysia, a new manufacturing site somewhere in the world, which is still up for discussion, and anything else that we need to address. Speed, agility, willingness, ability, and passion to adapt have made us known around the world and we plan to increase our global footprint.

2/5/20

3:12pm EST | Our Office, NJ

It has been another day of necessary paperwork covering sales, prices, and various other activities. At this moment, Pete Buttigieg 26.9% is leading the Iowa Caucus, but it is still not over yet. Bernie Sanders 25.2% is second, then Elizabeth Warren 18.2%, Joe Biden 15.6% and Amy Klobuchar comes in with a strong 12.5%. Joe Biden looks to be in trouble, but it is too early to tell. It looks like

the Chinese move to cut off Hubei Province, while very hard on its inhabitants, seems to have stemmed the flow of the coronavirus. It must have been a very tough decision for the government. Most global stock markets are way up; Tesla has doubled since the beginning of the year.

2/5/20

7:24pm EST | Our House, NJ

I started testing the latest version of the SwaddlePax Jacket today and wore it to my chiropractor. The reaction there was immediate and positive—so much so that I lent the jacket to one of his other patients to try until Friday. John has the time to help me market this project and there seems to be some momentum growing. Maybe we actually have something here.

The Good Part and the Bad Part

I have been writing since I was a teenager. The good part about that is I have an actual record of what I was thinking at various times of stress and joy. The bad part is there can be no self-delusion since I wrote down what happened. I found a diary entry I had written in 1972. It was about my relationship with my dad. I did not remember it being as combative and negative as it was—especially since we eventually worked together for almost two decades. But the truth was there: we had severe conflict and I got over it when he had helped me by taking me into our family business and teaching me how to be successful. Our relationship worked when we needed each other and stopped working as well when we didn't. The printed word does not change, even if my memories did.

2/6/20

3:48pm EST | Our Office, NJ

We are making great strides in multiple areas. The regenerative farm in Israel has its first round of financing/donation from us and should be able to start planting in a few months. The SwaddlePax Vest is getting ready to launch in April and Dr. Capriglione and his team are excited about spearheading the effort. We are getting excellent repose on our new SwaddlePax Jacket Design. Don Lem is working hard on plotting out the testing areas in Malaysia for the sequestered carbon project. I am hoping we can run the actual tests within two weeks, get the results by the end of the month, and see if our theories are correct. Then, we can move forward to start a company and launch the project. IJ US, Europe, and Mexico made a very small profit last month, which was actually excellent considering the economic dip. Sales for this month are okay so far, but everything is clouded by the coronavirus. IJX is still on schedule to re-open on Monday; if they do, and the rest of China does also, then the impact will hopefully be greatly reduced on the global economy. However China is still being quarantined by much of the world and things are going to take a while before they go back to normal. I am sure that our customers who moved their work to Mexico are happy with their decision, but no area is safe from a pandemic. Spreading out the options seems like an ever better idea. I emailed Ben the other night; I am thinking that we need

another plant so when this type of emergency happens again we have more options. At this point, most of the world is either too expensive, gives out way too many benefits to their workers to the detriment of potential employers, or does not have the infrastructure in place to safeguard our machinery, intellectual property, or IT. This leaves us with Mexico, Australia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia. It is not a simple or inexpensive road.

We Are Here for a Purpose

Our world is filled with incredible doom, hardship, hope, and joy. The older I get the more I realize that the reality of how things are emanates from how I view them. If I am happy, then my teams, family, and friends absorb that energy and it gives them fuel to do the same. If I am down, angry, or upset, then that negative energy poisons them in the same way. As a boss and dad, my responsibilities go way past my own self. I can motivate those around me to take our ideas and launch into the stratosphere or they can be dropped in despair. I was not meant to be here as a negative influence. No matter what you believe in, whether God, karma, or simply the value of life, we all have a right, a need, and a destiny to go as far as we can in the positive directions we choose. Don't settle for normal or average. Whatever is inside of each of us needs to be let go to radiate to others so we all soar together. If not, why are we here?

2/7/20

12:03pm EST | Our Office NJ

I spoke to Ben this morning. Things in China are not great; here is an update that I circulated.

Hi everyone,

I spoke to Ben this morning.

1. IJX will be up and running, barring government stoppage, on Monday. They will be at 40% capacity. 60% of their staff is stranded around the country and will get back when they can. This will affect deliveries—check with Sophy regarding updates.

2. Shanghai and the surrounding areas are shut down, including until February 25th.

3. The government has checkpoints at all roads and people are quarantined. Some will have to wait two weeks before they can go back to work.

4. The Chinese supply chain is severely affected for the next few months. Further damage depends on the containment of the virus.

Regards,

Andy

2/8/20

4:51pm EST | Our House, NJ

I emailed a big customer in Germany. His group in Romania has a huge project where IJX is heavily involved. He was concerned last week about whether they could handle the starting orders. I said IJUS would help—just not at the same prices. I emailed him and them today so that IJX could give him an update on Tuesday as to their capacity and readiness. The world is waiting for Monday

morning to see how the China business market gets back into operation. Some areas have already been pushed back two more weeks. It has been a fun day; I exercised this morning, biked outdoors, then visited with David and my brother. The weather is wintry-like, but aside from flurries, no snow is predicted for at least another week.

2/9/29

7:11am EST | Our House, NJ

We need to start thinking about people we can access in other countries besides Malaysia—both to open companies there and spread our message about carbon credits. Climate change is the number one issue in the world, and if we have a workable answer, then we can decide how it is addressed and who is leading the efforts in their countries. We are potentially in a unique position to help lead this effort in Southeast Asia. We have the chance to make a significant positive impact. This is our time.

2/9/10

2:37pm EST | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

You taught me to love and respect our environment. The last time I was in Southeast Asia, I was literally sickened by the haze and pollution levels in the countries I visited. One of the main reasons is the illegal burning of their farmland as a cheap way to clear it to grow new crops. I believe the practice has seriously compromised the very ability of their citizens to live healthy lives and we are now working to come up with a solution to help stop the burning permanently. Who am I to even attempt this? I don't even live there. I go by the philosophy you taught me: if I feel strongly enough, go after it. I do, we are, and I put the chances of success at .01%, but that is much better than zero so we are going for it. We will keep going until we either succeed or we are stopped—both are eons ahead of giving up or simply not trying. I can live with defeat, but I can't live with "what if I had tried?".

*Love you,
Andrew*

2/10/20

1:46pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Great news! IJX is back on-line at 40% capacity—hopefully full strength by the weekend. IJ Suzhou is still closed. Rina has asked the government permission to reopen; no word back yet.

2/11/2020

1:49pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Don contacted a professor in Malaysia who was supposed to help with the carbon testing. We all got on a Skype call together and it turned out that the basic

premise of our project was faulty. The amount of burning in Malaysia was minimal; the big issue was in Indonesia. We will have to center our efforts there or stop the project.

OCD Is Not All Bad

Having Obsessive Compulsive Behavior (OCD) means that the individual (me) creates “rituals” of behavior that are very difficult to lessen or stop. For many, it can include eating foods in certain numbers, shapes, or sequences. It can also mean huge amounts of checking and rechecking to ensure that something is either turned off or stays running. Normally, at least for me, once a course is determined, then it has to be finished or I have to fail in order to stop. Any action can become a ritual and there is no firm rule about how they are identified, internalized, and become law within a person’s brain. But once they are in your mind, they remain. However, in certain cases it can save your life, help your career, and also make you incredibly dependable. For instance, if you “determine” that you will work diligently, intelligently, and won’t stop until you succeed, then you probably will meet your goals. If you resolve that your word is your bond and you will never disappoint someone, then that will also happen. Some rituals can greatly affect your life in a good way. I have an issue with hand washing; I do it frequently and multiple times each visit. While this has its drawbacks in terms of time spent and chafed hands, it is an extreme advantage in flu and other pandemic diseases. Hand washing is considered one of the best lines of defense and I don’t have to be reminded—it is one of my rituals.

2/12/20

4:42pm EST | Roseland, NJ

I was up at 3:45am and ready for my meeting with a customer from Malaysia at 5:00am. They wanted me to push IJX to make them free samples so they could then approve them for the future and send them orders. That was an easy task for me as we always want the business and making a few samples to get them is usually not an issue. The meeting went well; we all agreed on what was to be done, so I emailed with IJX later and they are taking care of it. I then exercised inside until the 7:00am IJ Global sales meeting. Everyone involved with sales was on the call, the main concern was for IJX and the results of the coronavirus. The good news was that IJ Xiamen was up to about 50% capacity and will hopefully be at 100% by the first week of March. IJ Suzhou, however, was still closed and waiting for government approval to reopen. Elsewhere, everyone else was good; our marketing is strong and expanding. None of us have any idea how badly business will be affected by the virus, but we hope it will be contained soon and things globally will not be horribly affected. We are going ahead with the virtual coloring book; everyone liked the idea and we will create a box of pencils with our logo and advertising to go along with it. These will be given out on sales calls, mailed to prospective and current customers, and used anywhere else where they could be helpful.

After biking and getting cleaned up, it was off to the office where I spent the

day doing marketing, pricing, and working on a problem with a job. Don is going to interview an Australian carbon research expert hopefully tonight. She is our last chance for the Indonesia carbon credit project; otherwise, this project may die. Stock markets reached new highs even with the problem with the virus. The US presidential race is in chaos; happily, Mike Bloomberg is now in third place nationally, so we have a chance if he succeeds. Otherwise, it is more of President Trump.

2/12/20

8:29pm EST | Our House, NJ

I just Skyped with Don. He just spoke with the expert from Australia. They think there is a way to prove the amount of sequestered carbon per hectare of land and I believe we have a path to get it approved by the Indonesian government. It is the slimmest possibility and everything has to work out perfectly, but if it does the burning can be greatly reduced or stopped and it can happen quickly. A lot has to go right before anything can even start. Divine Intervention is the only way it will work.

2/13/20

1:43pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Michael Bloomberg is making headway and that is confirmed because the president has started to attack him directly. The good news is that Bloomberg is attacking back—very nice to see—and it looks like the race is on. If the Democrats choose anyone else, they will lose.

2/14/20

3:11pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Valentines Day

As is our normal procedure, Wendy and I gave each other cards this morning. Flowers should have arrived by now and that should be it. This is not a major holiday for us—just a reminder of how fortunate we are to have each other. Kayla called me this morning; she usually calls me as she walks to work. Her job description has changed again. Actually, her team's job description has changed. She is rolling well with the new responsibilities and, as I keep saying, the company will see her amazing attributes and I think she will be moved upward in less than a year.

2/15/20

8:52pm EST | Our House, NJ

It has been a really good day. It was too cold to bike so I exercised in our basement; I am getting the hang of using our new ARC trainer. It was then off to see David for tea and conversation. We spoke about family and business. We had spoken about the farm in Israel before, but today he committed to helping us

and gave me a nice-sized check as a donation; he is a very good man. After I got home, Wendy and I went to lunch at a local restaurant to celebrate my birthday coming tomorrow. The food was very good and the conversation ranged from family to reincarnation. I believe in it, but Wendy is not sure. I believe in God and Wendy is hopeful. Then we spoke about my place in this world. I believe that I, with my family and support team, can change it for the better. Wendy thinks that is possible, but part of her job is keeping my ego in check. I agreed. After we got back home, I spoke to Irene; she and David are donating to the farm and I told Mom about it when I saw her later. I also told her about David Williams donating; we have a lot of good people in our lives. I also emailed Netta and Sahar today. I think that Netta's boyfriend will help with setting up bi-monthly drone flights around the property so that everyone can see the progress and maybe Sahar can give a commentary. There is a lot of potential fun and good times coming from there in the future. After I left my mom's, I did some errands, then it was back here to Wendy for peace and quiet. We had leftovers for dinner, which were excellent and I hope to be asleep soon. The coronavirus seems to be reducing in China, but there are scattered cases around the world. I hope they can be contained; no one will be able to lockdown and quarantine like China so the potential for bad times is much higher.

2/16/20

3:54pm EST | Our House, NJ

My 64th birthday has been a lovely day. I exercised inside, biked outside, and then went out for lunch with my wonderful wife. Afterward, I went walking with my brother and we had tea. Amazingly, we both agreed that we could vote for Michael Bloomberg and Amy Klobuchar. The more people I speak to the more voice support for Mr. Bloomberg—let's hope it continues.

2/17/20

2:29pm EST | Our Office, NJ

I was able to bike this morning—a very good thing. It is President's Day here in the US; a lot of places are closed. Even with the coronavirus, global stock markets are still mostly rising, along with precious metals. It is all very peculiar. A lot of database work today updating our customer files and sending out books and brochures. Not highly exciting, but it had to be done. I have no problems doing it.

2/18/20

4:22pm EST | Our Office NJ

There are certain indicators I watch for the world economy. The first is the price of gold which is rising, it is now 1605.10/ounce and rising. The second is the average of global stock markets for the last month. About half of those are now in negative numbers. The third are stock markets over the last year. Almost all of them are still way up. I will keep a close watch.

We sent three SwaddlePax Vests to two pain doctors. If they like it, they can get it registered, so it can be ordered through insurance companies, which could mean huge sales. We have a long way to go before we get there. First, the doctors have to like our product. We are also working on the SwaddlePax handout card and the distributor form. There is a lot to get done.

2/19/20

11:17am | Our Office, NJ

We Don't Just Work Together

Growing up, I was taught not to get involved in the personal lives of our employees. The theory was that their problems would become mine, their issues would be used as excuses not to work, and it all made it much harder if I had to let them go. The problem was that the man who taught me wanted a very small company. His advice might have worked for a single practitioner and perhaps someone who held power over thousands but not to a boss who sees and works with his employees all the time. I like our team, I think they are great, and I consider it an honor to be working with them. I do know their problems, what is happening in their families, who is buying a house or getting married, and it does sometimes make things “sticky.” But in the end, getting involved is the way I have to do it. We are all gearing towards success, fostering a very pleasant work environment, and living happy lives both at work and home. If I did not put out the effort to really know our employees, there would be less of a chance of me getting into unpleasant situations and even fewer opportunities for all the good that can happen.

2/20/20

2:27pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Tomorrow I will follow-up with the medical doctor regarding helping us list the Vest so it can be ordered through insurance companies. I have no feel as to what kind of response we will get. While I was at John's yesterday getting treated, he introduced me to an attorney specializing in medical injury cases. She has neck issues herself; we will include her in the product testing for the jacket if we get to that level. If the Vests fails to sell this time, then we are done promoting it.

We had a big job from IJX delayed because of the coronavirus. The world is filled with events like this; I am hoping that our preparation makes it an overall benefit for IJ globally as opposed to a liability.

The Democratic Debate last night did not seem to go well for Mr. Bloomberg. However, it was his first one and the prediction of his immediate demise as a candidate is totally premature. By the way, he is the only candidate my whole family would vote for against the president. The price of gold is up to \$1622.50/ troy ounce. The farther it goes, I believe the more worried the investors, which in turn will eventually predict the next economic downtown. Of course, I have been predicting that for the past eighteen months—so what do I know?

2/22/2020

9:03am EST | Newark Liberty International Airport, NJ

Yesterday was a normal pre-trip day. After exercising, I spent the day doing paperwork, clearing my desk, making sure things were as ready as possible for our manufacturing team next week, and in general having a good time. I then went to the chiropractor; John is doing well and we issued more marketing for the Vest launch in April. My treatment was wonderful and then it was home to Wendy. A peaceful dinner followed; we packed and I went to sleep at my usual time and got up at 2:45am. I exercised for about two and a quarter hours, which, combined with the walking with our luggage here at the airport, meant I was done for the day and my mind was calm. If anything more comes later, like a walk with Ben, then that will be gravy. I then got cleaned up, Mike the driver got us here in good time, and then something really exciting happened. There was a place to sign up for CLEAR at the airport. That is a service that collects your individual data, fingerprints, and retinal scans. I'm already a member. We got Wendy enrolled, which meant that for all US airports that have this service, including Denver and San Francisco, it can mean a major time savings when checking-in through security. Boarding was exceptionally easy and we are now waiting to take off. As usual, Wendy is very easy to travel with.

2/22/20

9:51pm MST | Denver International Airport, CO

We arrived early yesterday and met Ben and Carla for lunch at our hotel. They looked wonderful; lunch was tasty and gave us a chance to talk. Then we went over to see their new house. It is awesome! Perfectly suited to them and already has a very positive combined vibe of the two of them. Wendy and I both really liked it. We spent the afternoon playing board games and then Ben cooked us a delicious dinner. We had a really nice time, but by 7:00pm local time, I was really tired so they brought us back to the hotel. By the way, the Art Hotel in Denver is very nice. I got up at 3:30am, exercised in the really nice hotel gym, and then Wendy and I were picked up for the airport. There were some snow-showers, but—so far—everything seemed okay. Wendy got to use her new CLEAR access, which was awesome. The entry area was pretty crowded and we are now getting ready to go to the gate. Ben and Carla look very comfortable and compatible together; they are a good match. I have grown very fond of her and am very happy that she is now part of our family.

Kayla is away on an unofficial company retreat with a bunch of her co-workers. I hope it is going well. Alex is working part of the weekend again; he is really putting in the hours.

2/23/20

10:54am MST | Denver International Airport, CO

So far, we are on schedule to leave, which is always a very good thing. The coronavirus is spreading around the world. Various countries are taking different

levels of action, including closing borders and stopping access to other countries. Some companies are doing virtual conferences instead of flying people globally. So far, we are in good shape, but I am taking nothing for granted. The cause of the virus is not clear, but the way it is popping up around the world has health officials thinking that the incubation period may be up to four weeks, and some people don't even know they are carrying it. It is very scary how fast this thing is moving and how many people are already affected.

2/23/20

11:47am HST | In flight to Kona

I have begun the transition to vacation mode. I just watched the original Star Wars movie; it has been a long time and it is still excellent. Wendy is up talking to the two flight attendants; she is calm and smiling so I know she too is making the transition.

Dear God,

I find myself in an incredible position. My life is amazing and I am in an eternal state of gratitude to you. I did not figure I would have the chance to make a difference in our world and you have even given me that. Whether it works or not, whether we can help save the forests of Indonesia, and whatever else happens and the additional chances to soar, I wanted to publicly say thank you. I grew up thinking that I should never put long-term, huge goals "out there" because I was setting myself up for disappointment and failure. But as I have grown older, I also realized that restricting my dreams because of fear of failure was a waste of everyone's time and energy. If I am going to "go for it", then I might as well go for a huge chunk. I have always advised people that it takes almost as much work to do a big project as small so you might as well go big because it is not that much extra energy. Besides, if it is successful, it gives you a much better platform to launch again. I am taking my own advice and ratcheting up our goals and what we want to accomplish. The only limitation on me, besides you, is me. Therefore, if you are behind me, as I truly believe you are, then there are no acceptable excuses not to surge ahead. If we succeed, we do it as a team. If we fail, I will blame myself. Therefore, no one will have a reason not to join in. You have designated me as one of the chosen. It is a position I take seriously and realize the ramifications if I stop trying to change the world. You will be with me as long as I surge forward, a partner of indescribable proportions, a force that through me, can help make a huge difference. I understand what you want, I understand what is inside of me, I understand what we can do together. Thank you for everything you have given me.

*Love always,
Andrew*

2/24/20

9:13am HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

We landed early, got our rental car, and rode along the coast highway to get here. It was a gorgeous afternoon, about 80°F and the scenery was amazing. There is a big mountain/volcano that we could see as we drove and we hope to see it close up this week. The resort is beautiful and the ocean. After getting

checked-in, we did little else for the rest of the evening. We did go down and see the sunset by the ocean, which was magnificent, and then stared at the evening sky from an outside couch and watched the stars come out. As you can tell, I was already pretty relaxed, which made it easy to get to sleep early. I was up at 5:30am—both to partially exercise before breakfast and also answer many emails. There are some issues at the office, which we will work through, but by the time we left for breakfast, all was okay.

The coronavirus is spreading globally and the world markets mostly went down a lot. There is nothing to be done at the moment. Ben liked my email from yesterday and we will talk next week. I am now on my way to the gym.

The Smell of Success

It is amazing what emits memories. As I was walking through the resort where we are staying, I was suddenly hit with a fragrance that sent me right back to college. It was the same smell, not unpleasant, of the dormitory where I lived from 1974-1977. It was a time of hard work and stress, but I remember mostly good things about my time there. The main one was getting out early so that I could start my career. I always wanted to work, wanted the chance to be independent and successful from very early; graduating a year early helped to accelerate the process. I have never changed from that perspective; it was nice reliving that moment in time when the adventure started, but I would not like to go through that process again.

The Sound of Water

When I was very young, we used to go to the Adirondack Mountains for our summer vacation. We stayed in a very remote area of upstate New York. Mrs. Mullins, the owner of the house we rented, had built a few homes with her husband, who had died by the time we started going there. Our whole family loved it and one of the main attractions was the nearby pond that had boats we loved to row. The first thing we did when we arrived was run down to the water to make sure nothing had changed. Right before getting there, we could hear the rush of millions of drops of water crashing onto the rocks below. It was a cadence that I loved. I heard that sound again while on vacation here in Hawaii. The rush of water flowing over rocks brought me back fifty-five years ago to memories of a place I loved. It was a time for our family to be together, away on an adventure and without any school. I will make sure to walk there again before we leave.

2/24/20

5:38pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

I was up at 5:30am to many emails since it was already 10:30am EST. Most of them were fine, but there was one trouble area which really upset me. It has been a color matching issue for months and probably won't be resolved for a few more months, so I will have to get my emotions under control and realize that we are doing the best that we can and we will fight it through. I then exercised in my room, went down to the gym for the treadmill, then headed outside for a little

jogging and a walk. I passed the tennis courts. I yearned to hit balls again, but my back would not last long and I could end up back in the emergency room—not a worthwhile risk.

After breakfast we drove to a small town near the airport. The flight attendants on the trip here suggested a restaurant famous for poke bowls, which are mainly rice with fish. Wendy got one and enjoyed it; I had the best tuna I had ever tasted. Afterwards, we walked a bit in the town. I got a large brimmed hat and sandals for tomorrow's adventure. Wendy bought coffee, honey, and other treats to send to our kids. Once back here, she went for a massage and I went to the beach and got free use of swim fins, a diving mask, and snorkel before I went out swimming. I had not used this type of equipment for a very long time and it took a little to feel at ease, but when I did, I had a great time. There were schools of fish next to the submerged coral and it was an amazing show of colors. It was really cool. Once done and after I got cleaned up, I had a diet soda in the lounge, and eventually Wendy and I had a very pleasant dinner at one of the resort restaurants. It was dark when we left and the stars were amazing.

It is becoming all the more evident that growing up as an outlier has given me a perspective on life that is very different from everyone else. A combination of the genes from my relatives and the direct influences from my parents and grandparents created the stage. The rest was the area where I grew up, my wife, kids, the business, mental training from my father, and—interestingly enough—the eternal interior battle within myself to fight being shy and introverted. It all combined to transform me into an outgoing, aggressive person who loves to fight for whatever I desire. As you can imagine, the war going on inside me, which continues to this day, often creates tidal waves of energy, which I have been able to use to my advantage. However, when given the opportunity, I love to sit quietly, keep to myself, and not deal with anyone unless it is my immediate family. My father told me that the best salesmen were always born introverted or shy and had to fight their way out to transform themselves to become successful. The ability to make and utilize that change would determine my ability to be successful. When my dad “threw” me out on the road to go cold calling, it was actually not the cold shock it probably was for others. I had been trained from birth to be there. Like all life changing situations, you can either blindly fight against it or you can equate it to other areas of experience that you can draw on to create the ability to succeed.

In my case, asking girls out on dates was the formula I used for selling—the same one taught to me by my dad. His philosophy on dating was that “one out of three” would say yes; it was strictly a matter of percentages. I tried it starting out when I was thirteen, saw it worked there, and utilized the same technique as a young kid out in the road who knew nothing about his product line or how to sell it. In fact, it was the best training I could have had; a lot of women turned me down for first dates so being told no from a potential printing buyer was nothing new to me nor could they destroy my ego by being mean to me. I was already a proven, successful warrior, and I knew that once I learned the nuts and bolts of the printing business I could sell successfully. My life has been a series of battles, adventures, many failures, and some successes, but the road has always moved me

upward—albeit not in a straight line. The fact that I am different from almost everyone else no longer bothers me. In fact, I love seeing the world differently and seeing the potential for global, positive change. I simply have to raise my sights on what is possible, and then the worst that can happen is failing. It has happened before, it will happen again, and it doesn't matter. Every time something doesn't work, it leads me towards something that will.

The point for you is don't worry if you are different, if you are not like your friends, or if you see things in a way that is contrary to those around you. Don't make the assumption that you are wrong and everyone else is right. The way things “are” is constantly changing and those changes are created by people like me and you who make the decision to try something new, go for an impossible dream or simply think there are better ways to do anything.

2/25/20

2:17pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

Bad Performance or Scripted Play

Within the next hour, the Democratic debate in South Carolina will begin. Before it does, I wanted to offer a possible explanation for the horrible performance of Michael Bloomberg's last debate. Mayor Bloomberg is not only rich, influential, and a great businessman—he is not stupid. He also has paid a fortune to have the best political minds around him. There was no way they would not have known what the questions would be and where the attacks would come from in the last debate. Therefore, there are three possible reasons for his crummy performance. The first is that he is a lousy debater and he was lucky to win three terms as mayor of New York City because the competition was so low. The second is that he was briefed well and panicked under the pressure. The third—my choice—is that he and his team did it on purpose in order to put him into the “dark horse” position, which would give him the underdog status American's love. It will also move some of the criticism away from him and onto Bernie Sanders, who is now seen as the presumptive nominee. If Mr. Bloomberg was merely lucky to win three terms as mayor, which I don't believe, or cracked under pressure, which again I don't believe, then he deserves to lose the nomination. My guess is this is all part of the Bloomberg team's plan; look for him to do a lot better when the debate starts in thirty-four minutes.

2/25/20

3:11pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

I got up at 4:15am, answered my email, exercised in my room, and then headed downstairs for thirty minutes on the treadmill. Breakfast consisted of three oatmeal muffins from Elana and a few small bananas. Wendy was ready early, as always, and we were off for our big morning to swim with the dolphins. We arrived with plenty of time and met the other five members of our group. They were from all over the US and very pleasant. The crew consisted of the captain—a very laid back, convivial, and competent man—and a woman first mate who was

equally competent and very pleasant. On the way out, I got a disturbing email regarding the color issues and debated whether to email right away or wait until later. I chose to wait and then tried to put it out of my mind, which was not easy. However, when the boat went into high gear and we went off to look for dolphins, I was able to push it back further in my mind. We located one of four pods of dolphins who frequented this particular area and the engine stopped. We all went out in our flippers, face masks, and snorkels. Being terrified of a sunburn, I wore a long-sleeved t-shirt as well as sunscreen. Once Wendy and I were in the water, we had plastic tubes to help keep us buoyant; we spent the next thirty minutes following the first mate looking for fish. Eventually, we found them, but then Wendy came down with a case of sea sickness and had to spend the rest of the time on the boat. She was okay with me continuing and I did see a large group of dolphins both swimming about thirty feet below the surface and frolicking on top of the water. After a while, we went to a nearby reef to look at the incredibly-colored fish that inhabited that area. I had great fun looking at their colors and got an amazing amount of exercise. By that time, another person had gotten sea sick, but we had all had enough anyway and happily came back to the dock. Almost as soon as we landed, Wendy felt better, and by the time we changed our clothes, she was back to being happy and we decided that she should probably avoid small boats for the future. We then went to lunch at the same place as yesterday and had another excellent meal. We have nothing planned for the rest of the day except maybe a walk and going out to dinner. It is very peaceful here and on the whole island.

Global stock mostly went way down again and gold was lower also. Fears of the coronavirus are spooking people and countries everywhere. I am not sure how concerned or scared we should be. It is hard to tell with the various levels of news coverage.

2/26/20

2:42pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

I woke up early, exercised, had breakfast with Wendy, and then we were off to the Hawaii Tropical Botanic Gardens, which was about ninety minutes away. This island is amazing because there are all types of climate conditions, like arid and tropical, and it was amazing how quickly we shifted from one type of weather to the other. The arboretum was started by a couple in the 1970s who had made it their life's work. It was awesome with incredible trees and flowers from all over the world. You could see the amazing amount of effort they had put into it. It also bordered the Pacific Ocean, so we got to see the waves come crashing in on their coastline. We had a really fun time, Wendy bought me a hat, and then we drove back here.

The coronavirus is still dominating the news. There are reports in Korea that a religious cult held meetings and had a few infected members so there could be major problems there. President Trump says we are prepared in case of real trouble—I hope he is right. It looks like an unintended consequence, but if Bernie

Sanders gets the Democratic nomination, the moderate members of Congress are afraid he will lose. What a crazy world and political environment we live in.

2/26/20

4:31pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

Some more news on the coronavirus. Ben's daughter Emporia who lives here in the US could not get masks and Ben asked if we could spare a few from supplies. I had bought some for IJUS when the problem started in China. Of course, I said yes and then checked Amazon. A lot of the masks that were available in January are gone, which meant that the public was not only watching but also acting on their fears. The news just reported the first outbreak of the virus with a person in the US who had no ties outside the US. The president spoke last night and he and his advisors did not think this would get any worse than the current flu epidemic. Although I agree with him, the perception of how bad things can get has worried me. I just ordered some more disposable masks, which hopefully will never need to be used. I have no idea if our employees will wear them anyway. I can't and won't ban contact in our plant. It looks like the severe case and death rate is below the flu so I will endeavor to keep our people calm, let them keep working, and if anyone looks like they have the flu of any type then send them home. Right now, it looks like the flu epidemic is worse than the coronavirus. I will still urge our people to keep washing their hands and covering their noses if they sneeze. March starts this weekend, spring next month—by then hopefully the worst of all of this will be over. To paraphrase the words of President Franklin Roosevelt: the biggest fear we have to face is fear itself.

Most world markets are down again because of the coronavirus, but I think it is the overdue market correction and this was the excuse people needed to cash out. Our teams are doing great, but I feel sidelined from the action, which is the reason why I don't do well on vacation. I will try and stay in "vacation mode" a little longer, but it is getting increasingly harder. I am ready to be "back in the game."

2/26/20

9:21pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

To a competitor to take over their company:

After viewing the decline of the global markets last week, it occurred to me that it might be a good time to send you the following offer. I have little factual information regarding your operation, but our two companies have been competing for decades and you run a good operation. Regarding your future, I don't know if you have someone who will take over, someone who wants to buy you out, or if you simply are not dealing with the future right now. I know that our company globally is under a lot of pressure in all ways and I figure that you are also. I thought you might be looking for a way to leave the business easily, profitably, and not have to worry about your plant or people.

To get right to the point and be blunt, I think you are probably as old as I am—64 years old. I looked at your website and it appears that your organization is mostly older (probably expensive), your equipment is also old, and you may not be able to compete as well as before. If the economy tanks, then you will get squeezed badly like the rest of us while your overheads probably can't be

cut much except to reduce your head count. There are few companies who probably can or want to buy you, especially if the economy gets really bad, which means that you don't have a lot of options. However, here is one to consider.

We now have a plant in the US, two in China, small distribution centers in México and Belgium, and sales offices in Thailand, Canada, and Israel, which is why I can offer you this simple proposal.

You stop operating as a plant, become a commissioned salesperson—virtually no work from you will be needed—and we will give you all the gross profits from all of your current sales and what you are making now for the next three years. Then you are done.

We will take over all of your production and service all of your customers globally while you can lay-off all your personnel, sell your building, and cut your overhead to zero. We will not take over your corporation, company name, pay for any expenses, or be responsible for any commitments you have made. You become a one-person operation and all of your problems go away after the initial transition. All orders would come through Ideal Jacobs in the US—all you would need to do is give us the introductions and then receive the monthly commission checks.

This way you can liquidate easily, quickly, and completely with no loose ends.

If you do not want to fire your people, I can do it for you. Let me know if you have an interest.

Regards,

Andrew

2/27/20

1:46pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

The US Stock markets plunged again the three major indexes are down between 6-10% for the past month. The threat of the coronavirus is blamed, but I am not sure if it is solely responsible. The media keeps stirring up that idea to create a sense of panic, which is working. I believe that the markets will go down another 10-15%, and if they do, then there is a good chance a recession is already underway. One might already be happening, but we won't know that until the economic data comes out at the end of this year. Regardless, we are now moving into position to launch our program to take over the sales of our competitors via hiring their owners as commissioned sales people. They can then immediately get rid of all of their overhead, close down their plants, sell their equipment and building, and simply make money through us. It is a good deal, but I am waiting until next week to go after our biggest competitor to see if the market keeps going down. The worse it gets the better chance they will want to sell out and simply make money. I will talk to Mike in the office before I launch this idea. If it does happen, the business will be manufactured through IJX, but will still be IJUS sales which means a lot of additional paperwork and inventory to control. I am not wishing for bad times, but I have been waiting eighteen months for this to happen, so if it is we want to capitalize on it now.

After breakfast, Wendy found a coffee plantation for us to tour. Her cold is a little better, which is a very good thing. We both thought it would be an interesting tour, but it did not turn out to be great. The high point for me was estimating the price of their coffee roasting machine. I was a little high but in range. Machinery is machinery regardless of the industry. I was also figuring out how much money the company made, and there did not seem to be a lot of profit in their production

processes. As Wendy said, it must be a labor of love and the money was secondary.

We bought lunch to-go from the same fish restaurant where we had been twice this week and ate it in the lounge here. It was excellent again; we will probably never get to go there again, but it was great while this trip lasted.

2/27/20

4:32pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

Hello and welcome to the March Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

As I write this, world stock markets have all substantially gone down and it is possible that the long-awaited "correction" is upon us.

Whether you believe it is from:

- *The effects of the coronavirus*
- *Irrational investor confidence in the global economy*
- *A cabal of ultra-rich business people who decided it was time to pull the plug on the economy, which they had already cashed out of, so that they could reinvest at the bottom of the coming downturn*
- *A cyclical event and just time for the economy to go down.*
- *All of the above*

The truth is that it didn't matter. For all of us who are not billionaires, the reason something happened had no bearing on us because we could not have affected it anyway. The best we could have done was prepare for the worst and hedge our bets so that we were covered if disaster happened.

It is a tightrope that we all continually walk, and when business is good, the markets are up and those with any savings are making some money. No one complains and we all just hope that it keeps going. But what happens when it doesn't? Things can turn sour very quickly. For those who were around in 2008, the bottom fell out in months—not years—and suddenly a lot of people lost a lot of money and did not know what hit them. It took a long time for the economy and them to recover. People tend to forget adversity as quickly as possible. For those who got into the job market after 2012, they don't really have an idea of how bad it was, which is worse because they think everything will always go up. That is why there is so much debt in our country and the world; things have been good for a long time. Some people have splurged on luxury items while others may have bought houses that strapped them financially. As long as times got better, then it was okay, they could always make more money, and their houses would be worth more. But when they don't, then the bottom falls out and they are in trouble. Once the financial markets significantly go down, credit becomes tighter, people lose money in their 401Ks and retirement plans, and real estate starts to lose its value. People who had a lot of investments in riskier areas are suddenly losing money and most start cutting back on their purchases and the cycle gets worse with businesses starting to close and people laid off from their jobs.

I write this as a reminder to all who were here for the Great Recession and as a caution to those who came after. This is exactly what happened then and multiple times in my lifetime. Tough times can and do come quickly. If you are in debt, you might want to consider trying to get rid of it as quickly as possible. If you are living past your means, you might want to cut back. It is going to get rough, and it might be bad. Whether immediately or in the next few years, it will come and you might want to think about your future now before things happen you can't stop. Think about how you can benefit if the

economy goes down significantly, have a plan where you will profit when others don't. It is not a bad way to think, it is not immoral, and no one will bail you out, so think about yourself because no one else will.

Regards,
Andrew

2/28/20

4:50pm HST | Fairmont Orchid Resort, HI

While I was having lunch with Wendy, I spoke to her about the takeover proposal from the other day. I had since modified it, but we both agreed it would be really good if we knew someone who knew the workings of the company to give me some guidance as to who is in charge, succession plans, and how they are doing. I sent the proposal to my friend Mike who owns a huge screen printing equipment company. There is a chance he might know the target and might have some background. I look forward to his reply. Meanwhile, world markets are in chaos and everything is down, including the price of gold, which as usual makes no sense. Everything should not go down nor should everything go up. The more scared people are the more prone they are to act quickly, so it's a very good time for us to be out hunting and absorbing other companies.

2/29/20

1:01pm HST | Kono Airport, HI

Dinner was excellent last night at the hotel—as was our whole stay. The Fairmont Orchid is a really nice place and I recommend it to anyone. I was up this morning at 3:30am to start getting ready back on New Jersey time, which is seven hours ahead. I plan to do the same thing tonight, which should almost get me back on schedule for Monday morning. I exercised in my room, then headed to the gym for the treadmill and had a walk outside. I headed down toward the lagoon and the snorkel area, and there was something going on. At first, I could not tell what it was, but it turned out to be a huge seal lying on the beach. I thought it was dead, but the employee keeping an eye on it said it was alive and just then the seal lifted her head. It was very cool, and then I saw a sea turtle hanging out in the “protected area” so I had a very fun walk. Once back, Wendy and I had breakfast, packed, and then we were on our way in our excellent rental car. We stopped for gas, food, dropped off the car, got through security, and now we are on the plane.

As for the world, things have not changed much since yesterday. Tomorrow night's global markets opening after the weekend is not looking positive. I am greatly looking forward to seeing Kayla and then going home.

I did some editing of last year's book before I ate six muffins, had some pretzels, nuts, Diet Coke and water. I am looking forward to landing.



3/1/20

7:02pm EST | En route to NJ

Today is the 51st anniversary of my bar mitzvah. The amount of time that has passed is a bit staggering, but the years have been amazing so I have absolutely no complaints. It was during the late 1960s and early 70s when we used to go down to Tackanasi Swim Club at the Jersey Shore. My mom had friends there and one of the families was the Apters. Delly Apter was an extremely strong-willed, pleasant woman who I remember fondly. I remember trying to earn money and she paid me to walk up to the nearby shop to buy her a newspaper. She also would let us use her bathroom when we were down there for the day, which was a big deal for me. Her husband Buddy was a very high-grade man whom I also liked. He passed away a while ago. My mom had told me that Delly was not in good health, so I emailed her son Jason to see how she was doing. Unfortunately, she is going on hospice care which means that the end might come soon. I checked with him today since we were getting back from vacation. He was happy I did. He had just gotten back from Florida where his mom lived. (She would not move up to be closer to Jason and his family—I told you she was strong-willed.) She was comfortable and things were okay for now, but he gave me two telephone numbers so my mom could call her. She had already tried twice and could not get through. Jason is in the funeral business; his family has been for decades. He is an upbeat, very pleasant man and I have been and remain fond of him, too. When the time comes, and as long as it is local and I am in town, I will attend the funeral. I like people with strong wills and who are tough—that definitely describes Delly. I will miss her when she is no longer here.

3/2/20

2:27pm EST | Our Office, NJ

We arrived early last night—thank you, United Airlines! Mike the Driver was there to pick us up. It was great to get back home, mostly unpack, eat, and take

an incredibly hot bath. I was asleep by 12:45am and up at 4:15am—my normal time. I did my regular workout and went biking. It was cold, invigorating, and wonderful to be back on my route. It was also excellent to be back here at the office and it has been a very good day of catching up. One down note, our older laser appears to have died. It has gone way past its expected lifetime, so she owes us nothing. Die Master Dave will try one more repair, but we are already looking into getting a new one.

It looked like various banks and governments of the world decided to take financial action, which stopped the steep descent and put many exchanges back to positive.

Amy Klobuchar has stopped her candidacy, which now leaves four candidates. After Super Tuesday tomorrow, there may be even fewer.

3/3/20

4:18pm EST | Our Home, NJ

Yesterday there was a huge upswing in the markets here and today they lost a lot of it. The fear of both getting the coronavirus and the effects it will have on the US and global economies are increasing everywhere, which is not a good thing. The only action that everyone seems to agree on is that the more we wash our hands and stay in good shape the better our chances to stay healthy. Wendy suggested I stop shaking hands with people; it is a very good idea but hard to reverse sixty years of behavior.

Super Tuesday is on—primaries in 14 states. No one knows what will happen and those who predict, especially the alleged professionals, are often wrong.

3/4/20

9:37am EST | Our Office, NJ

Hands to Elbows

When I was a young teenager, I was out with my dad during the winter, and we met this man. I shook hands with him with my gloves on. He sternly told me to never do that with gloves. I never forgot it, and over the ensuing decades, even though I am extremely germaphobic, I had always done the “handshake” as a matter of respect. There is nothing like grasping palms to show someone that you consider them “a person”, worthy of the acknowledgement and the status that they have been recognized. However, my wonderful wife reminded me yesterday that the coronavirus makes shaking hands taboo indefinitely. A “fist bump” is even too close, so I have started touching elbows. Doing that now shows even more respect because you don’t want to spread germs. As is normal in this world, what used to be bad is now good; the opposite now shows more concern than what was formally proper.

3/4/20

3:19pm EST | Our Office, NJ

We are buying a new laser and it should be in by the end of this month. In the meantime, Dave Lebre got our auxiliary laser working, which has not actually functioned since we bought it. Kudos to him! Mike has been working on our database and it is showing movement. By the middle of July, we should have a complete raw materials and finished good inventory updated and ready to use. Michael Bloomberg dropped out of the race for president and endorsed Mr. Biden. Now it is down to three Democratic candidates.

3/6/20

12:50pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Elizabeth Warren dropped out of the race; now there are only two left—very interesting.

Act—Don't Panic

There is a chart on the Bloomberg News that shows the major stock markets for the world. As I have been watching them over the last year, they all zoomed up and now they are coming back down. There is a sure sign of major trouble when the last 12 month indicator goes into negative numbers. As of today, all of Europe is now lower than a year ago. Half the markets in Asia and 2 out of 5 here in the US are the same. This is the test that I use as the surest indicator of tough times to come. By the way, all but one of them are in negative numbers for the last 30 days and are averaging down between 6-15%. Is the world ending? The answer is no. Is the coronavirus going to shut down business and life in the US? I don't think so, but it could get tough. Is business going to go down and we are going into a recession? I believe that is going to happen starting now. Should you make changes to your life to stop spending as much money as before? That might be a good idea. Should you talk to people who went through the 2008 recession? The answer again is yes; check a few to get a rational view of how tough it was so you can be mentally prepared for what happened. Remember: in any down market, some people make a lot of money. It can be you. It is not time to panic; it is time to take constructive, positive action.

It is often easy to see how things are headed by simply looking at the quantities our customers are ordering or asking for quotes. The lower they are—or not hearing from them—is often an omen. What do I do in a case like this? Go sell, churn the waters, so people know that you are ready, able, and want business so your company can survive, grow, and excel.

3/7/20

4:08pm EST | Our House, NJ

My cold was not better this morning and getting through my exercises and bike ride were not easy. Still, I will be very glad I did it. Seeing Uncle Dave after a few weeks away was great and he is doing well. I then came back here to have lunch and then took a three hour nap—highly unusual for me, but I obviously needed it.

3/8/20

3:45pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I got a good night's sleep and was definitely better this morning. Today started Daylight Saving Time; we lost an hour of sleep but got an hour for the end of the day. Everything is blooming so it appears that Mother Nature has decided it is an early spring, which is okay with us. Temperatures for the next ten days in the afternoon range from the high 40-60s, which is warm for this time of year. After my exercises in the basement, I was off on my bike. Originally, I was a little concerned because I only had one pair of thermal underwear under my sweatpants, but it turned out to be warmer than I thought and I was dressed perfectly. I stopped by a stream and spotted ducks napping.

Most days I pass by the stream on my bike route because I don't have time to look for fish or whatever else is happening below. Today was different; it was a Sunday and my schedule was not tight. When I looked over the shallow stone barrier below, I did not see fish; I did however see two mallard ducks. It was a male and a female; I could tell by the coloring—thank you, Dad! They both had just found a spot outside the current and settled in for a nap. They curled their heads downward over their bodies and there they floated in total bliss. With the water going by them, it was a truly peaceful scene and thoughts of our crazy world suddenly vanished and I was at one with them. My peace did not last long, but for those amazing few minutes I shared their world. I hope they are there again tomorrow.

After I returned from biking and got cleaned up, Wendy and I went to our favorite diner, had a wonderful meal, and then I went to one pharmacy, two supermarkets, and then got gas. Once back here, I cooked the food for this week and got my fruit containers ready. Wendy and I fished some paintings out of our basement to send to Ben and Carla—not a simple task. As you can probably tell, it has been delightfully calm. I have to go do some more packing for Wednesday's trip. I saw my friend Susan in the supermarket before; she travels like I do and said the airport attendance looked lighter than normal and the airlines were canceling planes for lack of passengers. Something else to monitor. It is gorgeous out here; sometimes it is good to simply enjoy what is in front of us.

3/8/20

7:29pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Italy announced that a big part of their country is now quarantined. If other nations follow suit, it would become very easy for me to get caught up in a mess by going to Asia or Europe. Therefore, as of tonight, I am restricting my travel to North America for the foreseeable future. It is probably better because I will be with our team here in New Jersey and that is most likely where I should be, supporting and spurring them on to handle what may or may not come. I am very hopeful that by May this will all be over and life can go back to normal. In the meantime, we will handle things day to day and try to make the best out of what happens.

I sent a proposal to one of our bigger competitors last week to take them over. I did not hear anything back. It is Sunday night; the markets look bad. If the

owner of the company I am trying to take over tends to worry, then maybe my note of a few minutes ago will spur her into action. On the other hand, she will probably ignore us because she doesn't like me anyway, which makes no difference to me but might to her. I can't follow-up again; she has the ball.

3/9/20

1:52pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I got a call from Mom last night about 10:00pm. She was in trouble, so I got dressed and got over to her as quickly as possible. She had already called the emergency squad and Irene was there, too. The squad members got her packed up and off she went to the hospital. Irene and I followed and we stayed there while various tests were being done. By that time, Mom was stabilized and it came down to waiting for test results. The three of us had a good time talking or listening to music and singing along with it. The hospital staff was attentive and great. At 1:10am, I left for home; Irene stayed until about 3:00am and took Mom home. She was better but not great. Ira was there early this morning and is taking her to the doctor. It is truly a gift to have wonderful siblings as we act as a team to take care of our mother and work around each other's schedules. I was asleep by 2:30am, got up at 4:15am, did my workout inside, and biked. It was beautiful outside and it has been a very fun day here in the office.

As I write this, global stock markets have plunged, the price of oil is down about 20%, and I have come to the conclusion that it is simply a time to remain as calm as possible and keep selling, so that is what I will do.

I will stop by Mom's before I go see the chiropractor to see her. Hopefully, new pictures of the farm will cheer her up.

3/10/20

4:48 EDT | Our Office, NJ

I got a text this morning at 3:00am from Mike the driver. Unfortunately, he was one day early; I'm not leaving until tomorrow. I texted him back—after confirming a few times that I was correct—told him I would pay him anyway and sent him home. Getting angry at him would have been pointless; we laughed about it when I saw him here later. I did reconfirm he was coming back in the morning. It was a mistake anyone could make and I would rather he show up once too often than miss. It took a little time to get back to sleep but so it goes.

While biking this morning, there was an exceptionally beautiful sunrise. The colors were spectacular and I thoroughly enjoyed the journey. After getting cleaned up, my day was spent pricing and doing various tasks that were pleasant and necessary. Sometimes I simply have to show up and be attentive to make sure things are running smoothly and our people know that I care about our company and them.

After yesterday's sharp stock drop, things here in the US were up and down until the market decided that President Trump was going to do some type of financial stimulus like a payroll tax holiday until after the election. Since the senate would have to agree, this was simply more speculation by the president and

the media like we have seen before, and when he does nothing, or very little, like I believe he will, stocks will drop again. The bulk of stock markets in Europe and Asia are now down for the last 12 months. Six more presidential primaries today; the media has Mr. Biden already winning the nomination. I am not convinced that is a sure thing.

I just tried the medical doctor who might be able to have the SwaddlePax Vest listed as a garment that can be ordered through insurance companies. The first time he did not return my call; this time his mailbox was full. It doesn't look too hopeful; however if that fails and the launch next month at the chiropractor convention doesn't go well, I can chalk it up to a "good try" and give it up.

3/11/20

5:10am EST | Newark/Liberty Airport, NJ

I was up at 2:15am and Mike the driver was early to pick me up, which is always a good thing. I was through security with no problems, got my ice bags filled for my back and food, and am now on the plane. It is hard to be sure, but the amount of people in this airport seemed less than usual and this plane is not full. I would assume it is the effects of the coronavirus warnings. Mr. Biden won more primaries yesterday and has become the presumptive nominee. From my perspective, he is much better than Bernie Sanders, but I am still not sure he can take the presidency.

3/11/20

10:39pm EDT | Intercontinental Hotel Chicago, IL

The flight was great and I was picked up by Eric, my driver for today. It turned out he owned the company, had immigrated from Turkey with nothing, and built himself a very nice business. He took me to Plexus where the manager I went to see apologized that all supplier and customer visits were cancelled because of coronavirus, but he agreed to go out for coffee. We had a very nice chat and there is a chance for more business. Eric and I have been talking as he has been driving. He has one daughter and wants her to be in his business. As per my experience with Kayla, I told him to have an exit plan ready in case it did not work. He was devastated by that idea. I was sorry I had upset him.

I went in to the second appointment and the receptionist called the man I was supposed to see. Unfortunately, he had forgotten our appointment and was working from home. He was very apologetic and I was easy about it—nothing would be gained by me being upset. I quickly forgave him for the mistake and left him a color chart for his new company colors and our materials brochure. From there, Eric took me to AWI, one of our screen printing equipment suppliers. I had known the owners Mike and Jody for years and we are friends; I was there for a plant tour and lunch. Mike showed me around; he has a very big place and it was filled with all types of raw materials and equipment. The screen printing manufacturing sector is going through as many changes as the screen printing industry so we had a lot to compare. We then had a very enjoyable lunch and agreed to continue to work together to find potential targets that IJUS could take over.

There was another big sell-off in the US stock markets today, which meant that some screen printers may have had enough and what to get out.

Eric then got me to the hotel where I exercised in my room then went for a walk down by the water. It was pleasant. I stopped to pick up a poke bowl from Whole Foods on the way back and it was there where I got into some trouble. There was a television film crew in front of the building and I was watching the reporter instead of where I was walking. I stepped off the curb without seeing it. I jolted my back and I am now sitting with an ice pack on my bed, hoping I did not cause too much trouble. I have to leave soon for dinner with Sam and Marissa.

3/12/20

5:45am CDT | O'Hare Airport, IL

I decided to bring one of my filled ice bags with me to dinner, which turned out to be a good idea. I was in a low level of pain and the ice helped enough that I mostly forgot about it. I got to the restaurant early, which gave me a chance to have an iced tea and catch up on the news. Financial markets had continued to drop. Efforts by our president to deal with the virus and other factors unfortunately seemed to have no effect and his call to stop people from flying into and out of Europe resulted in a further plunging of their markets. It does not look like we have hit bottom yet.

In brighter news, Sam and Marissa look great. She is in medical school and is looking at about six more years of training to be certified in whatever specialty she chose. She is competent, tough, smart, very pleasant, and—besides making a very capable doctor—she looks like a terrific match for Sam. She is hoping to do her residency in the Boston area to be near her two grandfathers and grandmother. Sam likes his job, but does not have an issue moving to wherever she needs to go. He looks content and happy, a very good thing to see. Dinner was exceptionally pleasant and punctuated with many intervals of laughter. We then went to another place to get hot chocolate and they walked me back to my hotel. I plan to be back here in about a year; I hope to see them sooner.

I got four hours of sleep—not enough—and was up at 2:15am, got ready, packed, and checked out. Eric got me to the airport in good time. My lower back is sore; I have two ice packs on it now, but I am hoping that by the time I finish biking later it will be close to normal.

The coronavirus has paralyzed everything in Asia, which unfortunately includes the carbon credit project.

What Do We Do Now?

I had dinner with my nephew and his fiancé last night in Chicago. He is up for a job promotion and his boss very intelligently asked him to define his additional responsibilities. I suggested that he look at four or five of the people around him with different jobs and take on small parts of their portfolios. In doing so, he would not only learn their jobs but also become increasingly more valuable to his boss and the company. I offer the same advice to you. If a recession or worse is coming, those employees who are most valuable will remain. Even if it doesn't

mean more money, in rough times, sometimes all you are looking to do is survive. If you are only willing to do more if you get paid beforehand, you will probably be the first to be laid off.

3/12/20

4:40pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We arrived on time; Mike the Driver was there to get me and I was home before 10:00am in time to say goodbye to Wendy who was on her way out. In between emails, Skype, and phone calls, I exercised in our basement and then went for an excellent bike ride. Once back and after lunch, I stopped for an iced tea and came here. The last few hours have been very pleasant; our people saw that I was okay after traveling and we are making plans on how to capitalize on the virus and the downturn in the economy. The lack of sleep from this week just hit me—time to go home.

3/13/20

9:22pm EDT | Our House, NJ

The president announced a national State of Emergency regarding the coronavirus. He is pledging 60 billion dollars to help—not counting the money already approved and additional aid from the House and Senate. I think it is too much and will result in a lot of money spent needlessly, which will end up as extra taxes to those who have money, but I may be wrong. Regardless, they will spend the money anyway and it will put more small businesses into trouble, especially with the extra two weeks of paid sick leave they are forcing on employers. Whether we get any money back if we agree is doubtful and the only good thing is that it may act as a stimulus to help jump start the economy because I believe that a recession is here. The ups and downs of the US markets continued today with them going up about 10%; they are still way down and I think will go down at least 10-20% more. The effects of the media panic are showing everywhere from people hoarding food and supplies to whole cities becoming almost deserted. While the intended results might be positive, the negative mental impact is substantial and the fear generated is palatable. There are a few voices of reason out there, but they are mostly getting drowned out by the sensationalists looking for ratings.

In the meantime, Don has compiled a list of screen printers in the US and Canada as possible take-over candidates. I plan to start on that Monday.

3/14/20

12:35pm EDT | Cleanway Carwash, NJ

Time To Attack

I find it interesting that people keep asking me what I am doing in the face of the global coronavirus pandemic. My responses have been simple and direct.

- Be nicer to people than usual—everyone is under a lot of extra strain.
- Do not expect people to make rush decisions because they are panicked and the normal reaction is to freeze.

- Do not minimize the pain other people retain. Fear is a palpable, real thing and telling people to stop being afraid is about as useless as telling them to try out for a major sports team.
- See how people react under extreme circumstances. You will see them as they really are. Take notes for the future for when something big happens again; you can then predict their actions.
- Recognize who works best under pressure. They are the future leaders you should be promoting.
- Look for bargains of all types. Unfortunately, panic produces rash decisions and you might be able to capitalize on them. There is nothing wrong or immoral in this. Someone has to go higher in times of extreme strife; it might as well be us.

3/14/20

9:26pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a really fun day. After working out and biking, I went to see my mom who is still feeling the effects of the stomach bug she has had for a week. Hopefully she will be better soon. I ran a lot of errands, including the supermarket where I was very fortunate to find toilet paper. It has been in short supply and forget about finding antibacterial soap or hand lotion. Wendy and I then went out to our favorite diner for dinner. I have been thinking about the staff system, the new type of martial art that has been given to me by Divine Intervention, and after emailing with our insurance man Lou, we are cleared to try and launch it in Mexico. I will probably text my old martial arts instructor and friend Dayne to formalize and codify the working manual and system. In the meantime, I was thinking about how to handle the equipment, it had to be pretty inexpensive. It then occurred to me that we might be able to 3D print custom face and throat masks, which will take care of some of the protection needed. The rest, like gloves and joint protectors, are reasonably inexpensive when bought in bulk. They could even be rented instead of bought. I am very excited about this because if the system works it can offer a level of protection for women and older people that is not currently available. Of course, the system will be based on people outside traveling in groups of two or more for protection, but I don't think there is any way of getting past that. We can offer a mobile alarm app that can be sounded if someone gets into trouble. I will check with our tech guys on that one.

Various countries in the world have declared States of Emergencies or banned gatherings of people or even closed companies. The question of whether I go to Canada in two weeks might become moot if Canada or the US close their borders.

3/15/20

3:26pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I was up at 5:00am to get my workouts finished before Alex came for breakfast. They went well—it was a beautiful, chilly morning and I had a great time in our basement and biking. I read on Bloomberg News this morning that passengers coming into our country had up to an eight hour wait at the airports. That was

the tipping point for me; my back would never be able to handle that. I emailed Marina, who was already up trying to help some of her customers back into the country. She cancelled my trips to Canada, Mexico, Texas, and Georgia. We also got word from Lisa last night that her wedding had been postponed in Europe so Marina also cancelled all of those reservations. At this point, the media is predicting Armageddon, which I obviously hope is wrong, and people are in total panic mode.

I heard from Die Master Dave and spoke to Mike from our office. We are instituting new protocols for our employees, which will begin tomorrow, including being checked for elevated temperatures at least once per day. Those who can work remotely will do so, and everyone else will stay at least six feet apart at all times. The kitchen will no longer be used by more than two people at a time and anyone who feels sick should go home right away. Don and I will try a new method of sales: sending video messages on a memory stick with each material brochure to give a mini-plant tour and introduce ourselves. I am not sure how it will work, but we will try it and see what happens. We will also do a similar method to go after potential take-over targets. Don got me a list of those and we will begin to attack tomorrow. It is a new world and those that can adapt to it the fastest will reap the biggest rewards.

I went to see my brother and my mom. She looked much better. Ira is unhappy because of the general virus situation, his daughter having to postpone her wedding, and the bulk of his courses being pushed back or cancelled. I was hoping that this virus situation would be over within a month. I believe that the hospitals are mostly filled with people who think they might have it as opposed to actual cases, but hard data was very difficult to come by and there is still a vast need for more testing kits, an obvious reflection on the lack of preparation by the Trump Administration. At this point, the virus is probably everywhere and many people don't know if they have had it or have it now.

Of course, when there is huge confusion, I want to attack and I did text one of my old martial arts coaches to see if he would be interested in creating a new martial art around the Staff. He replied he would so we will see where it goes.

3/16/20

1:46pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Me and Scooter

Weeks ago our guys came to me and asked if they could put in a robot cleaning unit. It looked like a small, circular spaceship and zoomed around our office area, keeping our carpets and floors neat and clean. Strangely, as time passed, Scooter (I nicknamed him) and I became buddies. Every day, I would hear him sneaking up behind me and I knew to move stuff away so he could clean around my desk and chair. I took to greeting him with a “Hi, Scooter.” and his constant presence, especially in this coronavirus filled world, was comforting. By this time tomorrow, a bunch of our people will be working virtually and it will be very quiet. Scooter, however, will stay—a non-living companion, hopefully germ free, whose only

goal is to keep our environment neat and clean. He will keep me company until our people return and life goes back to normal. Scooter is a constant in an ever changing world; there is something very nice about that.

Biking was cold but beautiful this morning. I spoke to my son Ben. He is going to be working from home for the next month and trying to get his gym there set-up as quickly as possible since his local gym had shut down for the virus.

At work, my mission was clear: keep people from freaking out and help set up the virtual team that will be working from home. By 2:00pm, our plans were mostly made; some of our team had already left with more going by this Wednesday. Mike will be setting up all the home computers and this will be a great time for us to go paperless, which should be completed before the end of this month. I am hoping that all of our team members are back by April 1st, but that might be an optimistic idea. The global stock markets are all down with the biggest drops so far here in the US. A huge amount of money has gone out of the markets and I am afraid that a lot of “regular” people got stuck with big losses. I hope that they are okay.

3/17/20

11:07am EDT | Our Office, NJ

A bunch of our people had asked us to work virtually. We are letting them do it; if they are afraid to be here, I want them sequestered at home. If—God forbid—those still in the plant do get the virus then we have a second team ready to go. They could come in and keep our company going until we are all back in good shape. It’s a frightening way to think, but we have to plan for the possibility. Global stock markets have stabilized and the president and Congress are working on a stimulus package to keep our economy from getting worse. As I have previously written, I thought that we were already in a recession so having various political and financial leaders say the same thing is no big surprise.

Kayla called me before. She is now planning to drive to Denver to stay with Ben and Carla until the quarantine is lifted in San Francisco. It will be a good, upbeat place for her to be and I am very grateful to Ben and Carla for offering. Kayla’s company sells conferencing software so their business is booming and I think they are truly seeing what an asset they have in her.

The Governor set up a 8:00pm curfew to try and keep people from going out and the president says to stay away from groups of more than ten people. The European Union is probably going to seal all of its member’s borders. All of us need a day or two to get into a new routine.

3/17/20

4:47pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The good news: The US Stock market went up—as did most of the rest of the world. A new normal is settling in with people resigned to what needs to be done for the next few weeks. My friend David got back here with his family from Colorado and they are fine. Kayla has plans to go to Colorado on Friday to spend

a few weeks with Ben and Carla. Business seems to be moving along, albeit slowly. There's a more positive bent than yesterday and a little less panic. We may have a potential solution to a big problem with a customer; we will know tomorrow. Our crew is doing great!

The not so good news is that our computer system crashed and Mike is working on fixing it from home. It has slowed us down today and I cannot do any more sales work, so I hope he has something ready in the next twenty minutes. We are very fortunate and I never take it for granted.

Pizza Day

My dad was a very smart man and taught me early that if someone was hungry then that was all they were thinking about. The only chance I had to get what I wanted from them was to make sure they were fed. Taken one step higher, if I wanted our team to be at their best—happy and efficient—then supplying food during specific events means even more. I have utilized this idea often over time as a thank-you for a job well done, but our VP Mike reminded me today that it was also a good idea in times of high pressure and anxiety. Today was the first full day of the new “reality” during the coronavirus crisis. It is a huge deal causing a lot of emotional issues with everyone. Our people are doing a great job and I am very proud of them stepping up to the new challenges. Tomorrow we bring in pizza for lunch; I think that they will be very happy.

3/17/20

8:29pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Pick Up the Phone

The effects of people sequestering themselves at home are becoming apparent even after only a few days. Tempers are getting shorter, the feelings of being closed in and trapped are growing, and the need for outside communications is increasing geometrically from the inner souls of those involved. Social media is not enough—people need and crave verbal contact. Unfortunately, the art of conversation or simply being able to initiate a telephone call has been largely lost in recent years due to the ease of texting and email. I have often found that when things get tough in business, the fastest, easiest, and most direct way to get a resolution is to make a telephone call. Amazingly, that has become an unusual occurrence, but I have found it often works wonders. These days, especially with people shut-in, a phone call is not only a welcomed event but can speed you to a problem resolution faster than any text or email.

Listen!

I am truly amazed at how much people talk and not listen. I spend the majority of my time saying as little as possible because I have found that active listening to be much more beneficial than hearing myself speak.

To be a good listener you have to:

- Think you are not the smartest person on the earth.
- Like to learn new things.

- Not be intimidated by contrary ideas and opinions.
- Have the confidence to believe that you have all the assets necessary to be a part of the conversation.
- You have worth, abilities, and the passion to grow.
- Do not spend a conversation concentrating on what you will say next but focus on what is being said to you.
- Want to be the best you can be, which includes introspection and realizing that some parts of you could change for the better.

3/18/20

8:43pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Three forces have now collided to make a supernova of bad news. First, the trade tariffs: let's not forget how they weakened the global financial network over the past year. Next came the global recession, which started a few months ago, as a direct result of both the tariffs and the cyclical nature of the international markets. Add to those the coronavirus, which has caused a global mental depression, and the media, which has precipitated a panic. Now we are in trouble; the mental well-being of the world population as a whole has been compromised, which means they will go from buyers to hoarders which will compound all of the problems above. We are in and going into a deeper downward cycle, which is not yet near the bottom. Stock markets plummeted here again today even while governments all over the globe pledged huge amounts of money to fight the issue. Even if their efforts do work, the amount of either inflation from their spending or huge tax increases will make the situation even worse so get ready because things are going to get rough. I hope that I am wrong. Historically, we have been through many recessions, the Great Depression, various wars, conflicts, and embargoes while still coming out ahead. I hope to do the same here.

3/20/20

4:05pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

With the threat of a state shutdown, I was up at 3:15am, went biking, then came here to make sure things were clean and ready to go. I then went back home, finished my workout, and after getting cleaned up, returned. The threat of a state and even federal shutdown were increasing by the hour so our team valiantly got everything possible completed before leaving for the day. They were awesome and I am truly appreciative of everything they have and will do over the next two weeks, which is hopefully the longest amount we will be stopped. I contacted my chiropractor first to cancel, then to see if he thought we could meet, but at that point he said he was also closing. I was really upset this morning, but after a wonderful phone call with Kayla, I calmed down for the most part and am now not only resigned to the time off. We should actually be able to use the forced shutdown productively to upgrade our systems and do a lot of marketing.

3/21/20

2:01pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Yesterday was really tiring so I slept until 7:00am and got ten hours of badly needed sleep. I exercised in our basement. Then I went biking. Our state is still waiting for the lockdown order from the governor, so until he does something, people can move around as they choose. I can see a reduction in car traffic and a marked increase in people of all ages and types walking and biking everywhere. If nothing else, that is a good side benefit of what we are going through. Another is that time seemed to have slowed down a little—not so much rushing around. I say that for myself also.

I got an email last night from Renaud. He is a supplier and also a friendly competitor. I had approached him almost a year ago about my proposal to bring 3-4 big printers together, put up 25% of our joint stock, and use it to buy out others who were in trouble. He emailed me yesterday saying he thought it might be a good time to start. I just emailed the other two potential partners to see if they would be interested. In the meantime, I am already going after potential targets and will go after more.

Ben emailed me from China. He has one daughter in a fourteen day quarantine in China; she was coming back from college here in the US. His wife and other daughter were in Malaysia and are in quarantine for ten days in China—at least they are in their home city. The world is a mess and it is a good time to reflect on what is possible both for the positive and negative. Right now, I am figuring we are shut down for two weeks unless we can be designated an essential service, which Mike is working on now. If we can be working when others can't, that can be potentially a huge advantage. As far as I know, so far none of our people—Thank God—have been affected by the virus, but we need more time to be sure.

I spoke to Kayla multiple times. She made it to Salt Lake City last night without a problem and is now on her way to Denver via Wyoming. She said the scenery is amazing and she is having a good adventure. I spoke to my friend David regarding the proposal to take over other printers; he loved it. He mentioned that the state of emergency just announced by the governor may exempt companies like ours. If that is the case, we will check Saturday night for anyone being sick from our team. If not, we may bring in a reduced team.

3/22/20

4:04pm EDT | Our House, NJ

We did confirm that we can open tomorrow! Very welcomed news. Our people have been emailed; about 40% of us will stay virtual and the rest, including me, will be in. I was at the local supermarket at 7:15m this morning, taking advantage of the fact that I am over sixty years old, which meant we could get in before the “young people.” I don't normally take advantage of my age, but in this case I definitely went for it. I was able to buy most of what we wanted—still no antibacterial anything or alcohol—and there were some shortages and limitations on meats and fowl. I exercised in our basement, included 30 minutes on my ARC

machine, and then went for a great bike ride. After lunch, I grilled varied meats for my lunches this week, packed my fruits into containers, and am now sitting on our driveway in the afternoon sun. It is a bit chilly, but I have my heavy coat on and it is very pleasant.

Kayla is now with Ben and Carla and all seem very happy at the arrangement. Alex is with Scott and I am happily here with Wendy. I am looking forward, as usual, to getting to work tomorrow and especially since there originally was a good chance it would not have happened. We were very fortunate and I am considering it the result of Divine Intervention.

We got an email from Sahar; she sent more pictures of the farm. The land is blooming beautifully and we are all very happy with her progress. The next installment of our donation will go to her tomorrow to help finish buying all of the seedlings needed for this year's crop. I asked her to send us a list of possible tree types for the forest patch that will be dedicated to my mom. I want to start with twenty-five trees so we can dedicate them to special people who are still with us and those who have passed. I called my mom a little while ago and told her we had new pictures. She was very excited and I plan to bring them over to her this weekend if there are no complications from the virus.

Speaking of that, the effects are global and I can only hope that the projections of disaster will not happen. The head of the medical effort for the state of New Jersey said in a newspaper article that everyone will eventually get it. The vast majority will be mild, but some will die from it. It changed my perspective. We will do the best we can, isolate those who are at most risk where possible, and then hope for the best.

The financial news is daunting. The talk of a recession/Great Depression is happening more and people are truly scared about what could happen day to day. China is already bouncing back and I think the warning of a 30% jobless rate here in the US is highly overblown. It is beautiful out here, the sky is almost a total cobalt blue color, the birds are singing, there are buds on the trees, and some spring flowers have already bloomed.

Why Not Now?

It is a gorgeous Sunday afternoon here in New Jersey. I am sitting outside in our driveway in the bright sunlight wearing my heavy winter coat because, although it is spring, it is quite chilly. In fact, it may snow tomorrow. Contrary to the peace and calm surrounding me, tomorrow promises to be crazy. By Divine Intervention, we were approved to be able to open, so our company will be operating as close to normal as possible. We have people working virtually, but those of us who will be in the plant will have a rigorous set of rules to follow to keep us safe. But that is really not possible since the head of our state's coronavirus effort said that the problem is everywhere and everyone will get it sooner or later. She is simply trying to level out the curve of really bad cases so the hospitals won't be overloaded. The bulk of our population will not have a rough time and hopefully things will go back to normal sooner rather than later. I am not downplaying it, but that seems to be the reality.

China is almost back to normal and it took them about three months. The economic repercussions for the rest of the world, I fear, could last much longer. If people are afraid, they will become much more cautious in every way, including investing and spending money. Now is the time for all of us to review what we have, be thankful for all of the blessings, and figure out how to benefit from these unfortunate circumstances. The next few months will give opportunities for advancement and success that have seldom been seen in decades. In times of extreme stress and change, there is potential to accomplish almost anything. See what is possible, now might be the time to go for your dreams.

3/24/20

4:14pm EST | Our Office, NJ

We have a shipping department again! Through setting up Jill virtually and having Mike and Dave here, we were able to get the shipping department back up and functioning. That meant we were back in business—almost to full capacity—which is testament to our incredible team. Some of our people will go on four 10-hour days to have less exposure here—something I was happy to approve. There was also some discussion about more people going virtual. Again, I was fine with that and we will figure out things as we go. We are by no means out of the woods yet and I think it will be at least a month before any semblance of normalcy returns. In the meantime, we will do the best we can.

I spoke to my friend and fellow printer Renaud. He is having a similar experience in Massachusetts and we are both now on the prowl to start taking over some of our competitors. I just have to land the first target and then the others will be easier. There is always a learning curve and this will be a tough one because the company owner involved will be letting go of their plant, their people, and their previous life to become a printing salesman for us. That is not an easy concept to accept.

The US stock markets went way up with the idea that a coronavirus aid will be approved soon. I have no idea if that will happen. I got an email from Sahar in Israel. The spring planting is continuing and additional trees and plants will go in over the next few months. She is setting it up to be a prototype for small farms all over Israel; we are all very happy to be involved.

The Double Whammy

I know that many people are just trying to see the end of the coronavirus for its worst effects. Unfortunately, I think it is just a prelude to what is coming afterwards, which is the next global economic disaster. I have been reading about the Great Depression of the 1930s both because I like history and to see if it parallels today. Unfortunately, although there was no pandemic then, there were a lot of financial events that are very similar to today, including multiple big stock gains after very deep drops. As I write this, another huge gain is in progress and the omens are there to predict very tough economic times ahead. I do not see how we can avoid a 20% unemployment rate by this summer, even if the government does not admit it. The two trillion dollar spending bill will not blunt the effects of

fifteen years of high economic growth, overspeculation, too much debt, and not enough savings. I would suggest you prepare for a very rough time by stabilizing all areas of your life as much as possible because when the virus threat is over, the worst problems will begin.

Life is All the Same

In tennis and martial arts, the great teachers always preach to stay relaxed. If you are calm but ready, your mind can be clear and you can focus on the immediate events on hand. Whether it be a tennis ball hurtling 70 mph at your face or a karate kick going to your groin, you can't react if you are too busy thinking about what should be done. If you are prepared, then your mind, body, and soul take over in the split second to either save you from harm, win the game, or make the business decision to further your career. Life is all about training, preparation, and combining every ounce of your total being to focus on whatever you want at the exact time needed. If you have extra time now, don't waste it! Use it to further your future, train every part of you, so when the time comes you will be ready to soar. You will always be fighting against people who have similar goals; the person who usually wins is the one best ready to handle combat in all forms and the results.

3/26/20

4:57pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

US Stock Markets flew upward again in the face of a record unemployment increase of 3.2 million applicants. The coronavirus keeps growing, but how, where, and when it started is unclear. Actual knowledge about any of it is sketchy at best. I have been reading a Herbert Hoover biography which covered the Great Depression. We are following the huge rises and falls. People are continually being sucked in and then lose a fortune. I am very worried about a potential second Great Depression. If we don't get the world back to work within two months, I think it will be very bad. China is the latest country to seal its borders against foreigners.

3/27/20

9:23pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been an extremely stressful week, and as I lay on the traction table at the chiropractor, I realized that I was being given a message via Divine Intervention. The message was that the economy would get really bad and that I needed to set up a way to self-finance our way through it. The answer was then simple. I would liquidate my IRA and utilize the money for cash flow for the business. While this is a rather radical thing to do, especially at 64 years old, I had my reasons, which included:

- I would rather be in debt to myself than a bank.
- The odds were good that taxes would go up after the 2 trillion dollar aid bill and I might as well pay the taxes on the money now as opposed to more later.
- The money would go to making us much stronger and give us power to hold out longer than our competitors if our customers slowed down or stopped their payment.

- The chance of taking over other companies was much higher the longer we could hold out and they could not.
- The company would pay interest on the loan back to Wendy and me.

It sounded good to me and suddenly a lot of the stress lifted from my being. The key drawback was that I had to check with Wendy first, but I thought she would be okay with it. When I got back to the office, the whole atmosphere changed with my change of perspective; they followed my emotional cues and I could see it was the right way to go. I then spoke to one of our money managers and Gary, our accountant, and it seemed that there was a provision in the big aid bill which might help us. We will check more next week. The day ended on a very positive note, our people are in a much better place, and so am I. I am incredibly proud that our team has performed amazingly under very difficult conditions. I am now figuring things won't get back to normal until June 1st. Hopefully it will be sooner because the longer the virus lasts the harder it will be for everyone to come back.

3/28/20

5:51pm EST | Our House, NJ

I spoke with Wendy; she agreed about me using my retirement account as money for IJUS. After we do it, we will pay off the IJUS bank credit line, which will then be our last resort for money. After that, if our ratio of sales to expenses decreases to a certain number, we will start layoffs—if we haven't already done it before. On the other hand, since we will theoretically be better financed than most others, I am hoping that we will expand, absorb others, and take off like a rocket. We are covered for now, which means that I should be able to sleep, which is one of the most important markers I use regarding how we are doing. My wife is amazing—supportive as always—and I will love her forever.

3/29/90

7:12am EDT | Our House, NJ

The global virus situation is soon going to be greatly surpassed by the coming financial disaster. What worries me is whether our customers will be able to pay their bill on time or at all. I am also highly concerned about the massive global layoffs and the amount of personal debt that people will not be able to pay back. This whole mess could easily steamroll into at least a global recession. We are fine for now, but I am highly concerned for the future. The people here in the US and in Europe have no conception as to what is coming and the shock factor alone can be enough to stop everything. It is also a time for potential huge growth because, if we are able to keep operating, the amount of available business will surge as our competitors start to fail. The next quarter and beyond can be potentially very rough until a new “normal” is achieved, but if we can get through it, we can emerge in a most fantastic way on the other side.

3/30/20

12:20pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

With no school kids and few people on the road, my biking this morning was a very quiet and peaceful journey. I would much prefer the normal chaos. Many school systems, colleges, and universities have given up for this year and are teaching online. That trend may continue long after the virus has passed. It has been an excellent day. One of our people who had been quarantined was back. Our team continues to excel, which gives me some breathing room in an otherwise oxygen-depleted world. Stock market exchanges here in the US were up today—that has no bearing on tomorrow. It never did and means even less now. The president continues to say things that don't happen, but his approval rating is higher than ever, so a lot of people agree with how he is handling things. We got a lot done regarding liquidating some of my retirement account to use as cash for IJUS; the money should be available by Friday. The government aid program continues, and there is a chance we could get money from that by the end of this month, but I will only take it if we don't have to pay it back as advertised. I heard from Cary our landlord. He is confident he will be okay through what is coming. I agree there will be major bargains to be had after the dust settles, but that could be years. I have little confidence regarding any aspect of the global economy .

Open The Door!

When I got into the office this morning, one of my guys came over. He asked if I had shut my door over the weekend and I said I had. It turned out that “Scooter”, our mobile cleaning unit, had spent a lot of time trying to get through the door to clean my room and had eventually run out of power and “died” at my doorstep. I felt terrible that I had done that. Yes I know, he just had to be recharged and all would be fine, but with all that was going on in the world, the thought of poor Scooter continually bouncing off my closed door almost brought me to tears. Obviously, a lot of other emotions were coming into play and—thanks to my dad—I was trained to stop and figure out what was going on. I often hold emotional stuff in to benefit our company, family, and the world, but when I start getting emotional about Scooter, it is time for me to step back for a moment and regroup. I think a lunch break is in order.

3/31/20

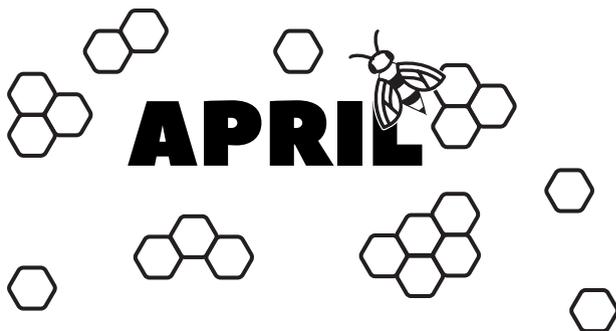
11:30am EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hello and welcome to the April Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Tough Times

The original version I wrote a week ago is so outdated I decided to start over. In the space of one week, the US Government created a 2 billion dollar aid package. Most of the US and Europe are either partially or fully locked down. Consumer spending has drastically reduced, there are discussions about rent and mortgage moratoriums, and things are a huge mess. At this point, there is some hope that the virus surges will be on the downside in another four weeks and life may start going back to normal sometime in May. But what does “normal” mean? Even with the US aid package, there are going to be

a lot of companies that will either never re-open, start up again smaller with less people, or completely change the way they are doing business by utilizing web-based business models. Where does that leave a company like ours? I am happy to say that at this point we are in very good shape. Ideal Jacobs Xiamen's two manufacturing plants in China are up and running; they were amongst the first to go back online after China was struck with the virus. They were actually able to get more business because they were operating early and their competitors were not. Ideal Jacobs here in the US—by an act of God as far as I am concerned—was deemed an essential business so we did not close. Some of our people are virtual and the rest of us are on-site, but our whole team is doing an awesome job under very difficult circumstances and I am very proud of all of them. Business in Mexico is continuing so Ideal Jacobs Mexico is also operating normally. In other words, we have been incredibly fortunate and, as long as our customers keep paying their bills, we should be fine. During disasters like this, cash is "king"; we have insured our reserves, and there is no better use for our money than keeping us running at full capacity when others cannot. My father always told me when I was growing up that some of the biggest companies were started during the Great Depression. Unfortunately, I think that the Covid-19 virus is only the first part of what is coming and people need to get ready for the economic fallout that will follow. With every crisis, there is supreme opportunity.



4/1/20

1:29pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hi Alex,

An idea for a new company. Since the fashion industry is in a huge state of flux, it appears that the clothes for this spring—and maybe summer—are already destined to be discounted as quickly as possible, reducing whatever profits there were for the fashion houses. That leaves the fall, and most fashion companies, now on furlough, will not have the time or resources to go to Southeast Asia for their prototypes and short runs. The company that did our Vest and Jacket samples was incompetent, expensive, and did not even use computers. I think there is a market for a lightning fast prototyper and short-run producer for new fashions to proof out designs and to use for getting sales.

We have a new laser coming in next week. My question: can you/we utilize that to cut the garments, use software to create the various sizes, and make prototypes/short runs to handle the crunch that will be coming once the virus issues stop and the new economic situation comes crashing down on the world? I realize that sewing will also be needed, but we may be able to utilize adhesives instead. What do you think?

*Love you,
Dad*

4/1/20

5:00pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It has been a crazy, really good day. One of our laminators was down, we got the part repaired about three minutes ago, so hopefully it can be operating tomorrow. I went to the chiropractor. John is doing a limited schedule and—happily—I am part of it. He is a really good guy and I am very saddened his business has been impacted by the virus. Speaking of Covid-19, one of our people with small children will probably take leave starting on Friday. She could be out for up to twelve weeks, working part-time from home. I totally understand her wanting to be with her kids. The impact of the pandemic is horrific and still growing; I hope and pray we all stay okay. Alex was not thrilled with the proposal above, but we

will talk tomorrow. I believe any company will talk to us if they need a supplier who can deliver small quantities quickly. It has been our historical model and worked incredibly well; I think it will for the fashion industry also.

4/2/20

4:13pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Significant, Positive Change

Unemployment hit a new record this week after last week's record. There are multiple predictions of doom ranging from the coronavirus itself to mortgage defaults, rents in arrears, additional furloughs, extended lockdowns, and economic downturns. I come from a family of worriers. I always defined myself as an optimistic paranoid, which means there is a constant war of emotions going on inside me. Sometimes I am very worried about what will happen and other moments I am exhilarated at the chance to build our companies to heights unheard of. Those emotions can happen at the same time so you can just imagine what it is like to be inside my head. In the end, the positive side almost always wins. In extreme adversity and change, there are unimaginable opportunities to move ahead faster than ever before. We all have the chance to reevaluate our lives in total; we can make significant positive change for ourselves and those around us we just have to be willing to make the leap forward.

4/3/20

4:49pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We applied this morning for the Small Business Aid package from the government. If we get the money and confirm there are no strings attached, then we should be able to continue for the next 3-4 months without layoffs. That is my hope and we are working our hearts out to keep the business coming in. In general, things are very good. One of our people went on home leave and is now part-time so we actually hired a new part-time worker to run the laser, edit my new book, and help out in other areas. We have a new laser coming in next week, which cost a lot of money, but I felt it is necessary to keep us competitive. Our sales people are pushing hard—as am I—and overall I am optimistic for us. I cannot say the same for the rest of the economy. I just had a discussion with my friend David who thinks the economy will boom once the virus is under control. I disagree. It will be interesting to see who is more correct; I hope it is him. It has been a very fun day, a lot was accomplished, and it is time to go home.

4/4/20

5:48pm EDT | Our House, NJ

The lockdown around a lot of the world continues. There is hope that some of the major city areas will peak within the next seven days. If so and things begin to decline, then maybe there will be a spot in the horizon for some sign of normalcy. I exercised in our basement this morning, which is a very good thing since gyms are closed everywhere. It was then out for an excellent bike ride. A lot of people

were out and I exchanged quick greetings with many. The general mood was upbeat and very happy about the beautiful day and the chance to be outside. It was then lunch and some chores. We had a group online chat for Kayla's birthday; all our kids, Carla, and Scott as well as Barb and Cliff's family and grandchildren. It was very pleasant; everyone looked great, especially regarding the world health situation. I later went out to the gas station and the food store.

4/5/20

2:43pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I have been thinking about the coronavirus. The first question was where did it come from and no one knows that even though rumors keep flying from everywhere. There is no question that the flow of information could have been handled better, including the sharing of potential treatments and getting the needed medical products to the hot spots. Since this has never happened before, the chances of doing everything correctly around the world are impossible. We need a much better global picture of what is true, what can be done, and how soon it can be accomplished. This will go far in helping to defuse the global fear and the paranoia along with increasing the chances of working together.

On a brighter note, the virus has spurred a lot of people to walk or bike outside. The amount of people I see when I am out is much higher than before and we even say hello to each other. It has brought out a sense of camaraderie, which is very nice. Neighbors helping neighbors is always a good thing and I think that this highly difficult time is also bringing out some of the best in people.

4/6/20

4:52pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It was a beautiful spring day here in New Jersey. Everything is blooming and gorgeous. The lockdown globally continues, but there was potential good news in Manhattan where the death rate seemed to have stabilized. The same may be true in parts of Europe. The Global Stock markets believe it because they are almost all up. I love their optimism, but no one seems to be taking into account what comes next. I find it amazing that people think this will all be "over" when the virus is contained and people go back to work. Maybe I am the one who is missing something.

Back a few months ago when the coronavirus first hit China, it occurred to me through Divine Intervention that it might become difficult to get an iPhone if needed. Mike got us one and it stayed in our safe at work. I was going to give it to my mom so she could see pictures of the farm in Israel. Since I can't see her because of virus worries, and the iPhone stores are closed, it came in quite handy today when I cracked my phone screen. Igor got it mostly programmed and it will be finalized tomorrow. I am a very fortunate man.

4/7/20

4:34pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The tension and fear from the last few months is showing in various ways. Whatever you were before, you are more of that now. If you were nice, you are now nicer. If you were mean, you are meaner. For the vast majority of us, it is a combination of upward and downward movement on various behavioral scales. Perhaps it will all even out again in a few months, but if a bad recession follows, then people will get no break and things will get worse. Recessions have their own set of fears and the continual chance of unemployment can play havoc with people's emotions. In the end, I am a firm believer in the overall goodness of people and I believe that it will triumph.

We have not heard back from the government regarding the small business loan program. I believe we are in the first wave of applicants so Mike and I are figuring about three weeks. We have alternate financing set-up if it takes longer so that is a very good thing. So far, business for us continues to be good. As long as people keep paying their bills, we should be okay for the near term. The current generation has not seen a recession and none of us have been through a pandemic so they are really going to get beaten up if times stay very difficult.

4/8/20

9:06pm EDT | Our House, NJ

We have taken steps to set up monitoring of all of the stock and stock funds that we have interest in. If they drop 10%, they will be sold immediately and any taxes owed will then be paid. The money left will be invested in government bonds, precious metals, or money markets for the foreseeable future. If I am right, then within two years the stock market will drop 60%, which means we can buy again or wait for further developments. My continued research into the Great Depression has been our financial guide. I am highly concerned the world will follow the same global path again as in 1929 and we will do our best to stay insulated as the declines get really bad.

My anxiety level has been high for weeks and will probably remain so for a while. The coronavirus is still the main theme for everything and will stay paramount in everyone's psyche for years to come. I thank God for protecting us and pray it continues. The more that goes on the more I believe in a supreme being and will try to stay on his good side, which means being the best person I can be. I strive for that anyway, so it is all on the same course.

4/9/20

1:40pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Because of the threat of rain, I biked first then exercised in our basement. It was a very pretty ride—quiet and peaceful. After multiple correspondence with our financial advisors, I think we are in a good place for when the bottom drops out of the stock market. It actually went up today. Another 6.6 million people applied for unemployment. I was estimating ten million over the next two weeks; I

may have been under, which is a very scary thought. The books I have been reading about the Great Depression are frightening in that the parallels to today are inescapable. No matter how reassuring people are, I am planning for very tough times ahead. Business for us this month is good and I will focus on that for the short-term.

I had a talk with Don about sales. It is both the best and toughest time to sell. People are scared and willing to talk if we can find ways to benefit them directly. Of course, this is the very essence of sales anyway. My first rule of sales states that we have no chance to sell anything until we first identify and try to satisfy the needs of our customers; only then do we even get the chance to get what we want. It is a very hard lesson to learn, but it is one which I have adapted as our call to action. People who sell are judged solely on their ability to get and keep profitable sales. Everything else is commentary—it is all in the numbers. That is why a college or advanced degree, good looks, and being nice means nothing. I will hire anyone with no theoretical advantages if they have the guts, perseverance, and brains to sell. Everything else is fluff, which is why someone who can sell well can always find good jobs—even when times are really bad. We are always needed and I that believe will never change as long as business continues.

I spoke to Alex; Manhattan is still in lockdown until at least May 1st. Business in New York City is mostly shut down, which includes the fashion industry. I am not sure how fast any sector will bounce back—if at all.

What happens when a consumer society stops spending?

One of the major changes I have seen since the coronavirus pandemic began has been the abrupt halt to most consumer spending except for food, drugs, and alcohol. People who are sequestered are scared about whether they, their relatives, or their friends will get sick, die, or lose jobs. They are wondering if they can pay their mortgages and other debt—not to mention the difficulties of living in close quarters either alone or crammed in with others. The stress levels have been and will continue to be huge, which means new behaviors are becoming habits we'll have to break. This all translates to a consumer society that will stop consuming the very things that keep it moving and growing, like going on vacation, out to eat, buying houses, and congregating in groups. The solution is to not get used to life under the vise of the coronavirus. Force yourself to exercise, get outside when you can, and learn skills that will benefit you later. You don't have to spend your time lying around, worrying, gaining weight, and feeling sorry for yourself. You have control of your destiny and the first step is to take control of your life now because it is only going to get harder later.

4/10/20

1:40pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

To Ideal Jacobs Teams around the world:

Both Ben and I want to thank you all for your amazing work over the past few months. The coronavirus has obviously had a huge impact on all of us and will continue for a while—not to mention the potential economic hardships that will follow. You have all done and continue to do an excellent job of keeping us operating and we greatly appreci-

ate your efforts. We believe that our companies are well positioned around the world to not only survive but also thrive through the time of the Covid-19 virus and the economic challenges that will follow. As always, if you have any suggestions about how we can improve on our systems, do better for our customers, or new product ideas, please contact Ben or me directly.

This is our 99th year in operation, our company has been through very rough times before, and we will do so again. Thank you all.

Andy and Ben

It has been an excellent day with lots of paperwork and virtual meetings. As per above, our teams continue to do great work and our sales efforts continue. I plan to go after a new company on Monday—so far the other targets have resisted my takeover offers, which may change as the business climate tightens. Unfortunately, I am figuring the next few weeks will yield large additional unemployment numbers, which will make it all the harder for the global economy to come back in general. I am using our company as the test case for the government loan program and it was last Friday that everything started. Mike and Gary have done great jobs as has our representative from the Bank of America. If it takes us 4-6 weeks to get our money, that means there will be hundreds of thousands of other companies who will have to wait longer and that does not bode well for their survival. I believe that most business owners will not put their personal finances into much jeopardy waiting for that money, and if it is too long, they will simply close up, which also means that the landlords won't get their money, no taxes will be paid, and the downward cycle will keep getting worse.

4/11/20

4:34pm EDT | Our House, NJ

A beautiful spring day here in NJ, and after exercising in our basement, I went out for a very pleasant bike ride. I spoke with David before lunch. He believes that the commercial real estate market will probably stay stable for at least a year, and then prices will go down. How far will depend on how deep the Recession goes. I think he is wrong and prices should start falling now, but that doesn't mean it will happen. At this point, the beginning of June for the lifting of the lockdowns seems premature, but it may mark the beginning of the loosening of the most stringent measures.

Netta Skyped me from Israel; they are in an even tighter lockdown because of Passover, but she is also hopeful things will loosen up next month. The problem is that the global economy is staggering now and another six weeks will mean the death knell of hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of companies around the world. The cost of the unemployment benefits will be staggering along with the increased inflation and higher taxes. The world is still focused on the virus, but soon enough it will be very evident that the bigger economic tidal wave is already in progress. I saw a map today of when the Coronavirus cases are supposed to be under control across the US. If it is correct, I now estimate another fifteen million Americans will be unemployed by June 7th. That could be offset

by people being hired back if the Federal Aid package gets to small companies before that date. Europe may decide to keep its borders closed until September 1st, virtually wiping out a good part of their tourist season. Sooner or later, the global economy will have to be opened back up and that will spell the difference between a really bad Recession and a second Great Depression.

The coloring book idea now has a lot of momentum. Our various team members like the idea, which will cost a lot, but may be worth the cost from a branding standpoint.

I went to the supermarket and forgot my mask. Luckily, I had a balaclava helmet in my car and I used that. It is amazing how things can be used for other purposes.

4/12/20

1:09pm EDT | Our House, NJ

To my wonderful wife:

Ancient legend—okay I made it up—tells the story...

When Moses and the Jewish people were wandering in the desert for 40 years, the people became tired of eating manna. One day during the holiday of Passover, Moses decided that the people needed a treat. He declared the Sunday during that holiday as the Passover Treasure Hunt and he planted small gifts around their camp to give the people of Israel something good to think about and fun to do. That legend—just re-discovered—is being reenacted today. You are the chosen woman to go around our backyard, deck, and shed to find the gifts deposited by the one who truly loves you—that would be me. Have faith that the world will get better and we can do anything together. (Well, that part is true.)

Love always,

Andrew

It is a beautiful spring day and I just finished grilling food for some lunches and dinners this week. I also packed fruit so that is done.

Wendy loved the treasure hunt! We sent pictures to the kids and they all loved the idea and her smiling face as much as I did. Anything to make her laugh and smile is a very good thing.

The next stage to getting our new laser hooked up tomorrow is ready. Tim the electrician just texted me he is ready to go. Yes, I know it is a holiday, but that means even less than it did before. The world is realizing the trouble we are in and the race to keep people at work and business running is on. The mayor of New York said that no tenant could be evicted and no one would go hungry because of the virus situation. While I understand his sentiments and don't necessarily disagree, that still means that landlords are now in the perilous position of having to give free rent indefinitely. Obviously, they can't go on doing this too long without also getting help. That won't happen without a huge aid influx from the government and the only way to do that is inflate the currency, raise taxes, or sell bonds. People can yell and scream all they want, but if the government decides to do something and has the military and prisons to back them up, there is very little individuals can do about it. Of course, that is how rebellions and revolutions are formed—like what happened with us in 1776.

4/13/2020

2:22pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

My quest to take over the sales of other companies continued today with focusing on specific targets and sending out proposals today. Since the government stimulus package is roughly 8 weeks of work expenses, that would be the perfect amount of time for a company owner to transition out of manufacturing and over to being an independent rep for us. There is the usual risk/reward going on here, which means it could be a lost effort or hit multiple targets at the same time. I have not heard back—nor expected to hear back—from the prospect last Friday night. No matter; we are already moving on.

Most global stock markets are up with the idea that the virus is winding down. While I very much hope that is so, there are now those who are predicting the same thing as me—a severe global recession bordering on another Great Depression. I hope it does not get any worse than that. I believe the markets will go down 20% by Sept. 1, 20% more by the end of the year, and 20% more by the end of 2021. I hope that is as far down as they go. The markets are following the path of the Great Depression: multiple spikes upward and then further down, sucking in the medium and small investors who are trying to get back the money they lost. There are some who feel there will be a 30% unemployment rate, which is even worse than the 25% I figured. It is getting increasingly scary.

4/15/2020

3:46pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Another crazy, good day with lots of frightening economic news offset by what was happening here. We got our stimulus money from the government, which gives us enough money to run at full staff for at least eight weeks. It is a very nice cushion and we will use it to keep pushing for new business. Our team is good; the new system we have adapted for the virus situation is working well.

President Trump wants to cut off the US funding for the World Health Organization. He is also battling various governors regarding when and how the states should reopen after the virus shutdown. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren have endorsed Joe Biden, pulling him further towards the liberal progressive side of things and polarizing our electorate. The election will come down to how the economy is doing the weeks before the election. Everything else will fade to the background. If there is 25% unemployment and the stock market is down another 25%, then the president's chances are weak. If the country is able to rebound well enough, then he still has a chance—especially if Mr. Biden goes too far to the left. There is talk of a loosening of the shutdown sometime next month, but social distancing could stay in effect for the next year. I have a feeling that people are going to get fed up with this process, and as soon as the reins are released a little, many will go back to their normal behaviors. It would be really good to know if the antibodies created after someone gets the virus will stop them from getting it again—so far there is no confirmation either way.

4/16/2020

4:30pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We just spent a lot of money on a new laser. The laser manufacturer is refusing to send in a technician because of the virus. I told the salesman that they should not have taken our money if they were going to refuse to service it. They now want to have us set it up remotely, which will not be as good. At this point, however, we are screwed because we need the laser up and running and we will have to put in the effort ourselves to get it going. Of course, I will try and extract as much from them as possible regarding credits and extended warranties. I also believe that God does not want their technician in here to spread the virus so I am not as upset as I could have been.

More than 5 million additional people registered for unemployment; the rate is now about 20% and heading for much worse over the next eight weeks. Groups in Manhattan are calling for all rent to be forgiven until June. While that is good for the renters, I fear for the landlords who have massive mortgages and will not be able to pay the banks and foreclosures across the board will turn into a tidal wave. New York City's lockdown continues for an extra two weeks; my son Alex is directly affected. Global stock markets are again in denial about what is going on with mixed results. Unfortunately, it is just like the Depression where there were spikes upward, which made no sense to what was really happening.

4/18/2020

6:22pm EDT | Our House, NJ

My wonderful wife and I often have different views on financial matters. She operates from a retail vision: how stores are operating, what is on the television, and her and her friend's shopping habits. I do a lot of research in various publications and radio stations as well as read a lot of biographies of individuals and various points in time. I spoke with David today about the commercial real estate market. From our talk, it looks like that property segment has gone down by 20% in the last 6 weeks. When I asked Wendy to describe what was coming on a scale of 1-10—with 1 being the economy at the beginning of this year and 10 being the Great Depression—she gave it a 7. I was between 7-9. I asked her how long it would take to get back to prosperity and she said between 3-5 years—the same estimate as mine. Rent and mortgages are not being paid, unemployment is at 20% and could go to 30% by June 1st. Even if the economy can be jump-started again with additional stimulus and the virus reduces globally, maybe the 7 estimate will hold. Otherwise, we are looking at worse. At this point, if our business stays good, if the government stimulus loan is forgiven, which is never a certainty, and our customers stay in business, we should be in a position to not only be stable but expand. The competitors I have been trying to take over may not be in a better or worse position than us, but we could easily become their owner's only option to keep going. It is one of those amazing times in life where I thank God that I not only love my job, but also that we have incredible global teams dedicated to moving us forward. As for me, we have adapted well as a family and team to these new conditions, but I—like everyone else—craves to go back to our normal

routines and I would really like to get back on the road. It is only out there where I can get a true feel of how the world is doing and I need that actual information to be bold to make better predictions and decisions.

4/19/2020

3:53pm EST | Our House, NJ

It has been a fun day with lots of exercise. I worked out in our basement, including going on my ARC trainer, then went biking; the weather has been spring-like and beautiful. After lunch, I went out to buy food for lunch this week. I also tried to get paper towels—no luck there. I came back and prepared all the food for my breakfast and lunches this week. I also spoke to my mom, sister, and brother; all are well and seem to be coping with the locked down as well as possible. There is talk, by the local governors, of maybe loosening some of the rules, which would be a very good thing because people are starting to lose it being cooped up for so long. Also, the longer the delay for re-starting our economy, the worse it will be. If the Jersey Shore is not allowed to get going by Memorial Day, the loss of tourist revenue here and the rest of the world will be highly damaging across the board. Rough times are coming; it is not hard to forecast. Even people who are not up on all of the various news outlets can feel something bad is here and will get worse. Not a pleasant feeling.

Most US stock markets are down. The price of crude oil went to -23.00 a barrel. It has never been in negative numbers before. It means there is too much oil and not enough storage area to hold it. No one knows what this will mean, but it is probably safe to say it is not a good thing. Meanwhile, there is still hope that the global lockdowns will start to lift in the middle of May. I hope they do.

4/21/20

4:30pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The laser manufacturer confirmed my belief that we were the first company to ever complete an installation via virtual instruction. Of course, we had Vinnie and Die Master Dave who are by far the best two machine men I have ever met. They started last night at 4:00pm, went straight through until 11:00pm, and finished the job in record time. I am very proud of both of them. President Trump is attempting to use COVID-19 as a reason to stop all immigration except for workers. I believe other countries are considering the same. At this point, I have no idea when any country will open their borders, which means tourism will take a huge hit. Locally, that probably means the Jersey Shore. I also have no idea when I can go back on the road to sell. It may not be until the fall—another example of money not being spent that would have helped our economy.

Are We Looking at the Same Event?

My best friend's name is David. He is in commercial real estate. We are roughly the same age and have gone through many decades of watching the global economy. It is astounding to me how we can both look at the same set of current events and come up with exactly opposite scenarios. He believes that the virus lockdown

will end, and by this December, the economy will be better than ever. Looking at the same global situation, I see disaster coming—a global recession bordering on a new Great Depression. I hope he is right.

4/22/2020

3:46pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Senator Mitch McConnell was quoted in Bloomberg News saying he did not have a problem with individual US states declaring bankruptcy. He did not plan to allow them to get aid to counteract their sources of income drying up from the Covid-19 virus. The problem with that is that if the states and their municipalities seek bankruptcy protection, then their bonds will be either devalued or worthless. That had me start a conversation with our investment people as to our exposure and it is not nothing. I am pretty sure that a lot of the retirement funds of most Americans have at least some local and state bonds, which means that a massive default would potentially “gut” the savings accounts of many older Americans. That means that any plans they might have had for retirement would probably be delayed at best and stopped at worst, which also means they will be staying in jobs much longer than before and not making room for younger prospects coming into the job market. This whole global mess is looking worse all the time and—again—the bulk of humanity is not even centered on what will happen when the lockdowns are lifted.

It was 34°F this morning—chilly but very nice biking with the right equipment. I spoke to my son Ben; he has adapted well to the new pandemic conditions and looks to be in a really good position to move forward in his company. In times of high stress, those who have the ideas and are willing to go forward with them often succeed. He has both of those.

Today is Earth Day

I am sorry to report that my quest to create a huge carbon credit project in Indonesia has gone nowhere. All of the various factors seemed to come together, but if every part did not fall perfectly together, the plan had no chance. The person I needed to spearhead the movement in both Indonesia and Malaysia has determined that nothing can be done while the Covid-19 virus is attacking our world. I believed that this was a God-given, once in a lifetime chance to act quickly and decisively. Therefore, I believe that we have lost our chance. Perhaps I am wrong, but I have to doubt that the opportunity will ever come back. It would be a very sad loss for our environment, but there is nothing else I can do at this time. It was pretty cool that we even had the chance to make a global change. I will hang onto that feeling.

I have been trying to figure out where the global economy is headed and—through some divine insight—there may be an answer. With the pandemic, a quarter of the world’s workforce could be furloughed. Many are receiving government money, but that will not go on for much longer and they will have to dip into their savings. If the economy takes a long time to re-ignite and the people stay unemployed, our consumer-based global economy will not have the ammu-

dition to get back to where it was. In other words, the same situation will occur as did in the Great Depression. Instead of bad investing practices, the cause is a global plague. Large numbers of people without savings or jobs with only government programs to help will eventually run dry. People will be unable to pay rent or their mortgages, which will also leave building owners to forfeit their responsibilities and put the banks into trouble. It is the same recipe for getting further and further into trouble—the same path to the Second Great Depression. Now, the government is talking about letting states go bankrupt, which means they can then forfeit their bonds, leaving investors with nothing. A growing avalanche of debt, default, and despair. If that is the case, federal government bonds should still be okay, state and municipal bonds will have to be watched, precious metals would hopefully stay good, and money markets and cash should do well.

4/23/2020

3:35pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Surfs Up and Coming

It has been about six weeks since the lockdown began and also my last haircut. As it has gotten longer, I have been trimming here and there—Wendy has helped—but I actually like it. It reminds me of my days in college when I used to sport a longer look. I am figuring that I probably have at least another month before my hair cutter re-opens. I should be fine until then, but I hope she can start again. Many companies that have been shuttered that long will probably not come back. The dreams of owning their own companies will end tragically through no fault of their own, which is very sad. We are about to go into a different world with some things better and other worse with the only constant being an ever increasing rate of change. Sometimes it is much easier to concentrate on something as simple and relatively unimportant as a haircut as opposed to the reality of the tidal wave that is fast approaching.

Unemployment numbers were released for the past week. I had predicted 5 million, but the actual number was about 4.4 million, which meant that there was approximately 20% (my estimate) unemployment here in the US. That means one in five people do not have jobs. While it may be temporary now, longer lockdowns promise worse conditions. My guess is that another 7 million will go over the next two weeks and it will cap at 25%. I hope that is as far as it goes. My quest to take over the sales of other companies has not yielded results yet, but the real crunch time will not happen for a few months. In the meantime, the owners are hopefully reading my books and pondering what life for them would be like without their plants and all the worries associated with them.

4/24/2020

3:32pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hello and Welcome to the May edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Awful and Great

The pandemic is awful and horrible. Being involved in a plague situation is very similar

to being in a war zone. But! In bad situations, some good can come out of it. Part of my job is being in charge of our global sales teams, and up until seven weeks ago, that meant that I traveled the world going after new business, seeing customers, and working on new product lines. It was an area that I loved and hope to get back to, but in the meantime I have been based here in our plant in New Jersey. When the lockdown was put into place by our able governor, we were designated as an essential business, which meant we could still operate.

At the beginning, we were just trying to function and keep operating as best we could, but after a week, we got into a new rhythm and the results have been amazing. It is the worst of times that often bring out the best in people, and our teams around the world have been great. Here in New Jersey, it quickly became apparent that my new primary job was to help modify our systems and maintain highest levels of efficiency under these extraordinary circumstances. That has led to the inevitable questions of “why are we doing things this way” and “how can we do them better”. I am sure that there are times that our staff would rather I be back on the road as opposed to pulling apart processes and trying new procedures, but they are a good-natured group and they know my purpose is to help our company. They can also see the many millions of people who are out of work and how many more will fall before we all can start to recover. Our world will be different and things will go to a new “normal”; I plan for us to not only survive but also to thrive in whatever new environment transforms from the system we had just two months ago. The only certainty is that change will happen faster and those who can adapt quickly in the smartest, most efficient ways have the chance to thrive. I know that I can be a pain in the butt, but I also know what works; and I have the feeling that our revised systems will coincide with me going back on the road. I greatly look forward to both.

*Regards,
Andrew*

Options in Lockdown for Those with Significant Others

You have been living—or stuck—with each other for weeks and every day seems the same, but it really isn't. You may not realize it, but you have been making decisions about your primary relationship that will affect the rest of your lives. Many separations and divorces will result as soon as the plague vanishes and life will return to normal. But you have some time to think about your relations and have the chance to improve them. But if one or both of you are showing signs of stress, here is a list of options of what can happen.

- Separation: maybe some time apart after this is done may be a good idea to see if your relationship can survive.
- Self-medicate: eat.
- Self-medicate: drink alcohol.
- Self-medicate: recreational drugs.
- Self-medicate: work harder.
- Self-medicate: exercise.
- Self-medicate: study and learn more.

There comes a time in everyone's life where they have to take stock of who and what they are. This is a good time. If you are eating, drinking, or drugging your way through this journey, you are paying for it now and will do more so later with the destruction of your mind, body, and soul. Of course, your partner

is also feeling the effects of your self-destruction and you are probably pushing them towards the same thing. The same goes for the opposite. If you decide to use the time on self-improvement in mind, body, and soul, work harder, smarter, and longer and get your body in the best condition of your life, then that will also motivate your partner to either do the same or go the opposite way. No process creates total logic or sense—especially regarding your partner—so the time has come to figure out what makes you “tick”, see what you like and don’t like, and make changes as needed. Or you can sink into further oblivion and drag your partner down with you. As I said, it is a time for self-reflection and hopefully you will like what you find.

4/26/2020

7:20pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It was supposed to rain this morning, but I got out to bike before it started. Then I finished my exercises downstairs in our basement, which included 41 minutes on the ARC. I had lunch with Wendy and we watched the last two segments of the Forsyte Saga. It was very good.

The governor of New York State has come out with a reopening plan, which will take at least six weeks to roll out. Unfortunately, in that time, and if the other governors follow suit, another 20 million people could be out of work with the prospect of them being re-hired quickly fading. There is one estimate that half of the small businesses that are now forced into closing will not reopen. That means there will be a huge vacuum and potential for new businesses to open and flourish, but there will be very little financing to help them. It also means a general contraction in the global supply chain system. If there were 200 competitors before, there will be 50 left by 1/1/22. It will be the survival of the fittest, best-financed, and best-situated around the world, and I will do my best to have Ideal Jacobs as one of them. I thank God that we own our house, we are renting for our company, and don’t own a building with tenants. Even though we have lost a lot of money in the market, we are now invested in areas that should be much more stable—if not making money. The time for people to be cocky about them having a job and figuring they could easily switch to another is gone. Right now, most employers are probably like me: very happy to be operating, very proud of our teams for getting us through the lockdown so far, and plan to be loyal to them for as long as possible. Look for lease, housing, and building prices and the global stock markets to be down 25% by the end of this year. It is time for everyone to focus on the second wave of the tsunami; economic destruction is upon us. If I am wrong and the economy rebounds, I will happily be the first to say I was wrong.

4/27/2020

8:20pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Due to the potential for rain, I switched my schedule this morning and—after a quick warm up—went biking. I still needed a road light for clarity, but it was daylight by the time I got home. I then did the rest of my workout and was in the

office at my normal time. It was a typical crazy, enjoyable Monday, which included working out some inventory issues for our BuildTak 3D Printing Peripheral line. It has grown with lots of products that are spread throughout our shipping area, and Mike and I agreed today that it all had to be consolidated to one area both for efficiency and keeping track of our inventory. That process will begin tomorrow with the jettison of some old Ideal Jacobs inventory to make room for the active parts. I had the chiropractor today, which was wonderful, and then it was home to Wendy and dinner—all very pleasant.

4/28/2020

4:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ
Doing What Was Meant To Be

I just had a new employee who was mostly full-time come into my office and say she did not want to work for us anymore running our laser. She did like editing my newest book and I immediately moved her to doing that, designing the cover, and setting it up to print. She will go to part-time in two weeks—probably 10-15 hours a week—and although I didn't agree with her decision—especially with so many millions of people out of work—it was her right to decide. Besides, maybe she is correct. I can help her launch her own editing and production company working on my next book, which is her life's dream, so maybe it was meant to be. I have been in the printing business for more than four decades and made many right and wrong decisions, especially involving people. I tend to keep my opinions to myself unless someone directly asks or they work for us. In the end, I have found out that a major part of my job is simply being a conduit that God uses to help move people around to do the most good wherever it is needed. It is actually a lot of fun and I find myself enjoying it more every day.

4/30/2020

8:19pm EDT | Our House, NJ
Reality

Look around you as times get tougher. You will quickly see the people you can count on: those with actual experience that is worth absorbing, those who love you, and that small group who can be counted on when times get really tough. Use clear eyes to see the truth and they will help you through the havoc that is already here. Don't let the designation "friend" or "relative" get in the way of seeing reality. There will be few people you can really count on who can handle huge amounts of stress with dignity, courage and good will. Keep them close and isolate the others as much as possible. Your energy is limited; use it to your best advantage because it is your one true asset and have to be selfish and save yourself first before you have any chance to help anyone else.



5/1/2020

4:24pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I went out biking in the rain this morning. I usually avoid that because it is hard on my bikes, but I decided it was time to push my limits. I got dressed in my Gortex rain coat, pants, and waterproof boots and was able to wear my helmet under my hood for half the journey before it got too hot. It was actually quite pleasant and I dried off my bike when I returned. I hope she is none the worse for wear. There is something calm and serene about being out in the rain and I plan to do more of it in the future. It has been another fun, crazy day with lots of working on inventory, personnel, and prices. April was a very good month for sales; the first four months of this year have been good and Ben emailed me last night that IJX has also been doing very well. I interviewed a new laser operator today who will start on Wednesday and we may also need an additional person for press lines. We also hired a new part-time employee today—one of Hilda's kids—she and he both will be in our shipping and receiving department. I feel incredibly blessed to be able to write like this, especially with the rest of the world having severe problems. I can only hope that things improve for them and we keep doing well. I wanted to get tested to see if I have the Covid-19 antibodies, but the test is not 100% accurate despite being very expensive. Since having antibodies is not certain to stop anyone from getting it again, I am delaying that process.

5/2/2020

4:15pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a spectacular weather day here in New Jersey. It is now sunny and 72°F and I was able to bike this morning without thermal underwear or a jacket. Wendy and I took off the tarps covering our porch furniture and cleaned. It is great to be able to sit out here again and listen to the birds. There were a lot of people out when I went biking and spring was in full array. There was enough traffic in our town to look almost normal. Various towns, cities, and states are preparing to relax their lockdown status, so it is hoped that by June 1st everything

will be open. There are warnings that the virus will come back in the fall but no one knows if the antibodies within those exposed will protect them. The best we can do is enjoy life now and hope for the best. Wendy just joined me out here; she extends greetings to all who are reading. We both feel very blessed for everything we have and hope things will continue to get better quickly. The porch gives some normalcy to our crazy world. Speaking of our country, the Democrats and Republicans are trying to figure out the next stimulus package. Various groups are vying for aid and I have no feel for what will happen—except that I believe that real unemployment will be at 25% by the end of the summer. I also believe that all world currencies will be inflated at the same time to take care of the bail-out packages, which means it probably won't greatly affect anyone except those who hold precious metals, which might hold their value better than anything else. The “economic experts” claim the economy will come blistering back after the lockdowns are lifted, which I believe is virtually impossible—especially when the unemployment funds dry up then things will look much worse. When people stop consuming, everything else will be affected to an ever greater degree. I pray that God keeps shining down on us so our businesses around the world continue to do well.

One interesting byproduct of the lockdowns is that people are doing a lot more 3D printing and our BuildTak product line is doing increased business. In fact, we are hiring at this moment, which I greatly hope continues. I still don't see all of our people back from being virtual until at least July and maybe longer. Some of them have health-related issues and are afraid to be around others; we will do our best to accommodate them.

5/3/2020

7:04pm EDT | Our House, NJ

The effects of the global lockdown are being felt everywhere to varying degrees. The tempers of many of us have grown short and outbursts are much more frequent than before. A lot of relationships will be sorely tested before this ends and many will either be greatly strengthened or strained beyond repair. Another aspect of this plague is the disbursement of families. Before the virus, getting on a plane to see relatives and friends might have been expensive and time consuming, but it was not a huge deal. Now we are not sure when we will get to see Ben, Kayla, and Carla again; it could be six months or a year, which is a very long time. Happily, Alex and Scott should be able to get to us or we to them by the beginning of June. There is a great deal of talk about another wave of a different strain of the virus coming in the fall. If we can get the virus more than once and if it mutates, it will add a very difficult layer on top of the trouble we already have. The economic aspects are already catastrophic. In the case of the Great Depression, some of that problem was caused by the direct actions of the people involved. In this case, those who did nothing wrong may be forced to accept the brunt of what is coming. There are people worried about deflation, inflation, unemployment, and the general inability of our consumer-based economy to keep consuming.

Our company has to do the following:

- Stay well-capitalized. If that means using my retirement fund as a running bank, then so be it.
- Keep debt to a minimum.
- Keep our overhead and expenses as low as possible but have enough extra capacity so we can expand in whatever areas are needed as quickly as possible.
- Keep our teams as motivated and safe as possible while driving them hard for maximum efficiency even under very difficult conditions.
- Keep paying our teams full salaries when others are cutting back, which will foster team spirit, loyalty, and their acquiescence in being pushed for better output.
- Go after the sales of other companies to grow organically, and at the same time, keep trying to take over others by getting their sales and paying commissions so our cash flow is not stretched.
- Push our sales people harder than ever before to be out in the marketplace to go after new business. Difficult times mean new opportunities and customers are always ready to listen to how we can safeguard their supply chains, save money, and look good in front of their bosses.
- Always remember that the boss, who is me, sets the tone for day to day and overall operations. If I am upbeat, ready to attack, and looking forward to what is coming, then our people globally will take my lead.

There are a lot less competitors in our arena than I originally thought. If times get really bad, then the odds are good a bunch of them will go out of business. We simply have to be visible to get a shot at what they had. We have to increase our advertising and selling globally and we have to do that now.

We have to remember to have fun. Work is not a hardship; it is our avenue for advancement and the option to push ourselves to our limits to see how far we can go. We have the ability to make our mark on the world in this time of great global stress. This is our time and our chance to become bigger and stronger, taking over much more market share.

5/4/2020

3:27pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We got an update from Sahar regarding the progress of the farm. They are doing great. I emailed Rob and Ruthanne, cousins from Washington, to tell them about it. She had lived in Israel and we planned to plant a tree in memorial for their daughter who had passed away. I found myself starting to cry as I wrote it and realized how I would have felt if someone was writing to me about one of my kids. The day has been spent in meetings and pricing; I was late on a call for one of our Mexican customers, which is not a great start, but it went well. It turned out they were unhappy about a price rise on one of their products. After doing more research, I found out that I had made an even bigger mistake originally pricing it than I thought. We will try and work out a compromise. I make mistakes; I will make more. I am not happy about it, but it is part of the process. We will do our best to keep them at a minimum.

Our government is talking about banning all international flights until the end of the year.

5/5/2020

4:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I spoke with Netta. She had a meeting with Sahar about the farm. It is doing well and my mom is really excited about her updates and pictures. Netta had big news; she is getting married in October and invited Wendy and I to come. The obvious problem is that I am not sure if we will be allowed to fly out of the US and get back without a quarantine. If not, we will go next year.

We have Don Lem emailing every potential contact we have in Texas as an ongoing onslaught to go after more business and keep track of people who have moved. He is copying me and I can see that he is going after the list with gusto.

5/6/2020

2:48pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

My wonderful brother called me to say that he was going to our family doctor on Monday to get a Covid-19 antibody blood test. I thought it such a great idea; I now have an appointment this Friday, and if we both show positive, maybe we can actually see each other, which would be fantastic. We had a new part-timer start today. He is a former manager for a very large and well-run screen printing company that went out of business about 15 years ago. They were excellent trainers and we have utilized a bunch of their people after they closed. We did a large amount of pricing today, including a huge five-year project that involved medical testing, which will hopefully translate into actual orders.

5/7/2020

3:55pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I biked early so I would be home in time for our global sales meeting. It turned out well; our teams are amazing and things, especially the Covid-19 issue, are going well. Everyone is very excited about our coloring book with the set of colored pencils and we all agreed to hold off for three months to see the response before we launched into the global coloring contest. There are also some additional advertising things we will do, including going after business in new areas for those other companies who can't operate fully in this environment. We also thought about creating some PPE-related products. Unfortunately, the pandemic's effects will be around for a while—though hopefully not forever. Our team also wanted us to put together a 30-second YouTube video commercial for potential customers. I will work on that.

Our new laser is coming online in spurts. Some more “dialing in” is needed, but our guys are making great progress.

Certain states are starting to open up; it is too early to tell if that is a good idea or not. Another 3.1 million people signed up for unemployment and the “real” unemployment rate is probably close to 23%—a very huge and scary number.

Most stock markets in North America and Europe are up—do not ask me why. I still see economic disaster coming. There are an ever-increasing amount of news stories of people from all walks of life and the incredible hardship the coronavirus is either causing or exacerbating.

5/9/2020

8:05pm EDT | Our House, NJ

My back was hurting, so after I did my exercises in our basement, I put on my SwaddelPax Vest and biked. It was the first time I ever used it while biking and it worked well. After I got back and had lunch with Wendy, I went to the flower store for the first time this season. Wendy had convinced me to wait because of potential cold weather, but some warmer weather had arrived and I had a great time picking out our first group of flowers. I am figuring it will probably take two more trips before I am done. Once finished there, it was off to the supermarket and then back home and a quiet afternoon and evening with Wendy. We had leftovers for dinner, which were excellent.

I had texted with my sister to tell her about the antibody test; she is hopeful for my results. If positive, I can probably see her next weekend. My mom called to say she got her Mother's Day flowers and she too was very hopeful the test result would allow me to see her again next week. I also spoke to my brother; he gets his test on Monday. If we can see each other, it will have been over eight weeks so that will be a very good thing. I spoke to my friend David; I can also see him next week if the test is positive, so a lot is riding on what happens.

Our country is starting to reopen slowly. If a lot of people have antibodies already for immunity, it would be very helpful to know that when dealing with them. Having antibodies does not mean you can't get sick again or are protected from another strain, but it least sets up a first line of defense.

5/10/2020

6:32pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Now It Is Spring

My wonderful wife advised me to hold off on the spring flower planting until this weekend. I thought her unnecessarily cautious until I looked outside yesterday and it was snow flurrying. Snow in May is incredibly rare in New Jersey, but she was right—as usual—and I should always remember not to question her advice. Today was the day for the flowers to go in, so after my exercises in our basement, a wonderful bike ride outside, an excellent lunch with Wendy, combining the fruit for my snacks and grilling food for four lunches for this week, I was ready to plant. I bought the flowers yesterday and stored them on our porch with a tarp against the cold. Once in our pots, they looked great. Our flowers will provide a constant source of peace and joy for the coming months and I will add more as the seasons move on. The virus has made everything seem out of kilter; pretty flowers help give some sense back into our crazy world.

Dear Grandfather and Dad,

I write to you tonight because our world is at a crossroads and I feel like I am in the middle of it. Through some twist of fate, a vortex of various huge forces are surging together to meet at a specific spot that can mean the difference between our world changing for the better or going continually into worse darkness. While the Covid-19 virus is seen as 100% bad, there are a few benefits that could come from it. Our world is in chaos, our global economy a mess that will soon go into a Great Depression, but with that horrendous event, there is the silver lining. People, government, and their leaders will finally be willing to consider options that were unthinkable before. With the pandemic, there will have to be trillions of dollars spent to help those who have been financially and physically impaired or destroyed, but the form of that aid is where our potential salvation lies. Just giving money to people seldom does much good because the smartest people—that very small minority—will end up with the bulk of it. The only way to do true good—to help the people of the world and our planet at the same time—is to utilize the funds that will become available for multiple purposes. The greatest needs for our global family will be a clean environment, healthy and abundant food, and highly available medical care. The only way to set up a system where the majority of the world's population benefits from its resources is to make it profitable to do the right thing.

The first avenue to help our planet is stopping the burning of our forests and lands, which will help stop the pollution of our atmosphere and the reduction in global warming. The second is to create sustainable farming methods that can be done on both small and large scale that are totally organic and do not rely on chemical pesticides and fertilizers. We have ways to do both, but we have to create a way to make it profitable. We have that procedure of what has to be done; we can do this I “just” have to convince my potential partners, the Indonesian Government, various banks, and others that we can make this global change, make money, and set up the blueprint to bring in other countries. It is a huge undertaking, but sometimes we have to start big. I have been working on this idea for a while. There will never be a better time. In extreme uncertainty and trouble, there is huge potential and I am not waiting any longer to go after it. Please shine down on our efforts and send us your advice through dreams and ideas. You both had—have—excellent, sharp minds. We could use all the help we can get and with help from God we can try and change the world.

*Love you both,
Andrew*

It was Mother's Day here in the US. I think Wendy had a very good day—that was my intention. We Skyped with Ben, Carla, Alex, and Kay. Wendy is sad. She does not think she will see them for a while. I am still hopeful for Thanksgiving or before.

5/11/2020

8:22pm EDT | Our House, NJ

The global lockdowns continue with some countries starting to reduce their stringency, others on a slower course, and a few countries that did little. Whether the full lockdowns saved lives, whether the economic costs will cause substantial hardship and death. Each side will push their vision and action, and in the end, it will probably be inconclusive—except that the global carnage regarding busi-

nesses of all sizes will be indisputable. Some believe that we will bounce back quickly economically; others, like me, think we are headed into the next Great Depression. As always, when you are in the middle of something, there is no way to know except to play out the hands we are dealt. The one positive thing is that there will be substantial global behavioral change because of this plague, and my job, as a member of planet Earth and a businessman, is to combine making money with being good to our environment. With that in mind, I went on LinkedIn today and found the finance minister for Indonesia. She looked knowledgeable, pleasant, and tough, so I emailed her regarding our carbon credit plan. I had pushed Azwan early this morning to either start the project now or we would go ahead without him; he respectfully declined, so I wished him best of luck and went on our way. Therefore, I either find a new high-level contact in Indonesia or I think this idea is dead. Hopefully, God will help if he thinks it is a good path. I will keep going until I either run out of ideas or everyone is negative. Still, helping the world and making money is a pretty potent one-two punch, so we will keep trying for a while. The rules for the PPP federal loan program are, I hope, finalized. We need to know if we can keep the money we may need to cover eight weeks of payroll, rent, and utilities. If it is just a loan, I don't want it because it will spur me to spend money we should be saving.

I got word that my Covid-19 antibody test was negative. I was surprised, but in the end, I figured that if I did have some protection, then I would start taking some unnecessary or even dangerous exposure chances. Since there is no guarantee that I could not get it twice, this is God's way of keeping me in line. I am not sure that I could justify me getting on a plane that is crammed with people with such a high potential to get exposed. I do know that as soon as a vaccine is ready I will go for it. It may mean no traveling for another six months and that is a long time. Meanwhile, I am needed at our plant, and since Mike is locked down at his house, it has worked out well that I am on site. Besides, that is where I should be. If there is risk for our people going to work, then there is no way I can ask them to do that if I am not there with them. We are in this together and the bonds we have formed are strong.

5/12/2020

9:45am EDT | Our Office, NJ

People Will Die Either Way

It is highly unfortunate, but the Covid-19 plague has given us a set of unacceptable options. If the world stays shut down, the number of cases of the virus will decrease, eventually a vaccine will be developed, and things will mostly go back to normal. However, with the lockdown there will also be a huge rise in bankruptcies, the inability for people to afford food and medical care, mental illness, crime, and violence. The reality is that this is a no-win situation and moderation from both extremes is the best pathway.

5/13/2020

7:06pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Dave Lebre came into my office this afternoon and said that something was wrong with Shyrone. I went back to the area and he was sitting down crying with his hand in his head. He was inconsolable, saying his head was killing him. We got him some ice packs and I called 911. Within 15 minutes, the rescue squad arrived. One of the members fully-covered and masked came in to check him out. After a quick exam, they took him to a nearby hospital. Because of the Covid-19 plague, I was not allowed to go with them or get inside the hospital, so I ended up going to my chiropractor appointment. While there, I texted Shy and he let me know that he was being discharged. He had gotten a Covid-19 test, but would not know the results for up to two days.

On the way home, I spoke to David. He has now done a 90 degree turn from a week ago and now thinks that the economy is going to get really bad. Hearing that he thought that my views of the downward economy were correct is not great solace to me. If he is thinking this way, then the balance of humanity is moving towards the same. When a consumer-based economy is faced with a crisis and the citizens stop spending, the conditions will get much worse soon.

When I got home, I told Wendy about Shyrone and she asked me what I would do if he tested positive. Thoughts of having to shut down immediately entered my head; I reacted strongly. The idea of having to cease manufacturing was one of my worst fears and having to confront it was no fun. I did take her suggestion and told Shy to stay home until he got the results. In the meantime, I will not go see my mother, sister, brother, or David, which I had hoped to do this weekend. If he tests positive, I will immediately have his brother go out for at least a week, but I will keep everyone else on and monitor everyone closely. We will continue to do the temperature checks every morning, which helps with the general morale, but every time something like this happens, it sends an understandable chill through the entire team. There have been some new infections in China, the rest of the world seems to be winding down with this first and hopefully only onslaught, but if waves continue, it will be treated like the flu. We will all get vaccinated every year and hope for the best. Going on a plane with lots of people in close quarters does not sound like a great idea. I still feel like I have spent my whole life preparing for this disaster/adventure. Everything is changing, people are reacting as they really are, a lot of the false fronts have been stripped away by the constant worry and strain. Some who I thought would wither have surged forward; others have begun to fall by the wayside. One thing for sure is that we have to have a really strong, cohesive group to survive and thrive, and that continues for the immediate future with the adding, changing, and reducing our staff. Our markets will probably reduce by 25% across the board; we need to take sales from others since a lot of new business might not be generated. I am in the midst of doing that now. Most of the time, I love my job, but there are occasions when everything is overtaken by a glimpse of how lousy it could be. The shutting down of our plant would be really bad—not just for our team and our customers but also for me mentally. We need to be able to go to work everyday; our routine

and our discipline is part of what makes us strong. They look to me for support, strength, and a direction that they can follow. I can not let them or me down.

5/14/2020

3:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We heard from Shy this morning; his headache is much better, but he is still out until his Covid-19 test comes back. We are in the process of checking with our virtual employees as to when they are coming back; we need them here. In the process, we are also interviewing new people, so I am hoping for a much stronger overall team in place by July 1st. We are in a different world, but the general rules of business remain and we are positioning ourselves to hopefully take advantage of this new landscape.

Hello and welcome to the June Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Since no one else will tell you what is probably going to happen, I thought I should give you the reality that is coming. It will not be pleasant until the end, so I urge you to keep reading.

Let's start with our world with the US. The Economic Recession that was coming and was going to be bad anyway will now rival the Great Depression. The real US unemployment rate is already 25% and will go to at least 30% before it levels off. That means that almost one in three people will be unemployed. High unemployment compensation will be phased out as individual states start dealing with the real threat of bankruptcy. The federal government will inflate our currencies and raise our tax rates. That means that those who still have money will seek safe havens to protect what they have; increased taxes will make any possible real return not worth the risk of losing it all. Those who own investment real estate will see value and returns reduced as the government allows tenants to not pay their rents. Banks will be affected by all those who cannot pay their mortgages.

This also means that the ability of people to consume in our consumer society will continue to decrease and the spiral will go down for a while. It will get very bad. For those fortunate to still have jobs, their idea of working hard translates to eight or nine hours. They will get paid less, and if they don't work harder and longer, they will lose the work they have. Complaining will not matter as no one will have the patience or tolerance to listen. It will become very simple: survival of the fittest. It won't matter your age, religion, sex, or anything else. It will strictly be a matter of how good you are at your job and how well you can fend off others who want it. In a good way, it will equalize us all because only the good will survive and the others will fall away down the economic ladder until they find a level where they can survive. Entitlement will be lessened because no one will be able to afford keeping people who don't pull their weight.

Now the good news.... During times like these, people are willing and eager to listen to new ideas and innovations. Since their main concern is keeping their job or getting a better one, they will be happy to learn about new processes and the chances for their companies to run more efficiently so they can make more money, which means they will stay employed. Tough times allow the cream to rise to the top. Those who had no chance to be heard before can suddenly have a platform, start a company from the spark of inspiration, gain momentum, and soar. Some really huge companies were born during the Great Depression and the same thing will happen now. If you have energy, ideas, the need to excel, and the willingness to work until you drop, then the world is not as good for you as before—it will become better. You are the accelerant that will allow the building of

new innovation, companies, and movements that can be better than it was before. There were many mistakes made in the past; we are destined to replay them if they are ignored. Study the past, find role models of what you want to accomplish, and prepare to soar because you will have the chances to go for your dreams like never before.

5/15/2020

11:52pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It is time for a new hobby.

Hi Jerry, (one of my oldest friends and a beekeeper)

I hope all is well. The world is crazy and I feel like it is a great time to start a new hobby. I would like to try beekeeping, but I am worried that if I keep getting stung I might develop an allergy and have to carry an epi-pen everywhere. Is that a rational fear?

*Regards,
Andy*

5/17/2020

8:21pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been an excellent weekend, and after exercising in our basement, I went out for a bike ride in the wonderful, mild pre-summer weather. Before lunch, Wendy and I were part of a Zoom first birthday party for Rebecca and Gavin's son Issac. It was a little sad that we could not actually be together because of the virus, but it was still good to see everyone. After lunch and a trip to the supermarket, I planted a lot of the flowers I had purchased yesterday. I never know when buying them whether it was too few or many; usually it is not enough, but this time I went way overboard and had a lot left over. Regardless, they looked great and I sent the kids pictures of our progress later in the day. After getting cleaned up, I went out to get us burgers for dinner and some sushi for lunch tomorrow. As it happened, the supermarket chain called Kings had excellent sushi on a continuing basis so I partake as often as the yen grabs me. After dinner, Wendy and I sat in our stoop for a little while and enjoyed the evening breeze. The trees have all leafed out and everything is gorgeous. It has been a bit dry so I just emailed a reminder to Wendy to turn on our sprinkler system in the morning.

After speaking with my friend Jerry, I signed up for an online beekeeping course from Penn State and bought an eBook on beginning beekeeping. Now that my flowers are mostly planted, I can concentrate on figuring out if and how I want to do this new project. I bought some of our new flowers with bees in mind so I am already moving forward. I love new projects.

It was great seeing my mom and Ira yesterday; they both looked good. It has been two months since I had seen either. This new Covid-19 world is going to be different and the main factor is how soon and how widely available both a vaccine and antidote will be available. The other questions are whether different strains will require additional vaccines, if you can catch the same strain more than once, and if it gets worse each time you get it, like dengue fever. As I said, a different world with a whole new set of parameters. If I am correct, many of those com-

panies that are really well-financed will be able to survive the pandemic-related problems and shortage of business as well as the increase in taxes and monetary devaluations that will be coming to pay for the various government programs. I am not complaining; I think the aid packages were and are necessary. Without them, there would probably be mass misery, hunger, and a potential revolution so this is a lot better.

5/19/2020

10:43am EDT | Our Office, NJ

A Owner Buys When He Cannot Sell

We are in the middle of a Pandemic. Most business has stopped. There is no certainty in anything in the marketplace except that extreme change will continually occur at an ever increasing rate. There is no traveling and almost no one is making sales calls. Therefore, it is the best and worst. The worst because most normal avenues to make money are cut off. The best because everyone is willing to listen to a new idea. When an owner cannot sell, they must pivot and buy. What do they buy? Their competitors. Now they just have to “sell” the idea to them; that’s how you find something to sell.

5/20/2020

1:49pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The bulk of our virtual people will be back on June 1st. It is a risk bringing them in because everyone here has been living with each other, but they are needed and we need to be operating as a full team. Stock markets are up, people seem to have a good feeling about the world coming out of lockdown, and multiple vaccines may soon be available. Unfortunately, I do not have that same optimism and we will be operating from the reverse point of view: ready for the best and hopefully preparing for the alternative. Meanwhile, the US unemployment rate comes out tomorrow for new applications. I am predicting 2 million more people. I hope it is less. There is a general reduction in the demand for energy; our environment is better and people are trying to figure out how to keep things getting better while having a functioning world economy. I hope they find a good way without increasing our taxes to ridiculous amounts and inflating the currency.

5/21/2020

4:08pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I grew up in a fisherman’s family. While most people looked at ponds, lakes, and oceans as gorgeous entities—which they are—my family would also be checking for signs of fish. For us, spotting a fish or signs of one was an exciting prospect and an activity which we never tired of. We would stop at bridges and look over the sides, streams going by roadways, or any place where there was water we would be checking for movement. Fish are not easy to see, but once you get used to it, the shadows they throw become visible. It is usually only a moment before you can see them hanging motionless and then suddenly start to move. They are

graceful, beautiful, and always singular. At certain times of the day a “hatch” will occur when lots of small flies are born and hover over the water. They make excellent fish food and often bring out those looking for a quick snack and make for great fishing. I saw a hatch today by my car; it made me think of my dad. Some of our happiest times were fishing. It is a memory I prefer over many others—glad I experienced it today.

A Question of Great Importance

In this world of a global pandemic and economic uncertainty, a monumental question has arisen: if I put a beehive in our backyard is there a danger that raccoons will attack it for the honey? I am not that worried about bears—we are in a suburban area—but raccoons and groundhogs can be a big problem. Of course, we also have foxes around, which are supposed to eat the ground hogs but not the raccoons. On the other hand, we trapped some raccoons last year to relocate them and I am not sure if they have returned. In the end, I think we will simply build a fence and take care of the problem that way. If only the pandemic and economy could be fixed so easily.

Is This Really Helping?

I saw an article today where it said the small business PPP loans given by the US government to hundreds of thousands of owners would only be forgiven for about half of the participants. The reason many of those people got the loans in the first place was so they could keep their people in for 8 weeks. If the loans weren't there, they would not have splurged on the money and would have cut back their expenses much sooner. If they don't get their loan forgiven, many more will go into bad debt and or bankruptcy because they thought they were getting help from our government. A loan is a lot different than free money and I am very concerned that the fall-out from this aid package might be far worse in the long run than might have happened with no help at all.

5/23/2020

6:26pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I was out walking in the rain this morning and I decided to stop off at some of our neighbors to see if they would mind if there was a beehive in our backyard. There was no answer at the first house, but the second had success. The young mother who answered was pleasant, but she said her son was allergic to bees so I will abandon my plans. Since there was now no reason to go to any other neighbors, I came back here, got cleaned up, had lunch, and visited my brother. He is well and it was very nice to see him. We spoke of the world, our family, and our gardens. We are both avidly fond of plants and trees. When I got back, David met me here on our porch. I vacuumed the basement carpet, which is part of my chores until our housekeeper returns in two weeks. The rest of the evening was spent relaxing with Wendy, eating dinner, and enjoying life. We are very fortunate; I always try to stay in the moment and realize how good things are.

5/25/2020

6:11pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

First and always, thank you for serving in our military during World War II. You and millions of others in and out of uniform made it possible for the life we have today and I will never take it for granted.

You have probably been watching what has been happening over the past 6 months around the world. This plague has caused international and internal havoc everywhere; no one really knows what will happen. The economic consequences are huge and will be felt for the next five years at least; the chances of a severe recession/Great Depression keep increasing with every report of more jobs lost and lockdowns still in effect. While the shutting down of the global economy has worked to slow and stop the virus in many areas, the economic impact, in my opinion, will soon far outweigh the medical, and we are going to be in for a very rough time. We are bringing back the bulk of our virtual employees next Monday and—with the new people we have hired—we have already increased our overhead to what it was before this plague. I have no idea what will happen; if necessary, we can cut back. I would, however, much rather increase our sales and the second wave of our “competitor takeover” program started last Friday.

If it works, we will use other companies' sales to push us to new levels. If they fail, it is simply another plan that did not work moving along to something else that hopefully will. It is normally a day that heralds the beginning of the summer and a more laid-back few months, but things are very different this year. There is talk about opening up the economy, which will help a lot, but again a “real” unemployment rate of 25% is going to be very hard to fix. Our company went through the Great Depression; I hope we did not have to go through a second one, but if we do, the wisdom from you and Grandfather should help a lot.

Love you,
Andrew

Yesterday, Wendy and I went to see our friends, the Leveys. They are wonderful people and Jerry is a beekeeper in his spare time. He has been sending me information and tutoring me on how to get started. Since I can't do it here, I may ask Cary if we can do it at our office. There is a good space on the second alcove. I will do some more research and studying first.

We got a call from our alarm company this morning. Something was seen in two of our office areas. Our wonderful landlord went right over to check it and it turned out to be “Scooter”, our robot floor cleaner. Our guys had forgotten to turn him off for today—a holiday.

Great Advice

I came across the abbreviated auto-biography of my Uncle Phil. He came to this country early in the last century as an illegal alien from Poland. He started with nothing and ended up a multimillionaire, beloved by his family, friends, and employees—a truly great man. He gave my dad a very good piece of advice I never forgot: never spit in another man's soup. If something was important to another person, I should never ignore, denigrate, or downplay its significance. It has kept me out of a lot of potential trouble over the years whenever I felt like

I knew too much about too many things and my counsel or my thoughts were infallible. It is as relevant now as it was a century ago.

5/26/2020

3:57pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It was great getting back to my regular schedule after the holiday and it has been a hectic, excellent day. We had one new man start today in our bindery area and another will start tomorrow in our press group. One of our guys has been out with migraine headaches and so far the doctors can't figure out what is causing them; we all hope he is okay and back soon. I have spent the day doing a lot of pricing and marketing and sending out two more takeover letters. We will see if anyone takes us up on our offer.

I spoke with the owner of the security company that protects our plant. He is also a captain in our county police force and is in charge of the local Covid-19 testing center. He says the operation is running smoothly, they have received everything they asked for from the federal government, and did not think that the local hospitals were overloaded in any way by virus patients. He is a no-nonsense type of guy, so I take his words as the truth. As is normal with the news, some sources say that the worst seems to be over economically and the unemployment rate will be below 10% by the end of this year. Others are predicting Armageddon. Some say that a vaccine and cure are possible before the end of the year; others say not so fast. Some say that those who have had it could be protected from getting it again; others say maybe not.

5/27/2020

3:03pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It was a beautiful day to ride; I saw some of the "regulars" I normally encounter. One woman who walks her dog, another who just walks. Often I see others; some going to work. It is a very nice, quiet time of day where people are pleasant and it gives me time to think about everything and nothing.

President Trump has revoked Hong Kong's special status because of the mainland's move to bring them into their domain. I am not sure what that means for Ideal Jacobs Hong Kong, but things are changing so rapidly—we simply watch and see. Stock markets in North America and Europe are up; people are buoyed by the idea of the easing of the lockdowns and the potential vaccine for the Covid-19 virus. As much as I like seeing the lockdowns loosened, I do not see a major shift for the global economy with so many people out of work and more coming.

5/30/2020

2:38pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I knew I had a lot to do this morning, so I was up at 6:15am, exercised in our basement, went on the ARC trainer for 40 minutes, then set out on my bike for our office. Nick, our home landscaper, had planted flowers in the pots on the patio at our office and he had called me last night to confirm it was done and ask

me to water them as soon as possible. Once there I realized how right he was, I hooked up the outdoor hose and got to work. Between direct spraying and the water container, I accomplished the task, but they would need more by Monday and no rain is predicted. It will have to be done again. Nick did a really good job, and once the picnic table and Adirondack chairs are in place, it should be a very nice place for our people to be able to eat and relax. Part of my goal is to make our plant a haven from the rest of the world. With the Covid-19 virus and all of the related problems, there is a huge layer of extra stress on everyone; if I can reduce it with a positive, fun environment, I am doing my job. From there, I raced by here to have lunch with Wendy and then went to meet Uncle Dave. The world environment seems to have bashed down his normal zeal for life and he is not hugely upbeat, but our business has done really well throughout this entire crisis—thank you, God—so it is much easier for me to be optimistic than many others. At the end of our time in town, I went into Dunkin Donuts for the first time in more than nine weeks to get an iced tea for Wendy and me. David did not indulge; I am not sure if it was because he did not want anything or he was afraid of contamination. Of the people in town, some had masks and social distanced; others did not. There is definitely a dichotomy here as well as the rest of the world as to how bad the virus really is, what behavior is necessary, and where we go from here. A lot of behavior depends on what other people do. For instance, I could be back on the road selling by this summer, but I am not sure anyone will be ready to see me in person.

Measuring Success

When we first developed the SwaddlePax Vest, it's main purpose was to enable me to keep working and avoid back surgery. I had previously screwed myself up so badly I had ended up in the hospital emergency ward, pumped up on pain meds, and realizing I had to make changes to adjust to a new “normal.” I did not want to be on medication for the rest of my life. Back surgery appeared to be a good initial option, but it could be a slippery slope of continually getting worse trouble over time. I had already given up tennis, martial arts, and most heavy lifting, so I had few options. Creating the Vest was not a simple process, but our company happens to have the design, prototyping, and manufacturing capability to make almost anything. I needed help immediately so I could keep on working and get back on the road to sell. Therefore, we spent a lot of time and resources to make it happen quickly. We eventually came up with the best design for me and I now wear it for a few hours most days. It has stopped most of my pain, allowed me to avoid almost all medication and surgery, Even though the world did not want to buy it, our employees, relatives, and friends love wearing them. The amount of pain that is not experienced is not quantifiable, but seeing the faces of those who suddenly get relief is well worth all the cost and effort. We have people, like me, who can keep working at a much higher and more comfortable level because our back pain is reduced for a while. The Vest is not a cure, but it is a huge step towards being “normal” and that is a really great thing. How can you tell if an invention is a success? If it is only in sales, then the Vest is not. We have sold less than five. However, giving me the ability to keep working with much

reduced pain and being able to travel—not to mention helping our coworkers and friends—is worth way more than then it cost to produce. Sometimes you can't measure value in absolute dollars, but I know we achieved success every time me or someone else puts one on and immediate relief occurs.

5/31/2020

7:20pm EDT | Our House, NJ

What a great day I had. Up early, exercised in our basement, and took a great ride in gorgeous 65°F weather. I then went to the office; I brought a hose from here to attach to the hookup there and watered our newly potted plants. They are looking much happier than yesterday and I think they will do fine. After lunch, I went to see my mom; aside from being a bit bored by being in lockdown, she looked great. It was then off to the supermarket for supplies and then back here. We had friends over; Marie and Roy joined us for a wonderful, peaceful time on our porch. They are delightful people. Roy is a physical therapist and related a story that he had given a SwaddlePax Vest to one of his patients who was in extreme pain. She loved it and said it helped a lot, which was really nice to hear. As I mentioned before, not making money on the Vests is fine if they are really helping people, and that seems to be the case. After dinner, I puttered around our garden for a little while. Some type of varmint is eating our plants; I will have to start replacing some probably next week. Such is the life of a suburban gardener—it all comes with the territory. I am sure there are similar areas in beekeeping. I am having a great time learning about that hobby and still on schedule to begin in early July.

Protests regarding the wrongful death of a Minnesota man have erupted around the country. It is not a surprising reaction for people who have been under lockdown for months, facing potential dire financial events and then problems with the police. It was a powder keg that just needed a spark and unfortunately the fire erupted. Hot summer weather is not going to help the situation nor will the upcoming presidential election.



6/1/2020

1:41pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Today is a big day. 43 years ago I started in our family business. I had failed at my chosen profession to become a television newsman and my mom took pity on me and forced my dad to hire me. It turned out that I was born to be in a company; I grew to love it so it worked out fantastically well for me. My grandfather started our company in 1921—the actual date is hazy—so I decided that we would celebrate that event on this day also. Sometimes you find your destiny and sometimes God finds it for you.

We had some of our virtual people come back to the office today. It is definitely going to take a few days for everyone to re-gel as a team, but I feel confident it will happen soon.

Kayla and Ben both called me today. They seemed very shaken by the demonstrations and riots as a result of the police death of George Floyd. Combined with the Covid-19 pandemic, they both seemed on the verge of despair. Having the advantage of experience regarding demonstrations and riots gave me some comfort. I have seen, I hope, the worst with the 1967 Newark Riots, and we lived through that so I am hoping this will calm down with some real police reforms in the process. Do I think the world is ending and our country is going into anarchy? No, but I don't downplay the significance either. We are in a time of immediate change and it is my hope and prayer that it does not go to revolution. While demonstration is a constitutionally guaranteed right, rioting and looting are not. No one has the right to destroy someone else's businesses and property. Rule by mob is no rule at all, and in the end, we will have to rely on our police to make the right decisions to keep order without over-extending their powers. I have extreme belief in our system of government, law enforcement, and the basic good in people, so let's go with the idea that things will get better.

6/3/2020

1:26pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Proof of God

Our new laser went down this morning. It happened suddenly and stopped dead. The manufacturer had been refusing to come in to service it because of Covid-19. Our CEO Mike called the manufacturer and demanded a service call. It “turned out” that there was one only an hour away. After he arrived, he concluded that some bearings had burned out, which is something that should not have happened in five years let alone ten weeks. It turned out that he had a spare set of bearings with him. What are the odds of getting a serviceman in an hour who had the special parts we needed to get up and running the same day? You decide; I believe.

Firefly Watch Has Begun

Every year, here in New Jersey my wonderful wife and I begin the evening watch for fireflies. Actually, it usually begins with their mating season—about July 4th—but I love looking for them early in the late twilight hours before I go to sleep. The first sighting is much like the first snowfall—a miracle of nature that never gets old. Once we have a confirmed sighting, we will often sit outside on our front stoop and watch as they slowly begin to dance along our street and front lawn. Their back tails flashing make them easy to spot and it is a wonderful start to the summer. No sightings tonight; I will try again later this week.

6/4/2020

4:27pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

No word back from the seventeen companies I solicited to take over their sales. It is a waiting game. If their businesses go down, they will have already had our offer in their heads. I am sure they continuously calculate, as I do, their financial positions and break-even points. As soon as some get closer to the break-even level, shutting down their own companies and coming to us will seem ever more attractive. There are a few more companies to go after; I will wait until my gut says it is time to move on them.

Our landlord was in today; we made a tentative date for next week to visit potential bee hive sites on the various rooftops here. He is as excited as I am. My research continues and I plan to start buying the infrastructure at the end of this month.

Our country seems to be calming down a little bit regarding the demonstrations and rioting. Unfortunately, things are going to heat up again in the middle of summer when a lot of unemployment checks stop coming, and I am afraid many jobs will not be available. Speaking of which, we interviewed a new pressman today. It was a rather unusual conversation. It started out as the man having the job if he wanted it, but I am now not sure if he would fit in. We should know better next week. It is sad how people can be their own worst enemy. If they just stopped talking, they would be much farther ahead.

6/5/2020

3:03pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

A Normal Doctor's Visit

I had something wrong with my eyelid, but I did not want to take any more risks than I already had regarding the Covid-19 virus. Of course, I am going to my chiropractor, food stores, pharmacies, and my dentist. How much more was I risking by going to the eye doctor? They directed me to wear a mask when I came in, but it was a very normal experience. The technician first and then the doctor were totally professional and competent; I felt safe the whole time, got the information I needed, and was on my way in forty minutes. Life is rapidly going back to normal and I could not be happier.

6/6/2020

6:18am EDT | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

Growing up with you, a child of the Great Depression, instilled in me a continuing fear of what could happen if all of the financial, business, health, and political events align in a bad direction. I have studied the time when you grew up to give myself an early warning system of when disaster might come. Although an optimist, I have an alternate side to my personality that believes really bad times are coming. Unfortunately, with the events of the day, I still believe another Great Depression has started. The signs are unmistakable. A pandemic that has reduced the survival means of our population by sickness and even worse economic devastation and the deterioration of whatever savings many people had. The stock market seems to be radically out of sync with the world economic order and a population that is willing to listen to the false high hopes of our political and educational leaders who say everything will be fine. The global stock markets are now surging, just like they did in the Great Depressions. Small and medium investors are being sucked back in after being destroyed with the last downturn. Whatever money they have left is being invested in companies that will go down. As with what happened ninety years ago, the events will continue with surges and downward spirals until we someday get to the bottom. That level will be found much faster than in the 1930s because of the global pandemic.

I write to you not to complain. As far as I can see, we have prepared as best we can. I want to tell you—once again—thanks. Had it not been for the way you were—and believe me, your paranoia drove me crazy—I would not have been forced to really see why you felt that way. In this case, I believe that your views were correct and are true for today as well. If I am wrong and the world rebounds, we are still positioned well. You have put us into a much better position than most. It is a legacy I did not want, a point of view I did not like having but nonetheless could help to ensure our very survival, so thank you, Dad. Your teachings are still guiding me today.

*Love you,
Andrew*

You could imagine that after writing the entry above that I was not incredibly optimistic about our global economy and the world when I met with my friend David. I was not depressed—simply resolved to what I thought was coming. He,

on the other hand, did not think that I was correct, was not introspective in the least about what might be coming, and was perfectly calm about waiting to see what happened and dealing with it when it did. His patience and resolve to do no advance thinking or planning was contrary to all of my views and training, but that is what makes life interesting. We ended with neither of us making a dent in the other's thinking; however, in this case we did agree that the vast majority of the world thinks and acts as he does. The pathway is open for me to figure out what would be happening and plan as I chose.

6/7/2020

4:43pm EDT | **Our House, NJ**

I am the first to admit that I have been extremely fortunate. I pay a lot of taxes, and although I don't love that, being a citizen of the United States has given me innate advantages that have greatly helped my family, career, and the chances to build our companies. Health care costs are ridiculously high; we offer various levels of insurance to our employees, but they are still not cheap. We pay our employees well, but the high cost of health care always urges people to go without insurance and hope for the best. While that works fine for a great majority of the time, sometimes it leaves a person with very few options when they get sick. That is happening to one of our people now. He chose not to go with any insurance because of money and a few weeks ago he started having health issues. He is not that unusual; the truth is that few people plan for anything. Most individuals of our world go from day to day not thinking about the future. They hope nothing goes wrong, but when it does, like a pandemic or financial meltdown, they are in trouble. A very high proportion of people considered lower income in our country have virtually no savings. If they can't work, for whatever reason, they can't make rent, eat, and pay medical bills.

The tax structure in our country is very messed up. Huge corporations and their top people normally do not have to pay anywhere near the taxes my company and I do. The inequity of the top .5% is glaring, especially when they even admit it themselves. If everyone paid what they were supposed to, there would be enough money for a government medical safety net. Everyone should have access to basic medical care, and with all the taxes we are paying, that should not even be an issue. I love capitalism; it is a system that we have thrived under and I understand that the rules for those at the top are usually different than everyone else, but this is ludicrous. The amount that 99.5% pay for medical care is crazy and to have people like my guy not knowing how he will survive without being able to work—let alone pay for medical costs—is totally unfair. It is time to change the tax system so it is equitable for all of us. If I have 45% of my paycheck go for taxes, then billionaires in our country should pay the same. They don't.

Elsewhere in our country, demonstrations continue, but rioting and looting have thankfully greatly reduced, curfews are being rescinded, and things are hopefully going back to normal. Now there is a great worry that the protesters got too close to each other and there is a threat of additional Covid-19 infections. This in the wake of most states reducing their lockdown restrictions. The economy is

going to get worse before it gets better and all the people protesting about policies brutality will probably switch causes to no jobs and wanting more federal aid programs. It looks like it is going to be a long summer; I hope that I am wrong.

6/8/2020

8:30pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It was a hectic day, which included a complaint from a customer which did not appear to be our fault and a complaint from another customer which did appear to be our responsibility. We will fix them both. We have continued integration issues with workflow, employee job descriptions, and responsibilities that I am determined to fix in the short rather than long term. We are set up to see five candidates for our new press position. The man who interviewed last week and had the job decided he wanted to check another company first and, in doing so, made me go out to find other candidates. He wanted the job today, but we pushed him off until Friday. He had his chance and he might still get the job, but it is the norm rather than the exception that people don't act in their own best interest.

The world is a mess with the pandemic, international anti-police demonstrations, infrastructure cutbacks, and the huge loss of jobs. Meanwhile, stock markets go up. Our business credit card bills have plummeted since I am off the road. If it is happening to me, then it is happening everywhere; huge amounts of money not spent will be recaptured. I am hoping to go back outside selling in August if our customers are willing to see me in person; otherwise, we will stay in contact with mailings of our coloring book, calendars, my new book, and anything else we think will keep our name in front of our customers.

6/9/2020

5:04am EDT | Our House, NJ

It Is Personal to Me

It is early here in New Jersey. I did not sleep well last night. We had a job go wrong yesterday, and whenever anything bad happens I take it personally. I know how upset I get when a supplier, friend, or relative causes me trouble or lets me down. My trust levels tend to run very deep, and when anyone does not live up to my standards, especially myself, I get angry, sad, and then usually spring into action. The problem that we caused yesterday will be fixed today; I know we will handle it and make it right. My team is amazing and they will do whatever is necessary. Letting a customer down goes against everything we have built, and when it happens, it is a harpoon into my heart. Everything good that happens is because of my team; everything that bad happens is because I was not good enough to stop it. It is a severe way to live, but it has proven to work incredibly well over time—except with the losses in my personal peace and sleep. As my dad advised, I always try and follow the Golden Rule of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” It is a non-bending universal truth, and when I fail, I have to work twice as hard to fix whatever happened, rebuild the trust that was lost, and reinforce a better foundation to avoid the same problems in the future.

For now, I will go bike, get into the office early ,and make things right because it is personal to me.

I went to my dentist this morning. As I anticipated, Dr. Browne's office was a model of cleanliness and efficiency. One additional bonus: Dr. Browne himself is now a beekeeper. We spent a few minutes talking about them. It was very pleasant and the best part was that my teeth were in good shape. I just emailed our landlord to see if he is available on Friday to check out possible beehive locations for our building. My research is continuing and I am getting closer to being ready to start buying equipment. He just texted me back; we are on. This has always been a very fun project.

The issue from this morning plus others seemed to have worked out. Our new laser appears to be running fine and we have a potential new employee coming in on Friday. Some of our crew members are getting older and we are making changes to make it easier to work here. Their experience is invaluable and I don't want to let them slip away. The world is in a great transition; I think a lot of people are pessimistic about what will happen. For the great majority of the time, I choose to stay on the positive side.

6/10/2020

11:14am EDT | Our Office, NJ

He Who Hesitates Loses?

There are many people in this world who weigh all sides and options of an issue and problem, take time to study, and then act. There are others who move immediately on impulse or their "gut" instinct. Both ways have their advantages. The wait and study method often reveals options and defects that are not apparent at first glance. On the other hand, being impulsive gives the chance to move quickly, decisively, and grab opportunities before others can act. Obviously, I come from the impulsive/gut instinct side, which was evident in that I just hired a new employee after interviewing him for fifteen minutes. He had just graduated from Rutgers, had a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and was answering our advertisement to work in our press department. I could see immediately that he could be better utilized in other areas so I offered him a two month internship; he starts later this month. I knew I had made a good decision after my CFO met him for five minutes and wanted him for his 3D Printing Department. Am I always right? Obviously not, but for me moving quickly has proven a much better and profitable way in business and in life.

Additional Consequences of Covid-19

One of my jobs is to be on the road selling. I would meet customers and suppliers, go after new accounts, find out what new products would be needed, and be in the blood flow of the world to get a real view of reality. The pandemic has shut me down from traveling since the bulk of our customers are temporarily virtual. The companies actually operating have banned outside visits, so even if I got on a plane, there is no-one to see. While this has meant some serious selling

and branding changes for us, there is a secondary effect, which is not spending money on planes, hotels, drivers, and food. I am figuring that if I stay off the road until September, I will not have spent at least \$30,000.00 USD. While I am only one business traveler, multiply that by 100,000 sales and support people and you are already talking about three billion dollars that will never be spent. The pandemic has not only created huge logistical and medical issues, but the side effects, like me not traveling, will only start to show up as time passes. My point is that I believe that a V shaped recovery is impossible and that the current prediction of a rapid comeback from this virus is premature at best and all out wrong at worst. In other words, prepare for a long haul to get back to where we were.

One Fox, Two Deer, and a Bunny

The weather here in New Jersey has turned to summer, which means my daily bike rides are mostly free of thermal clothing, jackets, and wool socks. The flora and fauna have bloomed and most days I see wildlife. This morning had the addition of the initial incredible aromas of fresh honeysuckle. I love being outside, and for about 80 minutes, the bad things in the world often disappear. I am at one with nature, God, and all things good in the world. I pass by the same people—we often nod in acknowledgment—all in our daily regimens and loving being outside. Seeing rabbits, foxes, deer, multiple birds, and incredible blooming flowers cannot help but put me in a better frame of mind. I am thankful for the ride every day.

A few years ago there was a plea from our Temple Congregation to help sponsor Syrian refugees. I offered to be a part of it but never heard anything back. We are looking for someone to work in our press department. A very nice man named Rashwan, a Syrian refugee, came in for an interview. He has been in our country for four years. He has most of the experience we need and he is coming in tomorrow to spend the day and be tested. I hope he is amazing in all areas; I would really like to have him come work for us. Sometimes things take a while to happen.

6/11/2020

4:33pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Cary, our landlord, was in and he and I went around the roofs of our building to look for good beehive locations. He suggested three good places and I will check them for good sun exposure over the next few days. Bees like the sun and to be protected from winter winds so we have to be careful on our selection. We hired a Syrian refugee for our press crew today. He is a very nice, competent man, and I hope he works out well for the long term. We are also trialing a new man tomorrow and another next week. I am hoping that God continues to shine down on us so we can keep everyone and hire more. Speaking of the economy, the US stock markets dropped anywhere from about 4-7%. Unfortunately, this was after a huge number of small and mid-sized investors went back into the market. We are still following the path of the last Great Depression. Hopefully I am wrong.

6/13/2020

3:10pm EDT | Our House, NJ

After exercising in our basement, I went biking; my recently repaired bike worked well. I quickly got cleaned up to go see David. He is well and we spoke about life, business, and giving back for the amazing good things that have happened to us. I mentioned that if business was really good, I was thinking about creating a honey bee farm where we would raise huge amounts of bees and donate their pollinating services to farmers to help them with their crops. On the way home, I got a flash of Divine Intervention and thought that if we made a huge amount of money, maybe we could start putting hives on city rooftops along with gardens to help bring back a better balance with nature. It is something Kayla might want to be involved with. One of the great parts about life: I can dream anything and I never know what might happen. Alex and Scott are here for lunch; we have been having a wonderful time. They Skyped with Ben, Kayla, and Carla, and we all got to participate. Things are good in Denver—except there is a demonstration forming nearby, as I am sure in other parts of the US and the world. I am all for showing what you believe in, but these demonstrations seem to be fostering a new spread of the virus and some cities are seeing a new spike in cases. If they have to shut down again after all this time sheltering in place, I feel very badly for the companies trying to survive. Nothing about this has easy answers, but the longer it goes the stronger my belief in God and the more I pray for protection, help, and guidance.

Life Can Be Very Strange

I have been editing my journal from last year to get ready for publication. I am working on August and am reminded of when we were laying people off. I was afraid that a recession was coming and I wanted to cut our overhead. We did that, and over the ensuing 11 months, which were profitable for us, we had a pandemic, roughly 33 million Americans filed for unemployment, and we are in either a very bad recession or a new Great Depression. Over that time, we reversed our path, rehired most of the people we had let go, and have begun hiring more. I always believe in going against the grain and I am hoping that expanding at this time is the right move. If not, the obvious solution is to cut back, but the thought of having to lay people off again is a nightmare. I am either really smart or really dumb—an optimist or a fool—I will let you know as soon as I find out.

6/14/2020

5:24pm EDT | Our House, NJ

After exercising this morning, biking, and eating lunch, I was off to see my brother. It has been a few weeks and he is good. He has been doing a lot of fishing and gardening, including various courses. It was really nice to see him and get his perspective on the events of the day. He has a conservative point of view—much like mine—which is often a breath of fresh air with all of the highly liberal media we are bombarded with on a constant basis. Then it was on to see my

mom. She is well and looking forward to starting her bridge and mahjong games later this month. We spoke about our various relatives and the farm in Israel; I had brought her some updated pictures, which made her very happy. Afterwards, I stopped for supplies for the office, and after getting back here, created fruit bowls for my snacks. Then I went out to inspect our grill. It had been catching on fire, which is a sure sign that it needed to be cleaned, and that turned out to be a spot-on conclusion. It took a while, but she is now clean and looks great. I then trimmed our flowers and I am in the state I try for on Sunday evenings—almost too tired to move. Hopefully I will sleep tonight.

I spoke to my son Ben tonight. He is now a manager and experiencing many of the same personnel issues that I dealt with on a daily basis. It is nice to have something we can talk about—a new common bond.

6/16/2020

4:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I just got a call from my friend Mike in Chicago. He is a screen printing press manufacturer and we have discussed taking over some of our common competitors. He just called me about an owner in a different but similar business who wanted to be bought out. The other man was telling Mike all the things he wanted to be paid for; I stopped Mike mid-sentence and suggested he did not have to pay him anything. I then sent him the formula I used for going after the bulk of my competitors even though none of them have expressed interest yet. He was fascinated at the potential to take over others with no money up front and paying them over time, more money than anyone else, for their sales. He will call me tomorrow. If this happened to Mike, the odds are good some of the people I contacted are getting close to the same situation. I just spoke to Mike, my CFO, to make sure we are ready in case the same thing started happening with us. The government aid for all companies is running out soon, if they don't renew it or worse—don't allow forgiveness—then small- and medium-sized companies across the country will start folding at an alarming rate. Stock markets and commodities are up around the world; investors think that people are going back to work and everything will be fine. Unfortunately, there is a resurgence of Covid-19 and the unemployment benefits here in the US run out next month. There are too many negative forces running against this euphoria; we are preparing for what we think is coming. Our new online marketing with custom videos has started.

6/16/2020

10:14pm EDT | Our House, NJ

We had a new pressman start yesterday. He quit today. Not everyone works out.

6/18/2020

8:59pm EDT | Our House, NJ

To Bee or Not to Bee

That is no longer the question. I have been studying beekeeping for weeks. The

idea of keeping a hive has intrigued me ever since my friend showed me his. I had been very careful, getting my plans together, trying to find a coach, and figuring that when the time came I would be very methodical about the hive, the bee themselves, the equipment, and figuring how to maximize my odds of success. Throw that out the window. I called a local apiary today to see if he had a “nuc”, or starter hive, and it turned out he had two full hives ready to sell and I could take delivery next week. He will also sell me all the necessary equipment. Therefore, no more research, no decisions on my part, except to go for it. I agreed and the next few days will be a crash course to get the new hives set-up. I am not that surprised; this often happens in new adventures. I think and plan, but in the end I jump off the cliff and go for it. That is usually part of the fun.

6/20/2020

9/47pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a wonderful day: exercising, biking, my grandnephew Max’s first birthday party, and relaxing with Wendy. After dinner, I went to my office to get the bees delivered. On my way, I got a text from Grant that he was running early. Luckily, I had told the Sharperson brothers to be there early, so they got to the office five minutes before Grant and his wife. I had been expecting a truck or pick-up truck with the two bee hives outside, but they came in a van. When he opened the back the bees were loose; he explained he did not like to keep them locked in the hive when traveling because they could get overheated. He used a “smoker” device and they went back in their hive; he stuffed newspaper into their entrance way, which kept most of them in the hive. He then helped us to transport them to our roof. We had bought cinder blocks, which he used as a base for the hives to keep them above any flooding or ice, and he brought some extra equipment for when the hives expanded and some food. He told us right away there would be no honey this year, which was fine, and there was no telling how much there could be next year. This was fine as we were in this for the long haul. He picked a different spot on the roof than both my landlord and I had figured, but said it was a good location, protected from the wind, and near the stream running by our parking lot. He was in and out in under forty minute; the roof was gorgeous that time of night. I hope the bees will be very happy. We got two hives because it is also always good to have a comparison to make sure they were both doing well.

6/21/2020

8:45am EDT | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

It is Father’s Day here in the US and I was thinking of you this morning. We did something last night that I know you would have loved. We bought two bee hives and had them installed on one of the roofs of our plant. It was a gorgeous, perfect summer evening. The beekeeper we hired, who had over 40 years of experience, placed the hives in position for the best wind protection and overall health for the bees. He then gave me some instructions and left; we are on our own. There is plenty of food for them nearby,

a stream, and if everything works out perfectly, which probably will not happen, we may have honey next year. The honey was secondary; the bees themselves are primary because I wanted to have a new hobby and this seemed a great option. As time passes, I am hopeful that the bees and our team will become "one" and we can help each other mentally, physically, and spiritually. Bees are a symbol to me of working with God and our planet to create a good balance. If we are successful, we will expand our efforts with more hives. You always loved nature, Dad, and that love was one of the greatest gifts you passed in to me. I dedicate these hives to you and hope you will watch them from above and enjoy them with the rest of us.

Love,
Andrew

It has been an excellent Father's Day. In between working out, I got various texts and phone calls from our kids plus really good greeting cards. I miss them all, including Carla and Scott. In a way, the pandemic has brought us closer together in a kind of mass response to the difficulties created, so I am not sad or complaining. Life has been amazing and I thank God for my incredible family, our team at work, and friends. Adversity brings out whatever is in the true core of people and I have found out a lot about the people around me. Some confirmed my opinions and others surprised me, but then again that is life. After exercising and biking, I was going to go see my mom, but Irene texted me both a Father's Day greeting and to let me know Mom had a stomach virus. Apparently, Ira had something similar so that only left me with two errands. The first was to go check on the bees. As soon as I got close to them on the roof, I could see a lot of activity. They were buzzing around their new surroundings looking happy. I did not get too close, but I also wasn't scared, so that was a good sign. I was then off to the supermarket for provisions, and as soon as I got back here, I grilled some plant-based and regular turkey burgers for my lunches this week as well as making fruit salad for my breakfast. It was then time to water our flowers, and by the time I finished, I was pretty tired. I now have some time to go through my online beekeeping course before dinner. It has been a wonderful day.

6/22/2020

3:12pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I took a bunch of our people on tours of the roof to see our bees. So far, everyone liked the idea, but some seem a little dubious that I did it all just for fun. We will convince them over time. A lot of paperwork was completed and it was great to have Rich back from vacation. More Covid-19 outbreaks around the US.

6/23/2020

8:28pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Why Not?

I was a pessimist when I was younger. I always looked at the dark side and worried that it would get worse especially on Sunday nights. As time went on, I modified myself on purpose to become a paranoid/optimist—looking at the good but

watching for the bad. I now find myself purposefully trying to remain positive as much as possible. Besides the obvious advantages of a happier life and making me a better husband, father, and boss, it has led the way to another wonderment. I started praying for good things to happen—specific things—and also that bad events would get better. For instance, asking for business to stay good, get better, and for the health, welfare, and expansion of our teams globally. I know it sounds hard to believe, and it is an evolving process, but the more positive I become and the more I pray, the better things seem to get. Obviously, not everything is perfect, but the overall level is moving upward and I have no other reason to believe it's origin except asking thanks and praying that things keep getting better. What do you have to lose by trying?

6/25/2020

9:18pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I did my usual inside workout this morning and then went for a glorious bike ride. Summer is here and the journey was pleasant with occasional hellos to people I often see. The office went well; our team members are trying their hardest to both keep up with the demand and the quality levels required and are doing a very good job. No word yet from any of the remaining companies whose sales I am trying to take over. I went to the chiropractor—it felt great—and then to get a haircut, which—after about fourteen weeks—was awesome. Cary had told us that he had seen fireflies at his house, so Wendy and I went onto our front stoop as it turned dark—sure enough we saw some. We will keep going out to look at them. It is a nightly event we look forward to all year. When I think about the summer during the winter, it is often the fireflies that are my first thoughts. It is such a tranquil time of night—everything seems softer and more peaceful.

6/29/2021

12:40 pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hello and Welcome to the July Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

I wrote a different entry for this Almanac, but after re-reading it, I got so depressed from all the bad news I was giving out that I decided I was going to write about something fun.

Have you heard about our bees? It started a few years ago when my friend Jerry showed me his beehive. I was fascinated, but it took a few years of being around them before I got the urge to try it myself. Things went into fast forward a few weeks ago when I called a local apiary to find out if he had any "nuncs" or starter hives for sale. The owner only had only full scale hives, so I figured it was God's will and we would buy two. I had heard that buying two was a good thing because, if something was wrong in one hive, you could compare it to the other. My landlord had been excited about the prospect, so we had our choice of roofs in which to house them.

Ten days ago the owner of the apiary delivered two hives to our loading area and helped us to transport them to our roof. After a scant few minutes of advice, he left and we were suddenly alone with two beehives, many thousands of bees, and no practical experience. However, I had been taking a correspondence course from Penn State, Beekeeping 101, and passed it! I had my friend Jerry for advice and we had also hired a coach to reduce our

levels of mistakes. She came last week for a cursory view and is due back this Thursday, when we will open the hives and run various checks on their health and the state of the hives. I am not obsessed (yet). But I have been reading about them, listening to podcasts, and we now have two hives, so I am heavily into it. My wonderful kids got me a full bee suit for Father's Day. I have been having great fun visiting them while I am working, going up to the roof, making sure they are okay, and watching them buzzing around for a few minutes. They already bring me joy, which is a very pleasant break during my day, and a fascination with how they live and work. I will write more about them in the future. For now, if you are ever in our area, I would be happy to show them to you. A five minute break on our roof can make both of our days.

Regards,
Andrew

6/30/2020

2:33pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Technologically Inept and That Is Okay

I come from the world of manual and electric typewriters and dial telephone. Car phones, computers, mobile phones, iPads, and apps can all be overwhelming—especially when one of my team members offers to teach me how something works as opposed to just doing what I ask to fix something. As I have gotten older, I have neither the patience nor the time to learn the reason why anything works unless it will directly affect my life. If I can use something to sell, be more efficient, help others, or make money, I am eager to learn. Otherwise, I am happy to let others do it for me. In the end, I choose to spend the bulk of my time thinking about my family, making money, inventing to help solve problems, getting more business, bike riding, and tending our two new bee hives. I can't do everything; I will focus on what I do best and have the most fun.



7/2/2020

10:06am EDT | Our Office, NJ

It had been a very good day until about 2:30 when one of our presses went down. Luckily, Vinnie was here, and after 30 minutes, they figured out that a motor had malfunctioned. Vinnie will be back tomorrow to try and get it out of the press and order a replacement. Hopefully we can get it on Monday and get the press back up and running quickly. There is nothing I could do for now, so I happily forgot about it when Jean the Bee Lady came. Ben, Tin, and I got into our bee suits, and off we went to the roof. It was very hot up there and the bees seemed to love it. Jean gave us the basics about using a “smoker” to get the bees calmed down and it became quickly evident why it is always good to have at least two people around when working on a hive; there’s so much heavy lifting! We had two young men with strong backs and they were able to help lift the hives, take out the cinder blocks underneath, and install plastic pallets. The large pallets spread out the weight over a much wider surface and were much better for the roof. The bees seemed to accept us without an issue and we were working within a huge cloud of them; it was amazing to have them flying all around and on us. The bee suits and other equipment worked great. Opening the hives was awesome and our bees are doing great with lots waiting to be born and honey already being made. We did not see the queens in either hive; we named one Queen Latifah and the other Queen Esther. It was very hot and a lot of fun; we were up there for about an hour. Jean is due back in about two weeks to bring us some honey supers (boxes) to be added to the top of the hives where the bees can make honey for the winter months and we will also check for various types of infestations. All in all, it was very fun and we are looking forward to having her back. In the meantime, we will keep going up to see the bees—just watching them is such a peaceful pastime. I am very happy we brought them in; they are truly one of God’s amazing creations.

7/4/2020

6:35am EDT | Our House, NJ

Today is the celebration of our National Independence Day. It is also in remembrance for those who served, were injured, died, and for their relatives who made incredible sacrifices to keep our freedom. The world is in turmoil in all aspects. It is times like these where Americans have risen up to find solutions to the tidal wave of problems that have occurred. It doesn't have to be from a corporation or the government. Entrepreneurs have historically come up with the solutions that can change and benefit our world. Anyone can do it, and with that in mind, God gave me an idea last night that would revolutionize the personal protective equipment problem. It would make face shields reusable for up to 12 uses without cleaning and also potentially protect the person inside from all viruses. We will need to check on Monday if the concept can work, but if it can...

7/5/2020

5:03pm EDT | Our House, NJ

After my usual weekend exercises downstairs, my bike ride was excellent. The weather was humid, about 80°F and I had a good time. Once back, I planted the flowers I bought yesterday, watered and sprayed, then headed inside for lunch. Our dinner with friends was cancelled because it would have been 90°F out on our porch—a little hot to be enjoyable. Instead, I went to our plant where I searched for some material we needed to do the new PPE prototype and could not find any. I put the bee suits in a plastic bag to hopefully stop any mice from going after the honey and nectar on them before going up to the roof to see the bees. They are fine; I took a video and some pictures, and then I went food shopping. I got the five fruit bowls ready for this week and cooked the food for my lunches as well as dinner tonight. There are reports of more Covid-19 spikes in both Israel and Mexico. I touched base with both Paulina and Netta today; they are fine and I hope it stays that way. Kayla contacted Wendy that she was back home in Denver after her camping trip this weekend with her friend Alyssa. Wendy and I always worry about her when she is off in the mountains or on trips, so we are very happy that she lets us know that she was okay. Ira texted me a link to an NRP Radio report about young people having real trouble with the isolation issue from Covid-19. His daughter Lisa, a psychiatrist, was interviewed for it; she sounded both intelligent and very professional.

7/6/2020

8:25pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

I was listening to a speech by Martin Luther King Jr. one week before the Poor People's March on Washington. What was striking to me was that everything he spoke about regarding race inequality and fairness could have been taken out of today's news. He was as relevant then as he is now, and to say he was an amazing speaker would not do him justice.

What has changed and what has stayed the same? Are all people inherently racist?

Is that part of our survival DNA to try and keep dominance to increase the chances for survival? Is humankind inherently bad, and given the chance, we will all revert back to our worst selves regarding power, dominance, and the allocation of resources? Is it simply a case of not having the willpower to be better? Or is it more a matter of individual survival and hoarding of the available resources to help each of us ensure our own way of life and the chances to improve?

I believe it necessitates a changeover from the idea of survival of the fittest and all others have to be dominated to positive utilization of resources where the most people get the chance to rise together. A society based on an elite class of billionaires to lead us versus a society where we all have a voice and a chance to succeed. Amazingly, the second option takes a lot more work because being positive is much harder and counter-intuitive than being negative. We have to fight our own DNA and rise up above the winner-take-all philosophy and make it more towards a team effort where everyone moves upward. That was the crux of the message I got from Dr. King this morning—more than fifty years after he originally gave it.

Love you!

Andrew

7/7/2020

3:19pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The main thrust of my day has been trying to ensure getting the replacement motor we need for one of our presses, which is down. Mike from AWT has been fantastic in trying to help us and we are hopeful one or two motors will ship out tonight from Chicago so we can be up and running tomorrow. It has been a wonderful, very hectic day. World stock markets are way up and gold is at 1795.00/ounce. The US media has President Trump losing in November, but Joe Biden has yet to choose a running mate, which could be critical in people's choice. Also, Kayne West is allegedly running; the guess would be he would drain voters from Mr. Biden.

With everything we tried yesterday, Mike unfortunately did not get to the FedEx depot in time and we did not get our motors. They are supposed to be delivered by 8:00am tomorrow; Vinnie will be ready to install them. All we can do is wait. Maybe it will work out, but it has been a day of worrying and that will follow through until tomorrow morning when we get them or until we have to find new motors. Business for this month is good so far so that is another huge relief.

A Different Landscape but the Pathway is Clear

When I was learning to “sell”, both my grandfather and father taught the value of personal calls. Whether it was mostly local in their cases or global in mine, going to actually see a customer or a new prospect not only demonstrated the desire for business and their worth but also the desire to get direct input. The information I could receive “on the ground” was critical to our marketing and general company decisions. Local media sources, information from customers, taxi drivers, hearing about new product offerings, and seeing potential needs could all foretell what was coming. While we could not know about the Covid-19 plague in advance, we did have a very strong feeling of a major global recession/depression

and prepared for it. Now, with customers mostly working from home and vendor visits banned indefinitely, there is a major shift in the global exchange of information. Our conduits to find out what was and will potentially happen have been cut off, which make planning even more difficult and risky than before. Fortunately, there are three avenues left for me to rely on, which are “my gut instinct”, Divine Intervention, and almost 100 years of our company experience. The feeling of what to do, how far to go, and when to do them is now mostly based on those three areas and I feel really confident that we still hold an edge over our competitors. I will be back on the road as soon as possible, but in the meantime, we will attack because that is the advice from my three sources of information.

7/8/2020

10:50 am EDT | Our Office, NJ

The motors were not delivered this morning because the driver did not know our location within our building. After the delivery said they would not redeliver again until tomorrow morning, even though it was their fault, Mike got them on the phone and they agreed to deliver before 9:30am. We got the motors! Vinnie is now installing one and we hope to be running by noon. I will be very pleased when it is up and running.

7/9/2020

4:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It has been a happy day filled with mostly positive tasks. The weather is hot and humid, which makes for very good biking early in the day, and then usually a quick break to see the bees in the afternoon. They are fine. Unfortunately, the plague is moving back upwards in its number of cases and certain areas in the US are tightening their restrictions. I Skyped with Netta and that is also happening in Israel. Unfortunately, her wedding has to probably be postponed again.

7/11/2020

9:56 EDT | Our House, NJ

I was up at 5:15am because I had a lot to do. After exercising in our basement, which included going on our ARC trainer, and then having a snack, I went off to bike. The weather at 9:00am was already hot and humid, but I had an excellent ride and was back in time to shower and then go see my friend David. He is well; we spoke about his business and the economic climate. As usual, we were on opposite ends of the spectrum with him thinking the economy would be fine and me thinking the opposite direction. Later, after lunch, I went to see my mom. She is well and we spoke about the family, our garden here, business, me potentially being off the road permanently because of the virus, and the farm in Israel. She loves talking about the progress of our joint effort there and I hoped to have more pictures for her next weekend. I then went to see my brother, who is also well, and we spoke about the world economic situation, the upcoming presidential race, and his garden. He is an avid horticulturist, and before I left, he gave me

a tour of his garden, which was beautiful. From there, I stopped off at the plant store; I needed some new flowers because some of the ones we had planted were past their prime.

On the way back, I received an email from Sahar. Apparently, she had been working on hers for days because it was very involved and detailed. To put it plainly, she was now getting ready to set up for years 2, 3, and 4 for the farm, which included a big expansion in all areas, a research component, outreach to help convert other farms to her regenerative method, and becoming an active member in Israel's farm movement. Judging by all the work she had put into it, she was hoping that we would support her efforts to potentially make this her life's work. I have to say that being given the chance to help convert Israel to an organic agrarian system that did not use pesticides and help spread the gospel of peace and working together was very appealing. In fact, it seemed that I was in a sudden life moment—a message from God to stand up and be counted or be lost among the crowd forever if we let this chance go by. This was not going to be cheap and I could not ask my relatives and friends for more donations unless I was heavily involved myself. My guess was that Sahar was going to want 100,000.00 US dollars. I knew the world was in havoc with the Covid-19 plague. I also knew that there could easily be a very bad recession or depression coming, but I also knew that failing to commit to something that was extremely important to me and my mom would have permanent ramifications. Also, having Sahar and others ready to commit their lives to their project meant that, in my mind, I had no choice. Therefore, that was it; we will find a way to do this whether by my company or a combination of multiple people and organizations we will get it done.

My friend Jerry Levey stopped by in the late afternoon. He is the man who got me interested in beekeeping and he brought over a jar of honey from his hive at home. We had a wonderful conversation about bees and beekeeping, which was a lot of fun. He said he would come over soon to see our hives at work. After he left, I went out to get dinner, and Wendy and I spent a quiet, nice evening here. It has been an excellent day!

7/13/2020

3:05pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I have had an amazing day. I was up at 3:30am to get in my workout so I could get to the office early and then leave for my urologist appointment. I heard from Kayla along the way; she is well and getting ready to return back to San Francisco this weekend. My appointment went great, Dr. Seidman is excellent, and I am cleared for another six months. Always a wonderful thing. It has been a day back in our office with lots going on from customers needing things quickly—a very good thing.

7/15/2020

5:00am EDT | Our House, NJ

If You Won't Listen, Then God Won't Talk

I have been getting some amazing ideas lately and they have been coming mostly when I am just waking up, exercising, or in the bathtub. Those are the times when I am most at peace and my mind opens up to what is possible. I am smart, but I am by no means brilliant and the ideas that have been coming often seem like they are not mine. I asked for and am getting help. I don't see another explanation. Can you?

7/16/2020

8:18pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has become painfully evident that the potential for a global vaccine and cure for the COVID-19 and what morphs after it are going to take a while. It is up to companies like ours to figure out a way out of this mess. Forget the potential profits for us; if someone like us does not supply a solution to at least reduce the potential level of disaster before us then we are going to truly be in very dire circumstances. However, in times like these, the "needed ones" often rise to the top and I am hopeful we can offer a way to improve things if not get them back to some sense of normalcy.

7/18/2020

8:07pm EDT | Our House, NJ

After a great workout, I met David in the park. He is well, but after talking about our global environment, he agreed with my prediction that we would be heading into a bad recession at best and a depression at worst. The government unemployment benefits end in twelve days, and unless they are renewed, a lot of people are in trouble. In my opinion, people will stop paying their credit cards first. Then, they will stop their medical insurance, mortgages, and rent; that is probably after they liquidate their savings, including their retirement accounts. The government will be forced to find ways to get money and will then both raise taxes and potentially tax people's retirement accounts now instead of later. It could become a very bad situation very quickly—much faster than in 2008. The hard part is that David now agrees with me, and he is one of the most optimistic people I know. It was very disconcerting, but it does not change anything I plan to do. We have hopefully already built in the disaster situation as best we can, even though at this point we are expanding. I don't want to stop our "mojo" going forward. If we lose our momentum, it could be a while before we can get it back; besides, we do have a plan if things start going badly. In his case, he says he will only deal with what is in front of him—the point of view of the majority—so if the global economy deteriorates quickly, then there is not a lot of planning out there. I am hoping that our planning will keep us out of the worst of what is coming and maybe even keep us ahead of the curve. David called me back later to say his friend believed that the government would not stop the extra unemployment

payments. It does not matter; David is my guidepost. If he thinks there is potential for doom, the indicator has now moved toward the negative.

It has been very warm here and more is scheduled for the next few days. Wendy and I did not do much except stay inside, watch television, eat, and play some cards. It was very pleasant. Our garden looks great and I saw that we have some raspberry bushes in our backyard, which I did not plant. We will leave the fruit for the birds.

Jason Apter called before. Our families have known each other for decades and I have known him more than fifty years. His family runs a funeral home, and when he called, the first thought was that his mother had passed away or someone else had died. On the contrary, he told me he had been by the house where I had grown up in West Orange and it looked just the same. It was very nice that he called and we caught up for a few minutes. He is well; unfortunately, a lot of people had passed because of the Covid-19 virus, but his immediate family were fine. He is a very good man.

7/19/2020

7:27pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been an excellent day. After exercising and lunch, I saw my brother and mother. They are both well. After a quick trip to the garden store and then for food supplies, it was back here where Wendy and I Skyped with Ben and Carla. They both look great and seem to be coping well. They were sad that Kayla had left. We just heard from her; she is about 2 1/2 hours from San Francisco. Ben and Carla too believe she will return within a month, so they were happy to have a few weeks to themselves, but also looking forward to her return.

From what I can see, there will be no immediate extension of the federal unemployment aid, which means that a lot of areas will start plummeting downward during the first few weeks of next month. People will stop paying their mortgages and rent while evictions, bankruptcies, and foreclosures spike. Unemployment will get worse—especially if there are more COVID-related issues.

Progressives have already figured they have beaten President Trump and the poll numbers show Mr. Biden way ahead. Unfortunately for them, the same thing happened last time with Mrs. Clinton seemingly with a lock in the election and could not lose. What the polls don't show is that many Americans will not admit to voting for the President; they just do it in secret at the voting booth. November should be a fascinating time for politics.

7/21/2020

3:19pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The weather was hot and pleasant this morning; my workout went well. I went to see Dr. Mesnard. I had been having a jabbing pain in my back and figured I needed a cortisone shot and he was the best. He concurred, and I was in and out of his office within 15 minutes. Once back here, it has been a day of seeing the bees twice and lots of paperwork.

Kayla is back in San Francisco; she called me and is well, but sounded like she wanted to leave there soon and go back to Denver. Covid-19 is spiking in various sections of the country and the latest, best hope for a vaccine now needs two injections to work.

7/23/2020

3:15pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hello and Welcome to the August Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

It has become obvious over that last two months with the second wave of the Covid-19 virus and the potential for additional waves that unless there is a highly effective vaccine or cure, then there are some areas of my life that will permanently change. For one thing, traveling for business, which was a big part of my schedule, may be highly reduced. Even when I am comfortable going back on airplanes domestically and internationally, our customers may not like the idea of seeing me after I have made multiple stops through various airports, hotels, and countries. The potential for being quarantined for two weeks at a time along multiple routes—let alone getting sick away from home—makes the idea of “going on the road” a lot less attractive. Being off the road means that we have had to shift our advertising and marketing to keep in contact with our customers and go after new business. Happily, many seem to like my books, our calendars, new coloring book, this newsletter, and blogging. We will keep up those areas and try out more ways to reach people—especially when many are continuing to work from home.

It is a new world and there are more changes coming—generally and in our own industry. We believe there will be a contraction in the number of players and we are already going after our competitors to try and expand our footprint. Someone has to improve during this time of extreme change and we want it to be us.

There have been some good results from this plague, which include me not being away from our plant here in New Jersey. We have been busy, God has been shining down on us, sales have been good, and it has given us time to review our processes and make some positive production changes. We have been working on some new Covid-related products, which we hope to release later this year. If they work, they should not only help those who utilize them but also be a good new source of additional business. If nothing else, they are allowing us to attack the problem and give ourselves some control over our environment and our future. I never liked the idea of being given a bad set of circumstances and not trying to handle them well.

As previously mentioned, we now have two beehives here at work. They have provided an unexpected high level of joy. We usually take ten minutes every work day to go up on the roof and simply watch them buzz around their homes. It is fascinating watching them and it is a quick mental holiday. We have done our best to make our plant here in New Jersey a haven away from the rest of the world. We try to keep things as normal as possible with high energy, positive thought, and having as much fun as possible. Our employees have the chance to advance faster and further when times are difficult, so this is a good time for them. This different life may be difficult but also offers us the chance to soar in ways not possible before. We love the challenge and will continue to go forward to whenever a new level is before us.

7/24/2020

2:43pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Work continued today on the PPE mask invention. After having a lot of fun making a prototype based on Dave Alexander's idea, we actually have something that looks really good. It is based on using a baseball cap as a base. We will know on Monday if we have succeeded. Work on the new coloring book and pencil mailing is moving along well. We hope to have the domestic mailing list plus the art for the message ready for Monday. Stock markets in the US and Europe are down, gold is up, and I have no idea why anything happens, so nothing surprises me. The presidential election is creeping upon us. Both major candidates are circling, trying to get in some early shots in preparation for the debate(s) coming up.

7/25/2020

8:42pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I had my normal Saturday workout, including biking outside, which was excellent. I then saw David. He said that the industrial real estate market was still very strong. I asked him what happens if the people who are leasing space can't pay their rent because of the plague and their lease runs out. I don't think anyone in New Jersey can be evicted until October due to the governor's decree, but if their lease runs out, what happens then? He did not know. This coming week, the Federal \$600.00 per week unemployment payments stop for millions of people. There is no plan right now to extend it. There is talk of another one time payment to those who are unemployed. There is potential for massive debt default across the board, additional higher unemployment, and a meltdown in the economy. Scary times are here.

One thing that seems relatively certain is that those who can find ways to cure, inoculate against, or deal with the virus on a day to day basis may be in line to make a fortune. Letting people go back to school, work, or on vacation is a huge opportunity, and one we hope to participate in. Components for the new mask product can be used today. We should have a full scale PPE prototype ready by Wednesday.

7/28/2020

4:18pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

My dad always used to talk about the "Dog Days of Summer." We appear to be in them. The weather here in New Jersey has been hot and humid. For me, it means an easy sweat while exercising, and since I am not on the road, it does not affect me. Our bees seem okay with it; we were up on the roof before visiting them. It must have been 100°F plus up there. Having the creek next door is an excellent water source for them—not to mention all the trees and flowers providing pollen. We put Tin on as a permanent employee. He is our new Mechanical Engineer and we are very happy with his progress; he has been with us about a month. Sales for this month have been good. God has been shining down on us; I pray it continues.

7/29/2020

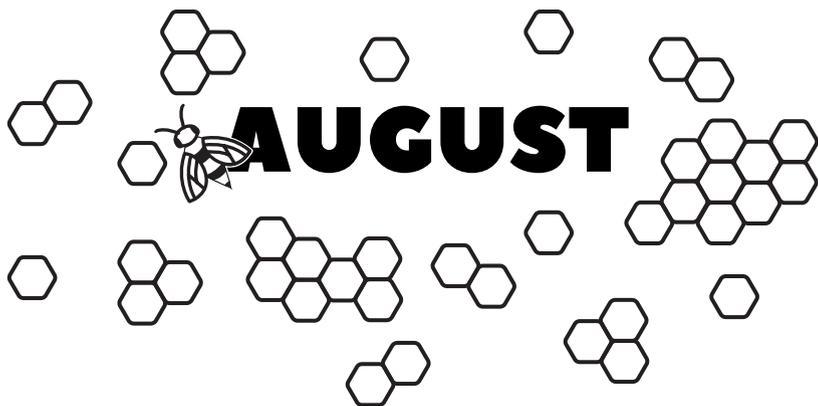
7:41pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I got a call from my friend and supplier, Mike Green, in Chicago. He and I had been strategizing about taking over companies as this pandemic continued and he believed that he found a suitable target. It was a screen printing business located in New York and I called the owner to talk. She had been in business with her husband for many years until he had recently passed away. She had thought about selling her business, but she could not get a good price for it. We talked for a little while; it was more just a “hello” type of call for me, but she wanted to talk about how it would work if she signed on with us. It was a pleasant call with nothing further planned. We sent her some of our materials and my books, and I invited her to come see our operation.

7/31/2020

3:15pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

When times get tough, you often get to see the best and worst of people. We had one employee quit this week; another may be on the way out soon. With so many millions of people out of work, it is astounding to me that people don't work their best to keep their jobs, but people often don't do as I think they might. The new face shield samples look great; we will start having people test them. More mailings out to our potential sales takeover targets that we have already hit before. It might be a year before some of them move.



8/1/2020

9:25pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a really fun day. I did my full usual weekend workout, then saw David for tea. Business for him has been good; industrial real estate is still going strong. I then went home for lunch, and afterwards, Alex came out to celebrate Wendy's birthday and go through a bunch of boxes in the basement to see what could be thrown out. We made a good dent in the materials there, which was a very good thing, and then he left to get Scott and pickup dinner. Once back here, the four of us had a great time eating, laughing, and talking about family history and our colorful family characters within it. They should be back in Manhattan by now; Wendy and I are ready to go to sleep soon. I feel blessed to be alive and still participate in the game of life. I take nothing for granted.

8/2/2020

7:37pm EDT | Our House, NJ

During my workout this morning, I got a call from Mike. The husband of one of our team members tested positive for COVID. She tested negative, but was out on an immediate two week leave from work. Hopefully, she won't test positive and has not transmitted anything to anyone else. Mike and I decided that with the increase in recent COVID cases that we will re-institute our partial virtual program as quickly as possible with Mike, Rich, and Bernie out as soon as possible. Mike, Vinnie, and I all feel that by mid-September—when the Jersey shore season has ended—the uptick in cases will probably go back down.

Later I saw my Mom and my brother separately. They are both well and both like the new mask product. I gave one to my mom to test. My brother and I agree that the times coming could be very bad and that President Trump is by no means out of the race for re-election. Later, Wendy and I did some more work in our basement getting ready to give away a bunch of stuff we no longer need. It will be good to get some extra space. I saw in the news that Lord and Taylor department

stores filed for bankruptcy protection. We start pushing for our Patent Search for the new anti-COVID product and the shield tomorrow.

8/3/2020

3:25pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

After I got here this morning, I noticed that it was a little hot in our office area. The problem got worse, and after contacting our highly able landlord, Cary, I changed into my casual clothes, which I now carry in the car in case we have to go work with the bees. With those clothes and some fans, we were all fine, and the problem was just fixed so we should be great for tomorrow. Mike met with Gary, our accountant, via Skype; things are well there also. I am hoping that we can get a definitive word on the PPP loan this month and whether we have to pay it back or it is forgiven. I heard from Netta; Sahar wants to Skype with my mom—a very nice thing for her to do. Bankruptcies are rising with incredibly high unemployment and a resurgence of the Covid-19 virus, and through it all, the stock markets are going up. Unfortunately, it is following the same path as the Great Depression. I am highly concerned and have been for quite a while.

8/4/2020

4:21pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Look out world—I am learning to post! There comes a time in every older man's life when he has to stop relying on others to do it for him. There was the typewriter, the electric typewriter, the computer, Blackberry, iPhone, iPad, and now it is here. Why it has taken this long is a mystery to me, but the time has finally come. From now on, I plan to do it myself. Unless, of course, I have to add a photo, which is an entirely different matter!

There comes a time when a light bulb goes off and there is clarity. I have been worried about the PPP program and wondering if we would get our loan forgiven. It is a lot of money and I would obviously like us to keep it. I had heard that the rules might have been changing regarding who could keep it, and if the companies did too well, then they would have to repay the loan. Business for us has been good throughout the pandemic, but seems to have fallen off a bit this month. I then realized that if it did go down, maybe it would be enough so we would fall under whatever guidelines there were to be forgiven. Perhaps it was God's way to get us in under the wire to keep the money. I therefore went from being worried to leaving it to Him, so I felt much better. I can turn my effort back towards where they should have been: inventing and being creative. We have already gone back after the companies we are trying to take over; now we wait.

8/6/2020

4:52pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I had a design meeting with a customer and his team in Europe and here. IJX is making a lot of products for them and they wanted to make sure all would run smoothly. They wanted confirmation that we would keep working at the level we

have been and I supplied that confirmation.

I got an email from Dorothy, Uncle Alan's girlfriend. He went into the hospital last Monday with pneumonia and possible Covid-19. I spoke to her later and she said that he might be moved to a care facility wearily next week. We will pray for the best. I alerted our family; everyone is highly concerned. He is a very high-grade man and we all think very highly of him.

8/8/2020

6:33am EDT | Our House, NJ

At the start of the pandemic six months ago, I told Wendy I could not worry about both the plague and the economy. I left the coronavirus response to her, and with my enduring gratitude, her actions have kept us safe. Leaving the economy to me has also worked out well. We altered our investments to get ready for a possible depression, which still worked out at least as well—if not better—had we stayed as we were.

Our companies globally have done well, and now moving into the November elections, I believe that the Democratic response—or rather lack thereof—to compromising on a stimulus package will enable not only the president to win re-election, but also the Senate and maybe even bring back the House depending on who Mr. Biden chooses as a running mate. I believe that the bulk of the US electorate is fed up with the Progressive total wave that has washed across our country. I think many are opposed to socialism and the strident ranting of many of the Democratic leaders. I also think that Bernie Sanders' people will stay home from the polls, leaving the Trump base just enough room to take the key states. When this happens, there will be no reason for the Trump administration to do any more stimulus or tax the economy anymore than it has. The Great Recession that I had been predicting will now turn into the Great Depression I was fearing and the government will have no choice but to go after the money where it can to try and fuel a recovery. That means that retirement funds will be immediately taxed, so individual tax rates will not have to be raised too much. Those who are in financial difficulty now—whether from their own mismanagement or not—will be caught in a vortex of unemployment, evictions, and bankruptcies. By not allowing the economy to go down sooner, the results will be much worse and there will be no checks and balances on the administration—especially if it is all Republican. There will be a re-apportionment of assets and generally those who deserve them will keep them and get more. Like in the First Great Depression, there will be massive unemployment and probably government work programs, which can help rebuild our infrastructure, but in the end, we will have to hit bottom before we can come back up. Blame it on the plague, billionaires, or government officials, we live in a cyclical economy and history repeats itself. By trying to stop that natural, incredibly unpleasant cycle, we have created a tsunami that will take years to calm to get back to prosperity. My fervent hope is that we do not have to have a war to make that happen because then all of us lose before even the chance for recovery.

I hope I can look back in 6 months and see I was completely wrong and things are looking a lot better than they are now.

8/12/2020

8:50pm EDT | Our House NJ

Victor from VMC came in today to test out as a part-time die-cutter. It was actually a moot point because I have known him for over thirty years and he is one of the best die-cutters I have ever met. Sure enough, within an hour, he had dazzled his new supervisor, who wanted him any time he chose. Victor also said he would help train our people. He is a great addition to our team, especially since we can increase his hours as needed.

8/15/2020

8:26pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been an excellent day. I did my usual Saturday workout. California has a huge heat wave, there are rolling power blackouts, and fires have started. Kayla should hopefully be out of there and back in Denver by the end of this month. I bought more flowers today to replace some of the ones from May; I should be done tomorrow. Our garden looks amazing; God does amazing work.

8/16/2029

7:53pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It rained this morning, so after my usual workout, instead of biking, I did 75 minutes on the ARC, and then went for a walk. Afterwards, I planted the flowers purchased yesterday, which looked great. I got lunch for Wendy and I from our favorite diner, which had been closed because of the virus. It was good to see them operating, even if just for take-out and outdoor dining. After lunch, I went out for supplies then came back here to do my fruit salad bowls for the week. The green grapes looked particularly good. Our friends Roy and Marie came over and we had dinner on our porch. It was extremely pleasant, they are very nice people.

8/18/2020

3:57pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

There was the first hint of fall this morning when I went biking. The temperature was about 50°F, the weather was beautifully clear, and it was a gorgeous ride. With every change of season, there is a moment when a switch is turned and the days that follow have a different rhythm. I think that time has come. Nice to see the standard changes in a world full of unanticipated havoc. The editing on last year's book is nearing completion and it is time to write the foreward, dedication, and introduction.

8/19/2020

3:02pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It is getting towards the end of the summer, things have slowed down, and my paranoia about business in general is starting to zoom into the stratosphere. That happens even when nothing is wrong. We are off less than 10% from last year's

sales totals so I really need to keep my anxiety in check.

The Democratic National Convention is virtual and should be ending tomorrow. There is nothing earth shattering that happened there; the Democratic leadership in the House and Senate continued to try and make the US public believe that the President was wrong on everything and their plan to spend over three trillion dollars is the way to save the economy. Unfortunately for them our economy does not seem as bad as they are stating so the President keeps looking better. I was not thrilled with any of them, but I will endeavor to not say anything that will ignite the fire in people around me, which will consume their and my energy uselessly and is not in my best interest.

8/20/2020

4:59pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

With every new endeavor, there is a learning curve. In the bees' case, it is a lot of laboring by doing and it is interesting to gauge my "gut" instincts versus the teachings of our bee coach. She was in today and it turned out that one of the queens may have left one of our hives. That makes it "weak" with the real chance of being destroyed, so we are looking for a booster colony called a "nuc" that we can add to it, bringing in a new queen and more food. I have been doing a lot of research on bees and I am quickly coming to some conclusions of how I will handle things once we no longer have our coach. Our first rule will be to check the hives at least every two weeks and the second will be to get photos of the various hives and frames within the hives as a record. Regardless, she is competent, I am not the greatest student, and I am just annoyed at having a "weak" hive. I don't like having a "weak" anything, so we will make that change as quickly as possible. It was still fun going into the hives, and the rest of my day was good as well, so I am forever grateful to be alive and still in the game.

8/21/2020

2:45pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I was still annoyed from the bee coach's characterization of one of our hives as "weak." Therefore I attacked and started calling the local bee apiaries to see if anyone had a nuc or a queen bee to sell. One man called and we struck a deal. He will deliver the new nuc this Tuesday, and if God shines down on us, we should have a strong hive in another five weeks. It's getting to be late in the season, so if we don't save Queen Esther's hive soon, it will be a long, cold winter. Raising bees is only partially a science; it is more an art form, and even when you do everything right, bad things can happen. However, it is all part of the process of learning something new. I love to learn, but don't like taking instruction from anyone. I know that about myself, and I will try to hold myself in as long as possible until my bee team and I can absorb enough to go on alone. However, it is also a stimulus to keep me studying and learning. In the end, it is all good. We had to learn about replacing a queen anyway—better sooner than later.

My wife is intuitively brilliant. Her mind and mine work on opposite ends of whatever spectrum you choose. She "sees" things that I don't, and this practicality

comes out in highly unusual circumstances. It happened this morning. She still wants us to get the morning newspaper. She likes to read the headlines and do puzzles. I don't really have a lot to do with it; it is expensive to have it delivered, but if it makes her happy, then I am for it. This morning she casually mentioned to me how heavy the paper was, which was rare since it has been getting slimmer over the past few years. She said it was because of some house notices. My interest piqued, so I took a look. Our county newspaper published notices of people who have abandoned their properties. In the past, it has normally been a couple of pages, but this time, it was 65 pages. They covered every town and all types of business and houses. It covered roughly 19,500 names and that is only one county. I calculate that the state-wide number is at least 250,000, which is a huge number. The reason could be the pandemic, the economy, layoffs, or—most likely—a combination, but that number is huge. No-one seems to be talking about it, but to me, it is the first concrete evidence of the tsunami that is coming. I hope that I am wrong.

8/22/2020

8:27pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been an excellent day. I exercised in our basement, went biking, then met David for tea. We spoke about various subjects, including wearing masks versus face shields, a potential full country shutdown if Joe Biden is elected, and if there is another major outbreak. I love him like a brother; we disagree on many political things, but such is life. He has a huge heart, is an amazing friend, and we can both count on each other no matter what the situation, so everything else is simply commentary and does not matter.

After lunch, I went to see my wonderful brother. Ira is well; he and Eve are going to Lake Placid, NY tomorrow for their annual vacation. His daughter Rachel and her family are also going. He told me that his other daughter, Lisa, and her fiancé are visiting from California. The smoke from the forest fires was bad and she is pregnant, so they decided to leave for a while. They will also probably go with them on at least part of the vacation. The fires in California are bad, as is the heat wave, which is causing a lot of power blackouts. We are very happy that Kayla is leaving this week for Denver to go live with Ben and Carla.

After Ira, I went to see my Mom. She is well and very glad Uncle Allan is back home in Dallas, feeling much better. I showed her the video that Sahar sent with an update on the farm. She loves what is happening there.

I went to the plant store for three more flowers to finish out our garden pots—at least for now. It has been a great year for our garden; it looks amazing and provides a lot of joy to whomever gazes upon it. I ended up taking a late afternoon nap—sometimes there is no choice—and Wendy and I then had delicious leftovers for dinner. The rest of the evening has been delightfully calm.

US relations with the Chinese government continue to worsen; I am not sure what will happen if President Trump is re-elected, but I think that will happen. For now, we will not do anything differently from the Ideal Jacobs perspective.

8/24/2020

3:24pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Tin and I went into the hives without our coach today. We needed to feed them and we were amazed at how much of the sugar water they had consumed since last Thursday. We successfully fed them and felt great for the experience. The first confirmed Covid-19 reinfection was reported today, meaning there might not be a potential for immunity. Stocks are up because people think there will be a successful vaccine; I pray they are right, but even a success is only 50-75% workable, which leaves a lot of room for more trouble.

8/25/2020

5:09pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The new bee man was here early, but instead of placing the nuc on our existing hive, he handed us the box, said good luck, and left. Tin and I then went up to the roof, used our smoker to get the bees into the hive, and then opened the lid. It looked like a cyclone of bees flying everywhere; luckily, we had our bee suits on and did not get stung. We returned later this afternoon and things had calmed down. The rest of today has been spent on pricing. We got word last night that Lisa is getting married this Sunday; the family is abuzz and we are looking forward to a very fun day.

8/26/2020

3:25pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We went up to see the hives. There was not an inordinate amount of dead bees, which hopefully meant the new ones from yesterday are getting along with those in the hive.

Hurricane Laura is bearing down on the Gulf Coast; she is a Category 4 storm, so it looks like she could be very destructive. I hope everyone there is going to be okay there.

8/27/2020

3:17pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It has been another amazingly good day. God has been shining down on us and I really hope it continues. Tin, Delia, and I went up to the roof this morning. We fed the bees. It was Delia's first time, but she was great. We also checked the new nuc we had put in earlier in the week. Everything seemed fine, except the bees had already destroyed the paper barrier separating the new and old bees in the repaired hive. We did not see a lot of dead bee bodies, so they are either getting along or they swarmed and left. We won't know if the new queen—or the old queen—came back or if there is any queen at all for at least two weeks, but we will keep watching. It has been a fascinating journey.

I got the proposed estimate from Sahar for next year's work on the farm. It is about what I had figured and we will do our best to do the majority from IJUS with help from my mom and others. Some of the US stock markets reached new highs. Hurricane Laura hit Texas, but is weakening. They were unfortunately hit really hard.

8/28/2020

3:17pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Hello and welcome to the September edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Mundane but Highly Necessary

When I first went into our family business, we used to have an attorney to go over the documents that came in. He was and still is very efficient. However, over time and as the document load became heavier, I started reading them myself. I was hoping to save time and money, and I realized that through repeated readings, many of the forms, like non-disclosure, purchasing, sales and rep agreements, all tended to follow certain templates. However, the reason I had to keep reading them was that invariably embedded within the various paragraphs were little time bombs that could bite us later. For instance, in a purchasing agreement I was reading today, there was a section that said they could return anything we sent them at virtually any time. There was another that stated that if we gave a price reduction for future orders, they could use that price for PO's we already had and even demand credits for invoices already sent. This was just today; I have seen things you would not believe, like documents saying they own our intellectual property, we had to pay for a problem for a whole system even if we only had a label involved. I don't necessarily blame the lawyers; it is their job to safeguard their clients as much as possible, but we all have to go into any agreement with the philosophy of "buyer beware." I now don't hesitate to push back. The two agreements from today both had a lot of changes and I will be curious to see if our customers agree or push back. In the end, I feel confident that we will come to an equitable agreement, but had we not been watching, we could have been "giving away the store." Reading documents is a pain; they are wordy, verbose, boring, and made that way on purpose to get people not to read them. Once I or you sign anything, that is it—whether we knew what was in the document or not, we are stuck with the results. My advice is to get a caffeinated beverage to help keep you awake and read through whatever is important before you sign.

To be honest, while I do it for work, I am guilty of not doing it when a warranty pops up for a product at home. I simply agree. There are levels of importance; therefore, in order to not go crazy, I pick and choose what I read. It is much easier to simply sign and send, but it can also cause you a lot of future trouble.

Regards,

Andrew

8/29/2020

6:20pm EDT | Our House, NJ

There was a threat of rain today so I biked first and then did my inside workout. I then went to the supermarket for supplies, and after spending time with Wendy, I went to see David. He is well, business is good, and Janet is due back this Wednesday after being in Florida to help her ailing mother. We spoke about life and business. Industrial real estate is still red hot and he is doing really well, which is excellent to see.

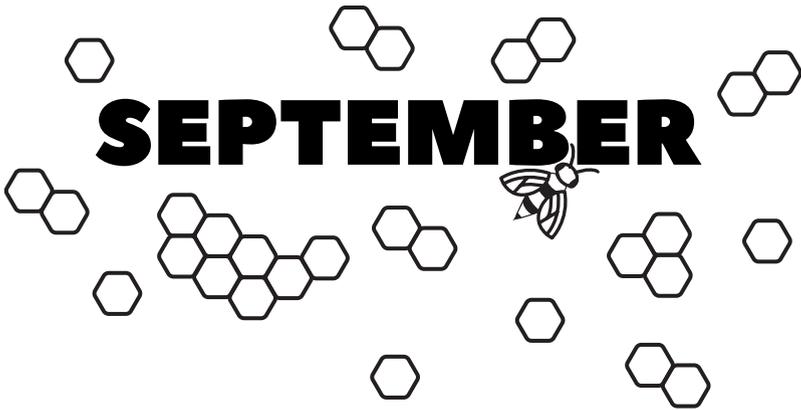
The US elections are now in about ten weeks and all sides will put everything they have into their campaigns. As much as I can't read the stock markets, I also can't read this election; the Republicans could very well pull off another win. The Democrats have, in my opinion, given away the bulk of their advantages, so I

think that anything can happen. If the Democrats take the presidency, then I will figure taxes will go up greatly, so we will plan to liquidate as much as possible and pay the taxes for this year before reinvesting again next year. If President Trump wins, there will be no rush to do that. Elsewhere, there are still demonstrations, riots, and looting, and I believe that most people don't like it and will vote for Mr. Trump. The call for people to go for progressive, socialist ideals of giving money away to the general population combined with their call for defunding police departments will help the president and others to stay in office. As I wrote, I believe he will win reelection, the Senate will stay Republican, and there is a decent chance the Congress will turn back Republican. For all of those who brag they will leave the country if he wins again, let them leave. I am tired of hearing their diatribes, and if they want to live somewhere else, that is fine with me. Unfortunately, those who promised they would leave the last time he got elected did not so—they are still here complaining. If you don't like what is happening, do something constructive about it: run for office, support your candidates, give them money. Anything but sitting back and whining.

8/30/2020

4:33pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a gorgeous day here in New Jersey. The humidity was low, it is 79°F, and my bike ride this morning was excellent. After a quick shower and snack, it was off to pick up my mom to go to my brother's house for the wedding. His daughter Lisa and her fiance Mark had tried to get married twice in the Netherlands during the pandemic and it has been rescheduled for next year. However, as fate would have it, the California wildfires pushed them out of the San Francisco area since Lisa is pregnant and the fumes were really bad. Instead, they came to stay at Ira's house last week. They decided to have a quiet, small wedding reception at Ira and Eve's house. It was held this afternoon and it was a great time. Conforming to New Jersey rules, there were less than 25 people, but Mark's family connected in from the Netherlands so it was a blast. Alex was there; he looked great and was a pleasure to see. He is a wonderful young man and it is an honor to be his father. I had picked up my mom, and after dessert was served, I brought her home. Wendy drove Alex to the supermarket so he could shop before he got a car back to Manhattan. It is now early evening, our grill is heating up for me to make turkey bacon, and I will then make myself some eggs to go with it for dinner. Who knows what else will also be included; Wendy is still filled from the chocolate wedding cake, so she will probably eat later. It has been another really good day; I am blessed and I surely know it.



9/1/2020

4:45pm EDT | Our Officer, NJ

I called Myrna; her sister Joyce died a few days ago and I wanted to make sure she was okay. She was very sad—as expected—but she still sounded good. Hopefully, I will be able to give her a hug soon.

One of our attorney's made a mistake last night in an email, which cost me a decent night's sleep. She did not do it on purpose—stuff happens—and most of the damage was fixed today. It is part of the job; if I can't take what happens, I should not be a boss. Very simple, very direct, very me.

9/3/2020

4:34pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

There was more paperwork to do, which does not bother me, and one of our customers wants us to get certified with a new security system so we can do defense work. I am all in favor of it and Mike will handle that project. These are times of intense and continuous change. As I was getting ready to go to the hives with Tin, Mike, our laser operator and cartoon artist, wanted to go so we all suited up and went to the hives. They both look great and it seems that Queen Isabella has taken over the second hive and everything is good. Mike loved the experience; I am really happy we did this—not just for me but everyone else.

9/4/2020

2:34pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Bee Successful

I am obsessive compulsive and I fully admit it. Therefore, when I passed by the two empty gallon containers that we use to feed our bees I naturally felt like we had to fill them. Forget the fact that I am in a suit. I pressed one of our guys into helping me fill them. Bees like a very thick mixture of water, sugar, and lemon, and if it gets on anything, it is a mess to clean up. You should never do this when

dressed for work. Regardless, the gallon jugs are now filled—one a little too full—the funnel overflowed and it was a bit of a mess. But we are now loaded and ready to go up to the roof hives on Tuesday, and in the end, that is what really matters. I don't know what it is about the bees, but they are mesmerizing us. As I type this on a sticky keyboard, I think I'll have to remember to dress correctly the next time I pass by our bee preparation area. Happy Labor Day everyone!

It is the Friday afternoon before the long Labor Day weekend. It has been mostly a quiet but very pleasant day, and our people are psyched for not only the time off but also the Pizza Day that is scheduled for next Tuesday. We are bringing in personal pizzas and there was no limit; some people are getting as many as three and I am perfectly fine with that. They have worked hard, the last six months have been crazy, and I am happy to recognize their efforts. The unemployment rate dropped to 8.4%—another good sign for President Trump's reelection efforts—and there is promise of a Covid-19 vaccine released at the beginning of November. In fact, I just spoke with a customer in one of the vaccine test trials, and he said the people running it seem pretty confident it will work. I hope to be one of the first to get it once it is available.

I have had a sty in my eye for the last few days. Many people have asked why it is red and inflamed. In the old days of kickboxing, it would have been a worthy trophy. Now, it is a pain and the very capable eye doctor from this morning treated it. I will hopefully look “normal” again in a few days.

9/6/2020

2:27pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I was up at 6:30am, exercised in our basement, used the ARC, and then went out biking. The weather was once again beautiful and it was a very pleasant ride. Once back and changed, Wendy and I went to our favorite diner for lunch and I went to the flower store. Once there, I bought twenty pepper plants since the deer won't touch them; they will be delivered this Tuesday. I sent an email to our people mentioning they would be coming in, and if anyone wanted to help me plant them, it would be appreciated. If not, I can happily do it myself or pay one of the guys to stay overtime. From there, I went to see Myrna. Her sister Joyce had passed ten days ago, and since Wendy had stopped off to see her earlier in the week, I knew it was okay if I did. With the pandemic in effect, Wendy gets to decide who we can visit. Myrna is in surprisingly good spirits and she was very happy to see me. We have had a close relationship since Wendy and I were dating. She is a warm, wonderful woman, and I was glad to see she was okay. I then stopped for gas and gave the attendant a good tip; everyone is having so many issues I figured it would be a nice thing to do. He was very appreciative. I am spending less money since we are not going out or traveling, so spreading some around for those locally seems like a good idea. It is beautiful out here in the porch; the screened in windows mean no bugs, but the breeze can still get through. I had planned to see my mom today, but she told me she was playing bridge and I will go tomorrow. I was very happy to hear that her friends were willing to play again with the Covid-related risk. Things seem to be getting back to a little more nor-

malcy, but I fear another outbreak. The only plus side to that is that our teams at work have already been through it; we know what to do, and hopefully, our past response will work again.

9/7/2020

3:34pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I did my usual weekend workout, the weather continues to be gorgeous, and after lunch, I went to see my mom. She is well, but she was upset to see the burn mark and stye on my face. The antibiotics are helping my eye and the burn from the hot compress I used to try and treat it is going away on its own. I rarely do anything half way and that includes trying to use compresses that were way too hot. My mom is well; she loved the pictures and video of the bee hives and is really happy that her bridge game had started again. It was then to the market to pick up fruit and pretzels, back here to get my fruit containers ready for my breakfasts this week, and then a snack for myself. Wendy had suggested we put a fire pit into our backyard with some chairs so we could hang out outside with guests and the kids. I heartily agreed and thought about doing the same thing at my office. Covid has changed the world and it is up to us to adapt as quickly and as well as possible.

9/8/2020

7:40 EDT | Our House, NJ

We had a nice dinner with the Gorins last night. Wendy and them agree on most political issues; I do not. It got a little heated. I come from a different viewpoint than the others. Their source of news and life perspective varies greatly from mine; theirs were liberal, local, and more theoretical while mine were conservative, international, and highly pragmatic. After that topic was finished, things returned to their pleasant norm, including them showing us pictures and videos of their grandson. I did the same with our bees. Even though I tried to go to sleep early, it was not a good night for rest, and one of my dreams turned violent so I woke up screaming. That has not happened in a long time, and in retrospect, is probably a warning of things to come. Regardless, I was up at my usual time, and after exercising and biking, I got to the office at my usual time.

It did not start well; Mike reprimanded one of our employees for not doing a good job and then I had to talk to another about a bad attitude. That was followed up by a third employee who had been out sick for a while and tried to come back too early. This is not a normal set of occurrences and all happening in a row like that is extremely rare. We had a meeting after that with Mike, Jack, Tin, and myself about a new potential project from an outside inventor. We went over the customer's design and I later sent him some suggestions about how to move forward. He liked our thoughts and is coming in tomorrow to meet with us in person. We had Employee Appreciation Day. Everyone seemed to be very happy with their personal pizzas. After that, I went onto our patio and planted the bulk of our new fall flowers. They will look amazing soon.

Dinner at home was excellent. I took out the trash and recycling, watered our flowers, had a snack, and settled in for the night. Another amazing day—thank you, God!

9/10/2020

8:40pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Dear Dad,

I have been writing business proposals and agreements while reviewing various contracts over the past few weeks, and I am reminded of when I first came to work for you. Although armed with a college education, I could barely construct a sentence, had no idea how to write a business memo or letter, and was a blank slate regarding how our business ran. There are pluses and minuses to a “blank slate”; however, the difference was that I wanted to absorb everything from you as quickly as possible so I could make money. The more I made, the more I wanted—and the harder I worked. Our common denominator was that you also wanted the money that I generated, so we got along well as long as you had information I considered valuable in exchange. It was the basis of how we dealt with each other for two decades, and when that slowed and eventually stopped, our relationship deteriorated. You were difficult, I was stubborn, and in the end, it forced me to figure out another way to relate to you. We got back to a decent place, but it was a neverending lesson for me of what happened when a mentor was no longer needed.

Love.

Andrew

9/12/2020

9:46pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Yesterday was 9/11. With the pandemic, the remembrance of that horrible day nineteen years ago had changed. Mass gatherings were discouraged and people did the best they could. A lot has happened since that day; my continued condolences to the two men I knew briefly who were murdered and their families. We can never forget and have to stay vigilant.

With the advent of the Covid-19 plague, life has shifted from people focusing on various huge problems facing our world, including climate change and trying to have countries get along better to repairing the world’s economies by finding vaccines and cures. I believe we have the power, the ability, and the resources to deal with all of it as long as we can let our “outliers” do their jobs and race towards positive change.

Dr. Mesnard diagnosed my shoulder pain as bursitis and he fulfilled my request for a cortisone shot. Delia, Tin, and I went into the hives yesterday. We took out the chemical treatment strips to kill mites and our inspection showed both hives seemed to be vibrant and growing.

It is now Saturday night, and besides my regular weekend workout and tea with David, I had lunch with Alex and Wendy. He and I then went skeet shooting; he did really well. After cleaning my gun, Wendy and I had dinner with my mom. She is well and we had a very good time. As always, she wanted to hear about our kids, work, the bees, and the farm.

9/15/2020

3:21pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Another Wonderful Time of Year

It turned colder this morning here in New Jersey—48°F. When I went biking, the jacket, turtleneck shirt, long and short sleeve t0shirts, heavy sweatpants, one pair of socks, and sneakers were not enough to keep me warm. Fortunately, I had my earmuffs with me for the downward descents and wind chill. Every year, I go through this to re-adjust as it gets colder. I love the seasons and it is always a challenge to see how cold I can go and still bike outside. For now, I will remember I need wool socks, boots, and heavier gloves. I should be able to hold off on the insulated underwear until it goes down to 45°, but the shorter the days, the colder it stays without sunlight.

Our two bee hives continue to be a huge attraction. We had a record eight people looking at them today. There were no issues with the bees, but there was one yellow-jacket that was buzzing a little too closely, so we came back downstairs. We have only had two people stung so far, which is truly amazing considering the number of people who have been involved. We just bought another bee suit and more supplies. It's a very fun hobby.

As expected, if Mr. Biden wins the presidential election, he is already talking about raising taxes. There are only a limited amount of places that he and others can get money, which include:

- Higher taxes of all types.
- Taxing retirement accounts now for the gross dollars in them.
- Inflating the currency.
- Indexing Social Security so fewer people get benefits.
- Legalizing and taxing recreational drugs.

If he wins, I plan on liquidating as many of our investments as possible to pay the taxes this year instead of next. If President Trump wins again, I am not sure what we will do. The “experts” who think we have hit the worst and the Recession has bottomed out are out of their minds. The recession/Great Depression I have been predicting for the last two years has only begun, and once the run of foreclosures begin, after the election and the economy is allowed to follow a normal path, then people will have a better idea of what is possible. Giving trillions of dollars away did help in the short term, but it will only make what is coming much worse. The main interest of people with a job is keeping it—including the President, Congress, and Senate. They only care about being re-elected and will do whatever is necessary, which also means giving money away until there is nothing left. In addition, there are forest fires in California and numerous global problems.

Is this the worst time in history? My answer is no! Through every historic, horrific event—whether man-made or plague-driven—outliers have risen to help stem the tide of what was bad and bring a road to recovery. Only when times are really bad do those people have the chance to be heard and influence the world. There are many people right now working on the Covid-19 issues; others are attacking global warming, helping to topple dictators, and trying to make our world

a better place. Unfortunately, you do not get people like Churchill, Roosevelt, and Eisenhower until things get really bad. Take heart—I believe the outliers are in place and changes are already occurring. Things will get worse before they are better, but there is hope.

9/17/2020

4:00pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It has been a very fun day. Zach, our new intern, started today. He is putting together some bee hives as his first task. We all went into the hives this afternoon; it was fun. The bees were almost out of the food we had given them, but they did not seem in a great mood—maybe because the weather was cooling off.

I started going through our customer contacts regarding going after more business. It is a slow process, but one that is highly necessary. My new book is due out in November and will go to more people than normal since I have been off the road; it is a great way to keep in touch. There are numerous discussions about when a Covid-19 vaccine will be available. Regardless of the press reports, when it is ready I will get one as quickly as possible, and then go back on the road. I am very much looking forward to traveling again.

9/18/2020

3:09pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Zach finished constructing one new bee hive and is working on the second. I have been working through our database going after people to contact. Thank God for the bees; going up to see them for a few minutes is a very fun way to break up the day. Stocks seem to be headed downward, but that has happened too many times in the past to predict a trend. The media is predicting Armageddon if President Trump is re-elected. I sincerely hope they are wrong because I think he will persevere. On a lighter note, I sent a picture of our bee tending operation to one of our customers and he emailed us a link for a recipe to make honey mead.

9/19/2020

4:49pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Today is the Jewish New Year: Rosh Hashanah. As with everything else, big crowds are banned and our temple did their service via Zoom. It went fine; I watched most of it on our porch, which was a beautiful setting with the trees in our backyard.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg died yesterday and dashed the hopes of many, like my wife. Judge Ginsberg was a champion for liberal rights of all types, and as a father of a girl and a gay son whose rights may be radically impeded in the next few years, I mourn her passing. I am not a liberal by any means, but I am not a reactionary conservative either, so I find myself left with two highly divergent political parties and not happy with either. Regardless, I have no power to change any of it, so I will plan for the worst to make it the best that it can be. I love this country, but if there comes a time where we are not welcome, then we

will leave as my Jewish ancestors have had to do too many times before. It is an option I have always planned for, and if necessary, we will go. On a brighter note, Wendy and I ordered a fire pit for our backyard and the metal tool holder for the pit implements came today. I actually put it together. For those of you who remember my epic attempt at fertilizing our front lawn—and destroying it—or putting together a grill backwards with my friend David, you will know this was a big deal. There may have only been eight bolts and nuts involved, but it looked good enough when I finished to send a picture to the kids. Of course, there was an extra nut and bolt when I finished, which I hope was an extra set. It was an Autumn day here—gorgeous, cool weather.

9/20/2020

3:57pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Juan from the bike store texted me around 6:00pm last night that he was dropping off one of my bikes. He was feeling a little awkward when I went out to meet him since he had been ignoring my messages about getting my bikes repaired. It turned out he had been having car trouble; I told him, after giving him a tip, that the next time simply tell me what is going on and I will be reasonable to work with. He agreed and hopefully it will not be an issue again; he is a very nice man and a good mechanic. Like many things in life, if people just talk to each other, a lot of bad thoughts could be avoided. He dropped off one bike and picked up another; she will hopefully be back by Thursday. I have one bike for the weekdays and one for the weekends. The weekend bike is lighter, faster, and good for when I also use the ARC in our basement. I am also usually more tired so I can get through my regular route in less time and with less energy.

I was up at 4:45am—early for a Sunday—but I was meeting David at 10:45 and got my full workout in. He was astounded to hear that I had no doubt that President Trump would win re-election and keep the Senate. He and I inhabit different worlds; let's see which is closer to reality. President Trump is trying to fill Judge Ginsberg's seat before the election—so far two Republican Senators have said they will oppose any move before the election is done. They need three more to block any nomination. The US and China continue to battle over WeChat, TikTok, and seemingly everything else possible. Business seems to have slowed down for IJUS; I hope IJ Europe and IJ México are picking up with the slack, but we won't know until the beginning of next month. I have already started worrying—part of my life as a boss. I am certainly not complaining; it is part of the job.

9/22/2020

4:32pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Dear Dad,

One of the parts of my job I love is being able to hire people who might not otherwise have the chance. In this case, it is a local high school student named Zach. Since he is young, and there is Covid, schools are in a crazy period and getting working papers is really tough. I challenged him to get all of the paperwork needed so we could hire him. He got the needed documents and he started with us at the end of last week. His public school

work is virtual from home and his soccer schedule is erratic, so he cannot give exact hours day to day when he can work. I will be patient as long as he does his work well. But he has that “something”—the potential to be different and amazing—that I want to encourage. He is an “outlier” like us, and is already fitting in well. I told him he would be treated as an adult unless he proved otherwise. He reminded me of us, we are different, and we need to help each other so we can then help our world. It is wonderful to be part of that process.

Love,

Andrew

More database work today. Airlines are asking for a government blanket order that all disembarking passengers have to be Covid-tested before leaving the airport. If approved, this will create long lines with potentially huge delays. If it is enacted, I doubt that I will be traveling anytime soon. Unfortunately, their solution may be the last straw to kill their business. I am a business flyer and am willing to pay more for my tickets; however, I also have a bad back and I cannot stand around waiting for a test. The pain level would be way too high. If this rule is negated, I will wait for the vaccine, and if it does not exempt me from the testing lines, my commercial traveling will be heavily curtailed or even stopped. The fear level of extreme, enduring, long lasting pain is enough to stop me. Add to that the possibility of being quarantined in another country in a small hotel room and you can see the disadvantages will quickly outdo the risk. I am hoping that there are alternatives.

9/23/2020

8:41pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Hello and welcome to the October edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Tracking is Not Just for the Woods

Many people think of New Jersey as a place for the Jersey Shore, the Turnpike, oil tanks, and gritty cities. But where I grew up, in the suburbs, I was fortunate to have a father who was way ahead of his time. While I did play “normal sports”, there was a whole other part of my life that was focused on hunting, target shooting, fishing, being outside, and enjoying nature. I saw a whole other side to New Jersey than almost everyone else—especially those my age. I confess I was not always thrilled with the way he taught us, including the nature walks where he would teach us about trees, flowers, and birds. But learning how to safely use fishing rods, guns, and knives has been a constant benefit all my life. There was one other thing he taught us, which came into play a few hours ago.

During those nature walks, especially in the winter, he also taught us how to track animals and identify them by the prints they left. We have been having trouble with “some type of animal” that was crawling up inside our grill and causing extensive damage. No matter how well we cleaned it and sealed the outside cover, something was getting inside. We had been getting pretty frustrated until tonight. I was on our porch to check to see the grill had been “hit” and I noticed some fresh markings on the wood. The paw prints were leading away from the grill so I knew whatever left them had been inside once again creating havoc. But this time I knew what it was. About a year ago, we had trapped a family of raccoons and had them transported to another location. Tim, the specialist we had hired, and thought the grill issue was over, but the raccoon paw prints proved our problem was back. There was no doubt in my mind. I called Tim, and within two

hours, there were two traps set-up near the grill. I have every confidence that by tomorrow morning when I go out to bike, something will be trapped.

Author's Note: One of Tim's prime weapons is Hostess Twinkies for bait.

9/25/2020

3:19pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

We are launching our new “bee” page on our website to eventually be filled with lots of photos and videos. Gladis and Hilda came to me to ask if they could “harvest” some of the peppers off of our pepper plants. I had been under the impression that they were not edible, but apparently they are a very “hot” variety that they both loved. I happily gave my consent and I hope they enjoy them. The stock market is up and gold has gone down. One of our brokers theorizes that people had lost money in the market's recent down pathway and were liquidating gold to pay their options debts. I don't know, but if it goes down much further, we are liquidating the balance of our gold—we did some already.

9/26/2020

5:26pm EDT | Our House, NJ

The chiropractor was excellent last night, and while in there, I got a call from my friend David. I told him I would call him back, and on the way home, he asked me for some advice. I did not view it as a problem but as a potential boom for the future, and I told him that God was sending him a message to get prepared for a new adventure and it would not happen until he committed to preparing for it. In other words, he had to declare he would do the preparation needed and then go through with the actions to have the potential for the big thing to occur. He heard me, but I was not sure if he would go ahead.

I was up my normal 5am Saturday time, did my workout in the basement, and then went biking. It was a beautiful late summer day and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I then went to see David. He thanked me for my advice yesterday and declared the next project he would go after as soon as he got the clearance he needed. He also is ready to donate more to the farm as soon as Sahar gets the new company created with a charitable designation. After lunch, I finished putting together the balance of the five chairs for our lawn fire pit. It went really well, except for the two I partially put together backwards.

At that point, incredibly loud Indian music started playing from the house above us. Alex had just arrived and was on his way to a wedding, but I jumped into my car and went to the house. They were obviously having a party, but it had not started yet. I politely but firmly asked the owner to please turn it down. He apologized, said he would, and told me it was his wife's birthday party, which would end about an hour from now. I felt a little bad about that and said no problem and they could go to 7:00pm. I felt guilty that I had messed up their party, but the high noise level continued, so I obviously did not inhibit them. Besides, I am going into the house in a few minutes, so it should not be a problem.

President Trump nominated Amy Coney Barrett to take Justice Ginsberg's vacant seat on the Supreme Court. The Democrats have already said they can't stop it. The conservatives love her and the progressives hate her so life is normal. One intuitive commentator said that one reason for the rushed nominations is that if there is a conflict in the Presidential Election, then President Trump would have a 6-3 advantage to stay in office. Say what you want, but he is not a stupid man.

9/27/2020

3:49 EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a very good day of exercising, biking, and helping Wendy to get our porch ready for tomorrow night's breakfast to finish Yom Kippur. That holiday, our Day of Atonement, is when we think about our sins, ask forgiveness, and strive to do better in the coming year. It is also marked with various levels of fasting. I normally do about 23 hours with just liquids and my normal medication; everyone does what works best for them. As time has passed, I have tried to do the best I can day to day and hope that, in the grand scheme of life, God will be okay, or even happy, with the way I have conducted myself.

I am incredibly thankful for how well things have gone over the past twelve months despite the pandemic. What could have been a major disaster for us on many fronts has mostly turned out to be a really positive experience. There is nothing like a difficult, continuing situation to be able to look inward and see what worked, what changes needed to be made, and how others have reacted. I am surrounded by an incredible team at work; some have been with us for decades and others only a few months, but having a chance to change the world is a blessing for which I will always be grateful. As for my family, Covid has hurt some of us more than others and the effects will be long lasting—if not permanent. I keep getting an ever-increasing belief in the potential for positive, global change and that can only happen with belief and help from above.

9/28/2020

7:38pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I had already been notified earlier today that one of our people might have Covid; it is a justifiable emergency based on my rules so my team contacted me on this Holy Day and the person involved was sent out for an immediate Covid test. I felt that was okay, but I should not have been doing business during this holiday and felt guilty, so I wrapped it up, did some writing to calm down, deleted it later, and went back to the Temple Service I had been watching online.

I was angry at myself for giving in to my desire to check in. I am an outlier—it is showing more all the time—and I am pretty sure, due to my political beliefs, that my participation at our temple will be a minimum. Besides, I am quite sure that they don't want me there either. It is sad, but I feel no bond there. Unusually, I do feel a connection with the television preacher I listen to virtually every morning while doing my exercises. Except for that fact I am not a Christian and don't believe in some of their social philosophies, over all I am much closer to them.

Joel Osteen is a positive man and almost everything is uplifting, positive, and a joy to listen to. I feel that God doesn't care how I pray as long as I do it, so for now, I will keep with a mix of religions, philosophies, and teachers. I have obviously not found the right synagogue yet.

9/29/2020

4:26pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Just When I Thought I Was Smart

I saw an email from a customer today making sure that we could deliver their parts within 6 weeks. I found out the material had not been ordered and I started yelling at two of my people; we had gotten the original order a few weeks ago. As it turned out, we had told the customer it would take 16 weeks to get the material in and deliver it when we quoted it; I had told my people not to order it since it was very expensive until a prototype had been approved, which had to be done twice. As is normal, my people had done everything correctly, the customer asked for a rush delivery, which they did not mention on their email, and I started yelling at my team unfairly. As soon as I realized I was at fault, I apologized and they said it was okay. It is events like this that keep me from getting overconfident.



10/1/2020

6:01pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Mike got his new car and we went over to Rashwan's house to see his studio. He is a Syrian refugee and an artist. He has catalogued his life experiences and numerous travels from country to country looking for a new home in his art. He is a very high-grade man and we are fortunate to have him with us. Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden had their first debate the other night. It was an awful spectacle that will hopefully never be repeated. Wendy and I filled out our mail-in ballots. Overall, things are amazing.

10/2/2020

3:03pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It is review time here at Ideal Jacobs and the process begins with everyone, including me, filling out self-evaluation forms. Some years are simpler than others. If business is bad, there are no raises or bonuses and hopefully few layoffs. Other "simpler" years are when business has been very good and I happily get to give people either raises and or bonuses to reward them for work well done. The last twelve months have obviously been unique as the pandemic has created a whole new group of criteria for what is a good employee. In our case, at the beginning of the lockdown, some of our people went virtual and others stayed working here at the plant. I was with them—there was never a doubt in my mind that I would not be with our crew as long as we were able to work. I send our thanks to our governor for allowing us to be considered an essential supplier; I will always be grateful for that because we never had to close. Those first two months were pretty dicey and I was incredibly grateful that we could continue to make and ship products. Many of our people went on flex-time and—combined with the large amount of factory and office space and the intelligent actions of our people—we were okay. We all adapted to our environment, and over time had some semblance of normalcy. We pulled together as to what needed to be done. With a lot of pray-

ing and God's help, business held up for all our teams around the world, and we are all well—may it continue.

With all that, now we have to figure out how to reward our people. Some of them rose to the occasion and did amazing work; others did not. I have no feeling as to how business will be in the future and have therefore resolved to give out raises and bonuses as deserved; if business tanks later, we'll deal with it then. As I have said, I mostly believed in God before the pandemic and now I am convinced. We are not in this alone. I am very glad for the help, happily surrender to a higher authority, and gladly look forward to working with him as a team and with others to make a positive difference wherever possible. It is hard to believe we are in the last quarter of the year and this book. People are already talking about what I wrote about the Pandemic—an obvious work in progress.

President Trump and his wife tested positive for Covid-19.

10/3/2020

3:53pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a gorgeous day here in New Jersey. I exercised in our basement, including using the ARC, and went biking. The thermal underwear and 3 shirts under my jacket felt good against the cold morning air. Later, I met David in town. He is well—a little bored—which means he has to re-double his efforts at work to get psyched up again to go after new business. He knows what to do and is prepared to do it, so it is simply a matter of performing the task needed. One of the advantages of experience is that if you have done it before, you know what can be accomplished under similar circumstances and about how long it should take.

From there, it was home to a huge lunch and then off to see my mom and my brother. They are both well. The news reports on the president's medical progress are either that he is doing well or in trouble. Happily, all members of our family seem to be in good health—may God continue to shine down on us. Ira and I then went for a quick walk around the pond at my mom's complex. The trees were turning to their fall colors, the water was filled with fish, and it was beautiful. Ira planned to bring his grandson, Jacob, back in the future to fish for them. My brother is a wonderful man. I love being around him and we have a very good time.

Once done with our walk, I went to my local hair salon, got a very good haircut, and came back here for an immediate shower to get rid of the cut hair. I was reading my Bible before—the section about Daniel and his friends being forcibly brought to Babylon to live permanently. The depth of their faith was remarkable. I am also re-reading the book *Many Lives, Many Masters* by Brian L. Weiss. It is about reincarnation and it is a fascinating read. It was one of the multiple reasons I believe in God and Reincarnation. The pandemic has also confirmed my belief that a small group of outliers was created to help fight it. I was put here for a reason. Not just to have a wonderful life surrounded by amazing people and fun but to be an overall help to the problems in our world.

10/4/2020

5:03pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It was a normal wonderful Sunday until we got a call from Irene. Her husband David was admitted to a local hospital for chest pains and is now scheduled for a procedure tomorrow. God willing, he will be fine and home on Tuesday. Ira then called that Lisa's water had broken; she is seven weeks early and taken right to the hospital. We found out later that she will be there for a week and probably deliver the baby then. I had spoken to Ira earlier; he and Eve had planned to go out to California the week before Thanksgiving for the birth. That trip will most probably be moved up. I just talked with Irene; they had some issues at the hospital with being ignored, but things seem to be better now. Jeremy is with David and Rebecca is driving up from Maryland. I also just left a message for Lisa; she did not pick up, but I think she's busy.

I went out to see our flowers. Some of them are pollinators with bees buzzing among them. It's amazing how, before we had our hives, buzzing bees produced an emotion of concern and fear, but now I simply want to get close and watch them. As is normal, fear is involved with not knowing the facts and reality; once things are clear, the anxiety often evaporates. It's amazing how quickly life can change. Except for those two major health issues, the rest of the day had been very good. I never stop being grateful for our wonderful lives.

10/5/2020

3:32 PM EDT | Our Office, NJ

We have begun employee reviews; we will be giving out bonuses and raises. It was a hectic day, but we got through a bunch of people. The bulk of our employees are tough, smart, and wanted the most they could get, but all were happy with their results. In the last five minutes, I found out that one of our employees who had been warned for messing up jobs on our die-cutting press and did it again. He had run out of warnings; none of the bad parts will go to our customer, but it cost me more money in wasted materials, so I terminated him. I wish him well for the future, but that will be with someone else. In the meantime, we will hopefully finish the reviews tomorrow and we can then figure out how much our payroll will increase. Our people are amazing, they deserve to be treated well, and we will do so. For those who can't keep to our standards, they cannot stay. I don't mind letting someone go who does not perform as needed. I feel very badly, however, when I have to lay people off because there was not enough work and they did nothing wrong. Then, it was my fault for not having enough business to keep them. Happily that is not the situation now. President Trump says he is leaving the hospital soon. Stock markets are up on that speculation—as is gold.

10/6/2020

4:42m EDT | Our Office, NJ

The President is back at work from home and has declared that Covid is not that bad. Since he had it himself and was okay within a few days, all those people

who say it is a global killer are now seen as extremists and his electoral base will be reassured that it is “fake media” propaganda about the virus and the world should never have shut down in the first place. In the meantime, the president’s choice for the Supreme Court will probably be approved; he has nixed any plans for another aid package for the US unemployed, which will again make the balance of his electoral base happy.

Meanwhile, business for us has been good; the annual reviews are done and the bulk of our people are very happy with the results. We went up to the roof today to go into the hives, changed out their feeding frames, and checked inside to see what was happening. Unfortunately, I put my finger on a bee and got my first bee sting. It was my fault; I will be more careful next time. Regardless, we had a blast and launched the new “Bee” page on our website.

10/7/2020

2:47 EDT | Our Office, NJ

I got a call from one of our biggest customers. An extremely nice woman told me that her company was abandoning all manufacturing ties to China. We had the choice of either setting up a plant somewhere else besides IJX or losing her to another supplier. As in previous years, under similar circumstances, I simply said not a problem; we would do it and she was happy. My partner Ben and I had discussed this before and our two immediate choices were Malaysia or Thailand. I emailed him to talk; we can be up and running either with a partner or by ourselves within six months. It is good we also increased our capacity here; we may go to a second shift. Our business is rarely boring.

Brett, the bee supplier, was in. He brought us two large containers of sugar solution to feed our bees and then went for a tour of our facility. He loved our arrangement on the roof and gave us some timely advice on how to winterize our hives. I also gave him a SwaddlePax Vest; as per most people our age who do a lot of moving around, he had a sore back and was greatly appreciative. As soon as he left, Tin and I began to strategize on how to carry out his suggestions; we are developing a good plan.

The media continues to say that Mr. Biden will win, he is already setting up his transition team, I think his actions are highly premature. Since the president had Covid and shook it off within a few days, his past comments that it was like the flu became more valid. No one in the medical field seems to be saying whether the overall sickness and death rate in the US is up or down. As usual, we are only getting the partial facts.

10/8/2020

2:58pm EDT | Belmar, NJ

For all of you who have heard of the “Jersey Shore”, Wendy and I are now vacationing in the middle of it. It is only about 70 minutes from our house and it was a very pleasant ride down here after I exercised this morning. We stopped off at a fish restaurant we had been to a few years ago. The food was just as good. It was a beautiful day and the ocean was gorgeous. When I bought some iced tea for

us, the attendant was getting ready to close at 2:00pm. He said that business was “dead”; he had a family and needed to look for a new job. It was disheartening to see and hear, but it is “off season” here so I was not sure what would have been normal pre-pandemic. The house we rented was very nice with plenty of room, and Wendy and I spent some time on the porch on the rocking chairs. After she found the WIFI password, it made communication with the outside world much easier. It’s amazing how I am able to navigate around the world by myself when traveling but seem incompetent when a “handler”—my wife or daughter—is around. The truth is that I am happy to seed control to others when I trust them so I can go off in my own mental world to think about business, the world, inventing, or just dream about what could be.

The vice presidential debate occurred last night between Kamala Harris and Mike Pence. I did not watch it—apparently it went as expected. It was more civil than the last presidential debate, but their views don’t really matter unless their bosses win and then die.

My 2019 book has gone to galley proofs and should be on press before the end of this month. That means it is time to continue editing this year’s book because it will be finished in less than three months. As always, it is hard to believe how quickly times flies.

Dear Dad,

Wendy and I are spending a few days at the Jersey shore. It is our first vacation since the initial pandemic lockdown last March. I did not want to leave the office until now. I felt it was my job, my duty, and my honor to be on the line with our people. If they were going to risk getting sick, then so was I. It had its crazy moments, but the bulk of our team members were amazing and I will never forget the effort they put out. We had never been through anything like that before, and the day to day stress and pressure bonded us together and the positive elements that came through far outweighed the bad. We had created and accomplished things in the last six months that were way beyond my expectations. I simply told our partners that we could build what was needed in the time periods required and our team kept meeting their deadlines. We just had our employee review time and the bulk of people got either raises, bonuses, or both—as I said, I was and am very proud of them. It is amazing that this is all happening at a time in my life when, up until six months ago, people were asking if I planned to retire. Now, those who know what is going on simply wish us well and to keep going as fast as possible to help bring in positive change. When we were working together and I had a new idea, you always said if I believed in it, to go forward. It is advice I am still following because even if we fail, others like us won’t. With enough of “we outliers” going for world change, critical mass will be reached and some of us will get through. We are part of a team of crazy entrepreneurs who believe we can change the world; some of us will and it is an honor to be part of that group. I am sorry you are not here to watch us going after our dreams. I also know you would have loved the beehives on our roof. Another result of your advice: it doesn’t matter if we know what we are doing—start the process and we will learn along the way. Success can be measured differently day to day, which doesn’t matter as long as we keep moving forward.

*Love you,
Andrew*

10/9/2020

4:41pm EDT | Belmar, NJ

I started the edit of the first quarter of this year's book. As I expected, the projections and thoughts I had regarding how this year would be handled were thrown out as soon as the pandemic hit. I will struggle to keep what I know now from altering what I was thinking then so people can get a true feel of what happened as it occurred. It has been a very fun day. I slept until almost 7:00am with no alarm clocks. It was very pleasant. Then, I exercised in the basement and went for a ride. I rode along the beachfront and the scenery was gorgeous. It is interesting to see the type and size of house change as I rode, and while looking out at the ocean, my mind kept drifting back to our family outings to the Jersey Shore. I really enjoyed them—except for the body issues I had with thinking of myself overweight, being really shy with girls, and trying to figure out who I was. That process began a life journey which still goes on. As positive as I am about some areas and extremely confident of my abilities, there are still times when I think of myself at the beach, in a bathing suit, trying to hold my stomach in and “be cool.” Over time, however, I learned that being cool meant nothing and being confident, powerful, and in control meant much more. I happily left the being cool part to others. I did not want to be feared—I wanted respect—I still do, and I doubt that will ever change.

I have been reading a book about past lives and I have been wondering if the flashes of instant judgement I have comes from a momentary glimpse from another time. This is not a judgement on a first impression—which, by the way, I count on because I am usually right and I will base my actions on them. This is more a subliminal thought that flashes through my mind, is most often negative, and contradicts the positive things I believe in. I don't know where they come from and why they happen, but as they do, I ask for forgiveness and move on because I don't like walking on the dark side. Maybe I am paying a karmic debt for the bad actions of another life. I do know how blessed I am to have the life I do now and am forever grateful. More things to think about.

Wendy and I had a good lunch at the same restaurant as yesterday and we are going to a new seafood restaurant for dinner. By the way, she had some fun with me before telling me the rules of an AirB&B. I have never been in one before and figured the procedures were the same as a hotel. Who knew we have to empty the garbage cans, make sure the dishes are clean, and take the linens off of the beds? Luckily—for many reasons—she is with me.

I walked up to see the ocean twice. It is beautiful, but I have had enough and will be ready to go back home tomorrow. It has only been two days, but I miss being “in the game.”

10/10/2020

5:15pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I was up early, exercised, biked by the ocean, and Wendy and I were home before 11:00am. It is wonderful that the beach is so close. We had a very good time and would go back in the future. After lunch at our favorite diner, I went to see

my brother who is well. We spoke about the election. I then went to see my mom; we also spoke about the election. Their sentiments and mine were aligned—except we did not discuss the tariffs, as per this email to my partner Ben in China.

Hi Ben,

The recent outrageous conduct by President Trump will, I believe, cause him to lose the upcoming election. If that happens, there is also a good chance the Senate and the House will also be run by the Democrats and Mr. Biden. If that happens, there will be a huge amount of changes throughout our country, including a probable re-alignment with China and Europe if that is still possible, a reduction or elimination of all tariffs, and an escalation in tax rates to cover the upcoming spending.

Trump has become irrational and his own worst enemy. He may have to be removed by the Supreme Court.

Regards,

Andy

Once done at my mom's, I went to the supermarket for provisions, and even bought some firewood for our new firepit. I spoke to Nick, our gardener, who said he would lay the base necessary to level it; I think he will use a piece of slate. Once back here, I put everything away and plan to have dinner with Wendy—delicious leftovers and such—and then spend a peaceful evening. It is great to be home.

10/11/2020

6:55am EDT | Our House, NJ

It was great to be back on my usual exercise schedule. I was up at 6:00am, exercised in our basement, including the ARC, and then went biking. On the way to get my bike out of our shed, I saw that we had trapped another raccoon. I think that was now five and I called Tim to re-locate him. The traps will be taken away until Wednesday because of an impending rainstorm. I then did various chores, and after a big lunch, went to see David. He is well but a little bored. He needs to go after some big targets, but first he has to find them, which is all part of the adventure and the hunt. It was then back here for more chores, and after a quick timeout for a snack and some television with Wendy, I read a passage from my Bible. I am currently up to Abraham and Isaac. It is now time to make dinner and then hopefully enjoy a quiet evening. I look forward to going back to work tomorrow.

It is Sunday night, the world is in havoc, and I am plagued by the potential for bad things that have and could happen in our world. I used to think that I should only concern myself within the confines of my own world. Keep to what I could alter in a positive way and be happy with affecting those around me with the hope I am doing what was good and right. But then the pandemic hit and life changed, we have to think and work globally and I plan to do so.

My Suitcase is Back in Position

Wendy and I went to the New Jersey Shore for a few days. It was the first time we had been away since last February. Besides it being a wonderful, peaceful retreat, it signaled a new beginning. We went away and returned and things were

fine. As soon as there is a Covid vaccine and the chances of being quarantined for two weeks are greatly reduced, I will go back on the road. I did not put my suitcase back in the closet for storage; it is now in its normal staging position for traveling. It is time to get back on the road.

10/12/2020

3:17pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

It started raining last night and is supposed to continue until tomorrow. I exercised inside and then went jogging and walking in the rain—it was very pleasant. Today has been spent catching up from being out a few days and pricing.

The Senate Confirmation hearings are in progress for Amy Coney Barrett. At this point, there does not seem to be any problem with her getting a seat on the US Supreme Court. US stock markets are surging; no-one knows why.

10/13/2020

3:59pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Business has been good so far this month; God has been shining down on us and I will never take it for granted. The “shredder” company is coming tomorrow to handle a lot of documents and give us much needed room. Our new intern Zack is doing a great job. He is smart, careful, eager, and wants to do a good job. He’s the kind of person we like to have around hopefully for the long term. There are a bunch of Covid vaccine trials in the works. They are having their issues; I hope one gets through soon. China doesn’t have one yet either. As soon as someone does, I plan to get it as quickly as possible. It has been raining for the past two days; the sun is out, but we did need the rain.

10/14/2020

7:56pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It has been a very good day. I was up at 3:45am to exercise and bike early so I could be back in time to meet with the company that was going to spray wash our house vinyl siding. They ended up coming twenty minutes early, which I liked, and I also had them do some additional work on our roof. Once at the office, it was a day of pricing, paperwork, and planning. The present China/USA global trade dispute is causing another realignment in the global supply chains of major global corporations. With all the confusion, problems, and pandemic-related issues, I think Ideal Jacobs globally is in a really good position to take more market share. I have prepared our financial brokers to sell our gold if it goes below a certain level. I believe there will be a big stock sell off and I think gold will go down with it. A new norm will be established in all of the stock and commodity indexes and I think it is coming soon. Of course, I have been saying that for eighteen months, so please remember that when I give out advice on anything.

10/16/2020

3:38pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

I was able to bike this morning before the rain came and it has been an excellent day of pricing and other tasks. We are still working on finding a printer for my latest book. Worst case scenario: we will send out the calendar and advertising materials first and the books in a second wave. Like last year, I don't think the post office will let us pack them all together and get the best rate. It's not the worst thing in the world for people to get two mailings within a month, especially if it is stuff they want to keep.

10/19/2020

11:20am EDT | Our Office, NJ

The weekend was excellent. The weather was crisp and clear both days and bike rides were a lot of fun. On Saturday, Alex came out from Manhattan and we came here to see the bees. It was his first time in person. Later that evening, we christened our firepit with Barb and Cliff over for dinner. One mishap: now I know why people say that there should be stones under the firepit when it is in use. After we had it going, the grass underneath burst into flames. Luckily it had been raining so very little burned. Our gardener is supposed to build some type of base for it this week. On Sunday, I saw my brother, who is well, and I then did various chores around the house. Tim, the groundhog man, was over to bait the traps; we have not gotten anything for a few days and he noticed our firepit. He happened to have a bunch of chopped wood in his truck; I bought his whole supply and we had a nice chat while we unloaded it. We had received our new wood log holder, and after putting it together, I stacked the new wood in it and everything looks great. In fact, I sent a picture to Wendy and the kids, and they are excited about burning it for Thanksgiving. I also cleaned the remnants of artificial logs we had burned from the pit; while they have burned well, they had left a mess and we will use real wood from now on. Wendy and I spent a peaceful evening and it was a very good weekend.

This morning I got up early for my exercises and bike ride to get to the dermatologist at 8:45am. She gave me a way to treat the slight rash on my face, which is not being helped by mask use; she said it was a very common problem. Once back here, I had a quick talk with one of our pressmen. Mike had called earlier that he received a big job offer from a local television network in New York and would be leaving us. Mike and I agreed it was a very good opportunity for him—as did Mauro when I saw him. So I spoke to Rashwan, our pressman, and wished him the best. We already have a replacement training today to take his spot. This is what America is about: doing your best and moving up.

We need a letter for this year's book and calendar mailing. The mailing will not be cheap since we are going to try and reach the bulk of our current and potential customers, but with us not traveling, we can afford to put out the expense and people will hopefully keep the books indefinitely.

10/19/2020

2:24pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The weather is turning cooler, and when Tin, Dave, and I went up to see the hives, there were a lot of dead bees on the ground. The bees in the hive are cleaning things out and this is not unusual. The cooler and less sunny it is, the less flying and general activity. Time to get back to our database and selling.

10/20/2020

4:17pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The weather report last night had showed some possible rain this morning, and even though it did not show up this morning, I flipped my schedule and went biking early. Good thing I did—it got misty as I got back and the roads got wet. I finished my workout inside. Our new great nephew, Adrian, had his bris scheduled for this afternoon, but I could not get on the supplied web link so I hope everything went fine. It has been a day of paperwork and selling. There still may be a stimulus deal this year if Congress and the President can agree. I have no idea what will be in it. Campaigning continues at all levels; again I have no idea what will happen, but I do hope that whatever the end results are that everyone respects the Constitution and accepts the outcome.

10/21/2020

1:29pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Family Businesses Across Generations

One of the benefits I have had being part of a 99 year old family business is that I got a clear lens as to what relationships worked and what didn't. With the benefit of hindsight, I can see how various generations in our company had taken advantage of others and the absolute toxic fallout that occurred and lasted for decades. Contrary to popular belief, I have seen that money can be more powerful than love and power can outweigh everything else. The history of the three generations of our company is littered with casualties from all sides, and while a well working, healthy business is the best of all worlds, a dysfunctional one will destroy everything in its current and future path. I have heard it said that every new generation in a family business has to destroy the employee structure before it. The playing field had to be leveled; the employees involved had to either change loyalties to the new boss or leave. I have seen that in our company and it is true. It is extremely difficult to have created a cohesive team that runs for decades and then change the leader. Whatever attributes, weaknesses, and negative traits the first boss had are rarely duplicated in the next generation, which normally creates a power vacuum and discord. Even if the next generation is better, there still was a lot of "history" that has to be overcome to create a new team.

On the other hand, being part of a smooth running family business where every member was pulling their weight and had the total entity's health and welfare as its prime goal created a dynamic that was truly a spectacle to behold. If that

team can transcend generations, you have the potential for expedition growth and prosperity. I have seen both sides and everything in between. From my vantage point, the primary lesson is that people are people first—with all of their attributes and flaws—they are leaders, employees, and family members second. In the end, human beings will watch out for their own welfare first, and then those others who mean the most to them. Blood ties of a family can be binding, but those feelings can work both ways. In the end, never make the assumption that anyone will put your welfare above theirs, and if that does happen, you should be pleasantly surprised and keep that person around for as long as possible. If you are the leader, you get to make the rules of conduct, but never make the mistake that you can say one thing and do another. Your behavior is what creates the acceptable pathway, so always remember the Golden Rule: don't do anything to anyone you would not like to have done to you. Being a part of a family business—or any other partnership for that matter—has the potential for extreme good or bad. How it turns out often depends on you.

10/22/2020

1:38pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

Dear Dad,

I just got off the phone with Paulina, head of Ideal Jacobs in Mexico. Besides inquiring about everyone's health, the main question is my going back on the road. I have not been grounded this long for years. I miss visiting our teams and customers, the chances to go after new business, and learning what is needed so we can produce new products to fill their needs. I miss waking up in hotels, traveling on long plane rides, and seeing other parts of the world. I also miss pushing myself to see how much I can mentally and physically endure. You never really know what is inside you until the pressure and strain are pushed to new levels.

However, I try not to be stupid, and being quarantined in a small hotel room would be extremely difficult for me to handle. Therefore, until I can get vaccinated and the chance for both getting sick and or quarantined are greatly reduced, I will stay here. It is a different world and demands a different way to sell. Let's just say I am adapting—as have our teams globally—but I still look forward to getting back in the air as soon as our customers are willing to see me. Your advice would have been simple. Try what worked before. If it did not succeed, then change it until it did. I would be successful based on my efforts, intelligence, determination, and willingness to adapt. As it has been since Gutenberg started printing his Bibles, it is the same today. Simple—just not easy.

*Love you,
Andrew*

We went to feed the bees today. As usual, they had eaten all of the food and were hungry for more. We filled the feeder, checked on their health, Vinnie took some pictures, and we were back before lunch.

10/24/2020

8:02pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Another excellent day. After exercising and riding outside, I saw David. He is well, has a chance for his best year in real estate, and now thinks President Trump will win re-election. After lunch, I saw my mom. She really liked the signage plans for the farm in Israel. I will email Sahar my changes and get things moving. Except for some body soreness, Mom is well; her mind is as sharp as ever. She is one of the few people who understands my thought processes and can comment with intelligence and alacrity. Of course, she is my mother so I am not surprised, but I am grateful she is near. I towed off my car and noticed a few yellow poop deposits from the bees at work. I don't mind, but at this time of year, their numbers will be reducing so the amount of car deposits should also lessen until next spring. The fire pit now has a stone base thanks to Nick, our contractor. The weather is supposed to turn colder, so maybe next weekend we can use it. More coronavirus cases around the world.

Dear Dad,

As you know, I am an avid reader of books concerning the Great Depression. A lesson gleaned from that time was that when many people from all walks of economic life and backgrounds were involved with the day to day speculation in the stock market, it was time to get out. We have already switched our investment to be mostly bond, cash, gold, and a much smaller percentage of stocks. President Trump intimated while campaigning that the Republicans might lose control of the Senate in the next election. If they do and if he wins, it will be four more years of not a lot of legislation or tax changes. If Mr. Biden plus the House and Senate are Democratic, all bets are off regarding government spending and tax hikes. I hope I am wrong and it all turns out well, but we are getting ready in case I am not.

*Regards,
Andrew*

10/25/2020

6:11pm EDT | Our House, NJ

It seemed to turn from early autumn to late autumn all in the last few days. After my workout, Wendy and I went out for lunch and we ate outside. With the windchill, it was about 46°F, but we were dressed for it. However, I may not be drinking much more iced tea outside for the rest of the year. It was a beautiful day. I cut back some of the plants in the front of our house that have started showing age from the cold and next week I plan on planting the kale plants that Wendy loves for this time of the year. By then, the bulk of the flowers we have in pots will mostly be withering and ready for transplanting. Biking will include thermal underwear, wool socks, and boots for the foreseeable future. The elections for almost everything come in 9 days; candidates are everywhere and spending money like crazy. Coronavirus cases are spiking around the world and it is very scary.

10/27/2020

8:41pm EDT | Our House, NJ

Dear Dad,

Covid-19 is surging again. Our economy has been hit much harder than people realize. Thanks for your training on my mind, body and soul. You helped to enable me to assemble my team and join another that has the potential to help blunt all the effects of the virus around the world. It has become apparent that I have spent my life getting ready to fight. With God's help, our combined teams will go forth, bring on reinforcements, and attack the virus head on. At this stage of my life, I could not have hoped for more. Thanks for your help in getting me ready for the battle of all of our lives.

Love,

Andrew

10/28/2020

1:50pm EDT | Our Office, NJ

The more I believe in God, the more good stuff happens. One of my jobs is keeping peace between our employees so they can perform at the optimum levels. This can get a little dicey because everyone here has a very strong personality. I am patient to a point, but if it gets too crazy, I will get mad and raise my voice, which is usually enough to get people to act reasonably again—if only for a while. There are partial coronavirus lockdowns in parts of Europe. I feel very badly for everyone involved, especially the business people whose business are being slammed again.

10/29/2020

7:41pm EDT | Our House, NJ

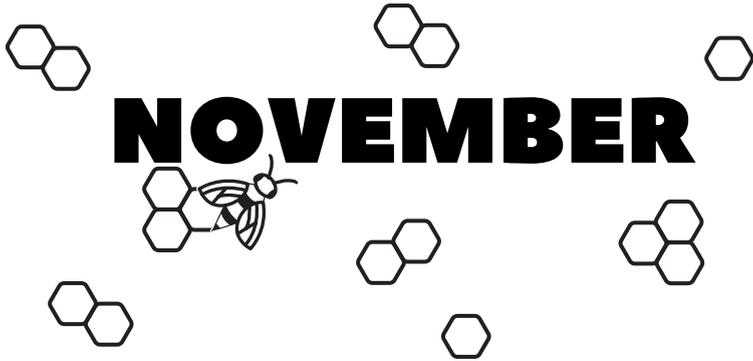
I was speaking to our travel agent, Marina; France and Germany had just gone back into national shutdowns because of the virus. It was coming back towards us. I hope and pray we have our production ready in time to help people fight it. On a lighter note, our long-sleeved Bee Team t-shirts came in and everyone seemed very pleased to get them. I have been very fortunate the last few days with the rain; I have still been able to bike, but more rain is predicted. We went to see the bees, but it was raining hard enough where we did not walk out on the rood and I am pretty sure they were all inside their hives. Maybe tomorrow.

10/31/2020

8:43pm EDT | Our House, NJ

I was up my normal Saturday time 5:15am—exercised in our basement, including the ARC Trainer, and went biking. I went to see David. He is well, business is very good. We spoke about the upcoming election and my suspicion that we will not have final results for probably a week after the polls closed—he agreed. We both want it over; as always, we have divergent political views. He is much more liberal than me. After lunch, Wendy and I went to a local lookout point for Manhattan, but there were still too many leaves on the trees, so we will try again in

a few weeks. We then went to our local plant store and bought multiple types of kale plants that I will put in as soon as I take the current flowers out. Last night's frost pretty much wilted them, so it was time for replacements. The kale will be the last plants until next spring. After I dropped off Wendy, I had tea with my brother. He is well and planning his and Eve's trip to California to see Lisa and Mark's new baby. Adrian was born premature, but he has already gained a few pounds and is doing well. Ira could be gone anywhere from a week to a month; I will miss him. From there, I went to see my mom; she has some aches and pains, but basically is well. I gave her some pictures from the farm that Sahar had sent along with a letter. The farm is doing great, but will need more support and we will be happy to help. From there, it was to the pharmacy, the supermarket, and then for a haircut. One of the owners, who did an excellent job, was there. After that, it was back here, where I did little else except relax with Wendy. It is Daylight Savings tonight, so we get an extra hour of sleep. It also means it will be dark progressively earlier until the end of December. I like the colder weather and will also be happy to see the spring in April; I love the changes in seasons. It has been an excellent day.



11/2/2020

2:02 pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Yesterday, after getting up an hour later with Daylight Saving Time, was wonderful with exercise, biking outdoors, planting the winter cabbages that Wendy likes, and relaxing. The weather has definitely turned more towards winter. At work, I began with reprimanding three of our people for not being careful enough. I hope that is the last time they need to be reminded. The rest of the day has been paperwork and pricing. We just got back from seeing the bees. It was windy and cool; the bees preferred it inside their hives. We sent in the deposit for the new bottling line, which we hope to use for a new product line.

11/3/2020

4:06pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Mike contacted me last night that Bank of America had just opened their portal to submit applications for the PPP Loan Forgiveness program. We have been waiting months for this and Mike worked most of last night to get our application ready; he submitted it this morning. Hopefully, our bank will approve it quickly, our government will do the same, and the money will then be ours. That would be very good because we used it for the purpose it was intended: keep our employees, hire new ones, and create new products to help generate more sales to create more jobs.

Gross IJUS sales for this year are less than 5% below last year. Considering the pandemic, this is amazing and I attribute it to Divine Intervention and our teams. Today is the US election from president on down. If we are lucky, we will have answers on whether the Senate stays Republican and the House Democratic tomorrow. The top race could be called later this week—or months, depending on how close it is and the court cases that follow.

11/4/2020

8:46pm EST | Our House, NJ

The Republicans have done much better than expected, but there is no definitive word on the presidency, Senate, and how many seats the Republicans took back in the House. It has been a day of paperwork. I went to the chiropractor this afternoon. I have been going three times a week. It is wonderful.

11/6/2020

9:33pm EST | Our House, NJ

I spent the day on paperwork and finishing the mailing list for my new book. The chiropractor was great, the weather amazing, and the bees really like the frames with honey we left them yesterday. Covid levels are soaring around the world; Wendy requested I tighten mask/shield rules for meetings in my office and I agreed. Another very good day; God shines down on us and I pray it continues.

11/7/2020

6:30pm EST | Our House, NJ

It has been an excellent day. I was up at 5:15am and did my usual weekend exercise workout; the weather was warm and very pleasant. I had tea with David; he is well. While I stopped for tea, I saw that Joe Biden was elected as President. There won't be closure on the Senate side until runoffs in January, but the House is still controlled by the Democrats. David was happy; I am not a lover of the president and am fine with President Elect Biden, especially if the Senate stays Republican. When I got home, Wendy was ecstatic; she has been hoping for this for years. After lunch, we went to a local restored estate with amazing gardens. We had a lovely time walking around and sitting in the 70°F weather. They had some beehives, which I found particularly interesting. After that, I went to see my mom and we discussed some work things. She has a razor sharp mind and had good comments regarding our various projects. It was then home, where Wendy and I had a delightful dinner of leftovers and we are now ready for a peaceful evening.

11/9/2020

2:58pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Pfizer Inc./BioNTech has disclosed that they have a workable Covid-19 vaccine and it will be mass released early next year if the results stay positive. The global stock markets have gone crazy, but there is a way to go before it gets into the general population. Anything above a 50% protection rate would be great and allow me to start traveling again. However, China is still sequestering visitors for two weeks in hotels that they choose, so I will not be going back there for a while unless they agree a vaccine is okay.

President Elect Biden is handling himself extremely well and is calling for unity, wearing masks, and social distancing. Our governor put in new mandatory Covid-19 guidelines regarding masks, shields, and distancing, which we instituted here in our office today.

11/10/2020

4:15pm EST | My Office, NJ

My new book, *The Ideal Connection*, was delivered today and looks great. I already signed books for Wendy and everyone here, and have started on Canada. Zach is working on the label lists for the US. I will do our other IJ locations first before getting to those. Mexico may have to wait because we have to merge our contact list with Paulina's. Tin and I Skyped with Terry, the salesman for a bottle distributor for a new project we are working on. There is a nationwide shortage for bottles, which is probably Covid-related, so we will go for some odd sizes, which might be more readily available.

11/11/2020

3:07pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Today is Veterans Day here in the US. We are only as strong as our offensive and defensive strength. Our soldiers, their support teams, and their families are the backbone that allows our country to thrive. Even when our government seems to be in disarray and our elected offices cannot agree on much, our armed forces provide the security that gives us the time to sort out our differences according to our Constitution and laws of every state. We have an amazing country and one of the reasons is the people who serve in our military. God Bless America!

The current Covid outbreak is worse than the last one, but less people seem to be dying because the hospitals know how to deal with it better.

I signed more books—thousands more to go, but I am in the process, so all is good.

President Trump refuses to give up, but President Elect Biden presses onward. Probably this will be the same until January.

11/12/2020

3:55pm EST | Our Office, NJ

I had my first Covid-19 rapid test today just to make sure everything is okay. The virus is really getting bad here in the US and we are offering free screening to all of our people. It was raining this morning, so I did the ARC inside and then went for a jog/walk. It was very pretty; many people don't seem to like rainy days, but I tend to like all days. I am always grateful for just being around.

Do Not Assume

I hung up on a customer today. I did not know it was a customer; when he said his name and I did not recognize, I just said no thanks and hung up. Something about it bothered me and I asked one of my guys to get me his number from my desk phone and I called him back. Turned out he was part of a group that IJX in China was dealing with and I had been monitoring to offer help. I apologized profusely and he laughed, saying he knew immediately the assumption I had made and was writing me an email to say he was the real thing. We then went over what he wanted; everything was fine, but that haunting feeling of screwing up will stay with me for a while—as it should. Making assumptions is usually the fastest path to trouble. I was lucky this time.

11/15/2020

2:38pm EST | Our House, NJ

Yesterday was spent in paperwork and worrying about my Covid test. God continued to shine down on us; my test, Delia's, and David's were all negative. We are still waiting for Shy, Joe, and Jubari. If all are negative, we will still stay in danger mode, but the panic part will be greatly reduced. I then went to my chiropractor, and when I got home, Wendy reduced the "threat level" here. We did not have to mask and stay in different rooms, but we still could not be directly in front of each other and breathe. She asked and I agreed to take another test this Thursday. She will do the same in preparation for Thanksgiving next week.

This morning, Saturday, I slept late; I could not see David because of the Covid risk, and after my exercises and the ARC machine, I had a beautiful ride on my bike. After lunch, I called him and we had a nice talk catching up on the past week's activities. He goes into quarantine at the end of this week in preparation for his kidney stone procedure, so I won't see him, at best, until Thanksgiving weekend.

I heard from my son Ben. He was checking up on me to make sure I was okay with all of the Covid issues this week. He is a great guy—yes, I am prejudiced because he is my son, but he really is. The big questions for us will be decided on Monday whether he, Carla, and Kayla come in for Thanksgiving. With the rising Covid levels, I am not sure if Wendy will be okay with it. Her decision will be made on Monday.

11/16/2020

3:35pm EST | Our House, NJ

Failure is simple. It just means an idea or project will not go ahead. The resources that are spent are probably lost, and if everyone is fortunate, knowledge is gained to go after a new goal. Success, however, is a completely different animal. Someone saying "yes" to a new idea means more resources, time, and money allocated and spent along with the higher chance for an even bigger failure. Most new ideas fail. However, if they succeed, then the new ideas can lead to new product lines and much higher sales. It is well worth the risk.

11/17/2020

7:53pm EST | Our House, NJ

There are now two vaccines approved for global use to fight Covid-19, which is a very good thing, and I will try and get at least one of them as quickly as possible.

11/19/2020

1:43pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Bee Centered, Bee Careful, Bee Happy

When we first got our two bee hives last summer, I had no idea what to expect. Even with getting a bee coach and listening to various podcasts, it took a while before I and our team were comfortable. It has become a daily work day ritual

for us to go and “see the bees”; we just came back down from the roof a few minutes ago. With all of the Covid-related craziness, that ten minutes up on the roof watching the hives, surrounded by fresh air and looking at the tree tops, is a true tonic. Our conversations range from getting more hives in the spring to how we should take care of them and how we are going to harvest the honey in the summer—if we get any. It transports all of us to another dimension of peace and kindness. Times can be difficult, but from these we will become stronger and more prepared for what comes next. For now, it is important to step outside the box—at least for a few minutes during business days—and just “be.”

11/20/2020

3:09pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Hi Sahar,

Great pictures of the farm—thanks! Life is a mixture here. The Covid virus is causing a lot of problems; two of my employees have gotten it and we are going virtual next week in the hope that a nine day work quarantine will help.

It is our Thanksgiving Holiday next week here and celebrations have been curtailed or cancelled around our country. Two of my kids are not flying in from Colorado and I am not sure if my son in New York City is coming for dinner. There are a lot of sad, angry, and scared people around.

On the good side, the rest of us seem healthy; I will have taken four Covid tests by the end of next week. The first one was negative. You are doing an amazing job; may God keep shining down on all of us to help change our world for the better.

*Regards,
Andrew*

11/21/2020

5:23pm EST | Our House, NJ

The weather was unseasonably mild—about 64°F with a cobalt blue sky—and I greatly enjoyed my bike ride and exercising downstairs. After lunch, Alex came home; he was bringing some furniture to the store since he was moving in with his boyfriend Scott. Wendy and I helped to get everything put away; all was done by 3:00pm. Alex stayed for another hour to talk; he, Wendy, and I were on the porch so we did not have to wear masks. It was very pleasant, and after he left, I built a fire in the firepit. Wendy and I had a pleasant chat there. I had already spoken to David a few times by then and had gotten interrupted, so I called him back one last time. He is quarantined until Tuesday, when he is having a minor operation, and is going a little stir crazy at home. He has a chance at being “Broker of the Year” again at the real estate company where he works and is doing extremely well, especially in the face of the pandemic. Speaking of which, the number of cases keep rising—very scary—and I will get tested again on Tuesday.

11/23/2020

4:08pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Yesterday was a blur of activity. I slept late for the second day in a row—almost 7:00am. Then I did my usual weekend inside workout, and before biking, I helped to get our downstairs and guest room back in order from Alex's furniture additions. We got another load of wood in from Tim the Groundhog Man, our new fire wood supplier, and he nicely left us a lot. After biking, I stacked it in our wood holder and then built another stack that was covered by one of our tarps. After a quick lunch, it was to the supermarket for supplies for this week then back home to towel off my car until she gleamed. I made my fruit salad containers for breakfast for work this week. By that time, I was really tired, had dinner with Wendy, did some editing for this year's book, read my Bible, took a very hot bath, and went to bed. My dreams were crazy, which is not unusual for me, and since it was raining this morning, I exercised inside, did the ARC, and then went for a walk. I was the only one here today and there was not a lot of activity, but it was still very productive. We just heard back from our banker regarding our PPP loan, which we hope will be forgiven by the government. We probably won't hear until March either way. Mr. Biden has been announcing his senior staff nominees. Hopefully, Former President Trump will give up and go away.

11/24/2020

8:18pm EST | Our House, NJ

Being alone in the office is a little strange, but our phones are setup—thank you, Mike—to forward. If I don't have a chance to answer, no call will be missed. Our landlord was in; he says parts of this building have shutdown until Monday. Former President Trump finally gave the go-ahead to begin the transition for President-Elect Biden's team. In the meantime, I am signing more books. I spoke to my sister; her crew is well. She offered to have my mom at her place for Thanksgiving, but my mother has refused both her and my brother. She is afraid she will transmit the virus, even though she doesn't have it.

11/26/2020

6:37am EST | Our House, NJ

I just woke up from a dream. I was driving to a sales call and my friend David was in the car. I dropped him off on the side of the road because he had to go somewhere else. I was then in some other building trying to get to the airport and two of my parents' friends, who passed away, were helping me. At that point, my dad, who had also passed, came in. He and my uncle Allan—both of whom looked to be in their forties—rushed in to drive me to the airport. My grandfather, who had also passed, was in a car outside, but looked to be in his sixties. There were no more seats in the car, so I was in the station wagon back area without a seatbelt. I then realized that I had forgotten my plane ticket, so I would have to wait at the ticket counter and there was virtually no time left. I would

probably miss my plane. That was amazing because that fact was not bothering me and I still had no directions on how to get to my sales call when and wherever I landed. Then I woke up. It was really good to see my dad, uncle and grandfather—all happy, well, and working together as a team. Thank you, God, for a really nice dream.

After exercising and helping Wendy to clean the porch, I got dressed. I also got an email from the lab that I was negative for Covid, which was really good news. Scott, Alex, and Nome the dog were here shortly after 1:00pm. They look great, and after having a snack with Wendy and I, all three of them went to Barbara and Cliff's house to see some of their kids and grandkids. Nome stayed with me while I kept an eye on the turkey. Both Wendy and Alex both tried to convince my mom to come over, but she was adamant so we let her be. The four of us had a wonderful celebration on our porch and in front of our fire pit. Nome was happy with the extra food. Wendy and Alex cooked an amazing dinner and Scott and I cleaned up. They left with the dog about an hour ago. It was a very different type of Thanksgiving, and although I missed the others, it was very nice with just the four of us.

11/27/2020

3:41pm EST | Our House, NJ

I was up at 4:30am, did my regular workout, and got to the parking lot of the Covid lab. The plague is getting worse around the world, and here in the US, there are beginning to be shortages of toilet paper and anti-bacterial wipes. From there it was to John, the chiropractor. It had been a while because of my potential Covid exposure from work, but my two negative tests allowed me back into his office and it was a great session. Wendy and I went out to lunch at our favorite diner. The weather will eventually make outdoor eating impossible and we will then do takeout. I don't think Wendy will be ready to eat indoors until we can both be vaccinated. Later, I went to see my mom. She was well, but not sorry she did not come to our house yesterday. She is fearful of the virus, which is easy to understand. I gave her some of Alex's pumpkin roll and Wendy's apple crisp from yesterday along with a small bottle of disinfectant. She was very appreciative for all of it. She is well and told me that some of Irene's crew are sick with colds and Lisa's baby is now up to eight pounds. We spoke about the farm in Israel; she loves hearing about it. From there, I went to the supermarket for supplies, including toilet paper, then it was back here for snacking, reading my Bible, and writing this entry into my log. A nap is in my very near future.

11/28/2020

8:07pm EST | Our House, NJ

Although it was a Saturday, I was up at 4:15am because David wanted to meet at 10:00am. I finished all my exercises, including the ARC, and bike ride in time to change and grab a snack. David is good; his kidney stone procedure went well and now he is mentally preparing for his second hip replacement surgery on the

23rd of December. Janet goes in for surgery two days earlier, so the two of them will convalesce together with the help of Janet's two kids and others. We spoke about life, business, and the partnership.

I had gotten my fourth negative Covid test result by then, which is excellent news. Wendy had said I was okay for now and did not need any more unless someone else nearby came down with the virus.

My brother looked good; he and Eve are not going to California to help Lisa with their new baby because she found someone to help until their baby arrives in a month. Ira was happy not to have to deal with airports or quarantines. We are all waiting to get a vaccine as soon as one is available. After getting back here, our friends the Leveys came over to visit by our fire pit. We had a wonderful time, spoke about the world, family, and—of course—bees. Jerry had gotten me into beekeeping and we had a great time talking about our plans for our hives, bees, and equipment. They left as darkness was descending. Wendy and I had delicious Thanksgiving leftovers for dinner and then we watched television.

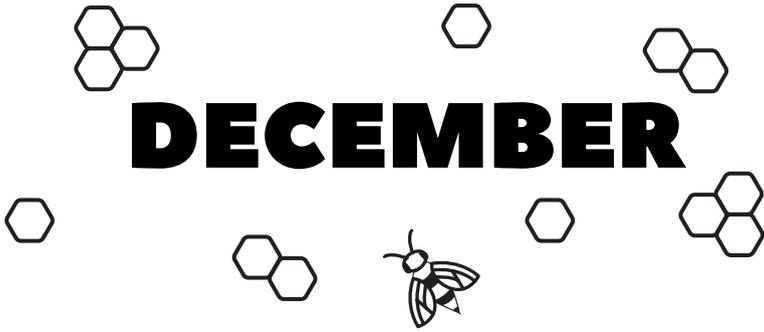
I just got two emails from Ben in China. Construction in our second building in Xiamen is progressing well—as is the new small distribution location in Penang. He is a wonderful friend and partner. It has been an amazing day; thank you, God, for everything. I take nothing for granted.

11/30/2020

2:00pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Divine Intervention Again

The heavens opened up this morning soon after I finished bike riding and got worse as the day wore on. Later, while in my office, the rain suddenly got much worse and water began pouring in through one of my windows. I texted a picture to our amazing landlord and he “happened” to be in our building. It turned out that the drain pipe above my office had been blocked with leaves and he went up there himself to unblock it. Within ten minutes, the flood stopped. What are the chances he would be right where I needed him at the exact moment of trouble? I no longer believe in luck



12/2/2020

2:45pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The Biden Administration is already talking about raising taxes and redistributing wealth—how badly will depend on whether the Republicans hold the Senate, which won't be decided until early next month with two run-off elections in Georgia. Covid continues to spread. We had one person test positive on Monday; two people near her got tested right after and are waiting for their results.

12/5/2020

4:44pm EST | Our House, NJ

A very fun day. After my exercises and the ARC, I walked because of the rain. Then I went to see David. He is well; our conversation centered on his business and Covid in general. It is getting worse around the world and he surprised me by saying he might not take the vaccine. I spoke to Wendy afterwards and she said she would also probably wait a little while to see if there were any side effects. I plan to get it as soon as possible. After lunch, I went to see my mom and Ira; both were well and both said they would get the vaccine as quickly as possible. After my discussion with David, it occurred to me that if I got it and a lot of others did not, it would give me additional access out of the road selling. Regardless, I am getting it as quickly as possible and offer it to our employees as soon as they can, too. After a haircut and stopping for an iced tea, it was back here where we received a present from our friends the Jensens in Utah. It was a beautiful wood cutting board and I sent a picture saying how much we liked it. It turned out Jim made it himself, so I called him to say thanks. We figured that we had been friends for about 39 years so far and he is one of the few people that I would hop on a plane to help. He said the same about me. I also got a bee-themed mug from Kayla; it was very cute and I texted her a picture of me with it. There was also an anniversary present from all the kids, including Carla and Scott. It was all very fun and reminded me how blessed we are and that we need to keep fighting the virus

with every weapon possible so we can get back to a more normal life with the options to see each other in person. I have been reading our Company Quality, Environmental, Health and Safety Manual for our annual interior audit.

12/6/2020

8:08pm EST | Our House, NJ

A Modern Day Trap Line

In the “olden days”, when the fur industry was flourishing, people would set trap lines in the woods to snare fur-bearing animals. While I have no urge to trap animals, it did give me an idea regarding bees. Swarm season begins in the early spring. When bees decide to leave their hives in search of new quarters, they will set-up temporary quarters in tree branches, inside and outside of buildings and houses, and even in holes in the ground. There is a device called a “swarm box”, where you can sometimes attract and catch a swarm and then re-locate them to a new hive. My birthday is coming up in February and usually I ask for plants and flowers for our garden—a hobby that goes to the core of my soul. But now I may ask for swarm boxes, which I will place in various locations in the hope of luring swarms in that I can then increase our hive count for this year. It is like going fishing without worms, hunting without guns, and the only danger is moving the bees to our apiary once they arrive. I can push off until the actual event occurs. Sounds like a blast—of course, my idea of fun is apparently a little off to the side of most others. No worries; I like to be an outlier.

12/7/2020

3:27pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Every year I have a contest with myself to see how cold I can stand it when out biking. This morning I equaled my record of 27°F, but it was uncomfortable. Alex told me about heat producing undergarments that might help me go colder temperatures on my rides. He is buying some for me and I look forward to trying it out. I went back to shipping and helped with the quality control process for our inventory. I know I always liked it when the owner of one of our subcontractors got involved when there was an issue and figured the same for our customers.

12/8/2020

4:03pm EST | Our Office, NJ

It was 30°F this morning so biking was not an issue, and today was spent in more paperwork. My books are being shipped as I sign them; we still have a way to go. David, our social media man, just said goodbye; he is becoming a freelancer in order to go after another job. He will still do some work for us. Another David in our screen-making department is also leaving. It is a natural ebb and flow with personnel; the core team stays, but there are always some changes.

I had been having a lot of pain in my right hip area. It was really bad last night, so I called Dr. Mesnard’s office. He had a cancellation, so I was there within fifteen minutes. He is a wonderful doctor and he thought some cortisone shots

might help. He gave me two and I felt better right away; I will give it a month and go back for more if needed. What are the chances of him having a cancellation at that moment? That he knew what the problem was and exactly what to do? It was no accident in my mind—thank you, God. The more I believe, the more things like this have happened.

President Elect Biden has been designing his picks for major posts in his administration. I have no comments on them and will happily wait to see if they are approved and how they perform.

12/10/2020

4:45pm EST | Our Office, NJ

This day was an amazing blur. It was paperwork, pricing, and signing books. We have made significant progress in figuring out what new products we can offer, how long it will take to make them, and what we can charge for them. It is an exhilarating, very fun process. Meanwhile, business for Ideal Jacobs has been good and our staff has been amazing. Dave, Tin, Vinnie, and I went to the roof with the plan that we would cover our two hives with insulated plastic covers. Unfortunately, we had to do some trimming while fitting the wrapping around the hives; the bees were not happy about being disturbed and started coming after us. No one got stung, but we backed off quickly and will finish the customizing here in our plant and try again early next week. The good news was that the hives were definitely alive with bees, which was great to know.

12/11/2020

4:25am EST | Our House, NJ

I got a message from God this morning at 2:26am. I am not sure if it was a dream or not, but the message was clear. We have to start building pollinator flower beds on the roof at work to help the bees in the spring. I immediately texted my brother, who is a master gardener, to come to my office as soon as possible so he can start the planning. I love when I get these messages; it makes the direction easy.

It has been a day of paperwork, signing books, working on a customer problem, and talking with Cary, our landlord, about the roof garden. He is in favor of it, which makes things much easier. We have started work on getting the centennial book ready for mailing for June. It will have various letters to my family, friends, and God as well as biographies of some of our sales people, photos of our teams, pictures, and background of our history. I think it will be an excellent alternative to a huge 100 year birthday party, which cannot happen with Covid. Ira's friend, the roof plant man, just texted me; we are meeting on Monday.

12/12/2020

4:00pm EST | Our House, NJ

Wendy helped me to move the porch furniture to a combined location and I will get a tarp to cover it early this week, so we should be in good shape if the

blizzard does indeed happen. In the meantime, I went to see my mom and got the bonus of seeing my brother at the same time. They are both well and celebrating Chanukah at Ira's house tonight. After stopping off to get supplies and iced tea for Wendy and me, I am now outside on our back lawn with a fire going in our firepit. It is very peaceful and I will do some editing of this year's book, which will be done in nineteen days. It is hard to believe this year is over; so much has happened both good and difficult. The Supreme Court struck down Texas's attempt to invalidate the votes from four states in the last election. President-Elect Biden will be certified as the winner this week and will take over next month. I am liquidating my retirement accounts this week. I feel there is no chance that taxes will go down under the Biden Administration, so it is better to pay them now as opposed to them being higher later.

12/13/2020

3:53pm EST | Our House, NJ

It has been a very good, peaceful day. After exercising inside, I went out for a bike ride. The weather was gorgeous. Once back, I went to see David; he is well and having a banner year selling commercial real estate. He did, however, say something that was jarring. He is not planning to get the Covid vaccine anytime soon, which means, if there are many like him, that herd immunity will not happen for at least a year. It also meant that the potential for people to want to see me on the road on sales calls will be significantly reduced and I will have to deal with the realization that part of my business career may be significantly scaled back or even over. If that is the case, I will greatly miss it, but I can still travel to various regions and meet our sales people, so it is not a total stoppage.

There is a chance of snow tomorrow, so all of the outside furniture is now on the porch. The sky is getting a "snow cloud" look—thank you, Dad, for teaching me about that. We have a fire going in the fire pit and it is a very pretty sight. If the government does not pass a stimulus bill this week, I believe it will not happen until next year. Unfortunately, that means that all the companies who got the PPP loans and counted on them being forgiven could be subject to a large tax that has to be paid for 2020. Whether it is forgiven in 2021 or not, there is still a penalty to be paid for those who don't pay it and my fear is that a lot of companies on the edge of going out of business will now be pushed over. It is a ridiculous situation and our government representatives should be ashamed of themselves if they let this happen and thousands of people lose their companies and go into debt after being led to believe that everything would be forgiven. Maybe it will be solved at the last moment, but it is a lot of extra pressure. Without a stimulus/aid package this month, a lot of people will lose whatever benefits they had left and will have very few options for survival. As I said, it's a very bad situation that could have been avoided.

12/14/2020

3:08pm EST | Our Office, NJ

One of the things I have learned over time is that if I have a task to perform,

nothing positive will happen if I ignore it and the faster the completion the better. Therefore, I have been pushing on getting all the books signed for weeks and am starting to near the end. It is a big job, but I know its potential as a marketing resource. Besides, I am committed to getting it done, so that alone is enough to push forward. It has been a very productive day regarding paperwork and I also met with a roof gardener this morning who will give us a price on setting up a pollinator garden for our bees. Mr. Biden has won the Electoral College; now hopefully the Republicans can settle down and focus on what is really important like a stimulus package.

12/14/2020

7:37pm EST | Our House, NJ

What People Want in a Leader

I have spent my life as a boss, husband, father, friend, and countless other roles, working out my best place within them. From my perspective, the most common admired positive traits of a leader are the abilities to listen, learn, love, change, accept blame even when not deserved. A leader should be an advocate, a resource, a defender, and a cheerleader. A leader should actually like and love the people around them. Above all, people like to be around someone who is living life and spreading joy, but they also need to be around someone who is disciplined, strong, and will push them to be their best. They want someone who can admit they failed, but not someone who is depressed or a failure. A leader must be able to censor their negative thoughts as much as possible without saying them out loud. In other words, on a day to day basis, they want a leader they can count on when there is trouble. While this is all a very good set of traits to have, it is often not the person people want to have as friends. If you have the traits above, the odds are also good that you are opinionated, expect your advice, if asked for, be followed, are impatient, and go nuts when your limited time is wasted. While that makes me a good boss, it does not always make me easy to be around. Bosses are often loners, we are not the nicest people, we get frustrated with those who don't live up to their potential—as defined by us—and often we can only talk to other bosses and owners who are similar in mind set. We are different, we don't fit in, we are outliers, and it makes it very hard to relate to others, especially family members and friends. I would not change who I am, but I readily understand how difficult I can be.

12/15/2020

4:29pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Another amazing day. I was able to ride, and once here, I signed a bunch of books, did a lot of paperwork, then I got the email that I was expecting and somewhat dreading. We had run a label order three times for a customer, and while we had run it previously successfully, multiple times suddenly it was not being accepted. It is irrelevant what we think; the customer determines what is okay, and after more discussions with them today, we have hopefully come up with a plan

that will get them what they needed. I have been worrying about this since late last week. I take issues like this personally. Part of my job is to take care of trouble and I am hopeful we can get them what they need by Friday.

I heard from the roof garden creator today; he wants to come in with his boss to see our space again. They are coming tomorrow, and while we were up there today putting the insulation on the hives, I slipped on some ice. I was okay, but it's good to know the potential risk for future visits up there. My chiropractor John came in with his daughter Nina; she is becoming an intern for us. After her paperwork, we all went back up to the roof to see the bees again, which is something I rarely get tired of doing. She is a very nice young woman and I hope she fits in well.

Still no word on the stimulus package; if it does not get passed this week, then the taxes due from the PPP loans that will be due this year and hundreds of thousands of small business owners could be forced out of business. It is a potentially a very bad situation for the owners, their companies, and all of the people already unemployed here in the US whose benefits are ending next week.

12/16/2020

7:26pm EST | Our House, NJ

Today is Wendy and my 36th wedding anniversary. To say our lives have been amazing and blessed would be an understatement and I never take it for granted. I was up at 3:00am; I needed to workout early to be ready for the 7:00am IJ Global Sales Meeting. It was too cold to bike so I exercised in our basement, went on the ARC Trainer, and then finished up with a brisk walk outside, which was beautiful. The meeting went well, our teams around the world have been doing an awesome job—especially considering the pandemic—and I am proud of all of them.

Part of the discussion was about marketing, sales, and the centennial book we had been working on celebrating our 100 years in business. It is a huge project that I will lead as soon as the ISO Interior Audit is over. During the morning, the roof gardener and his boss were in to recheck the roof to give an estimate to start the planting for the spring. Our landlord Cary, of course, has to okay any building plans. There was an impending snow storm, and after a great day of paperwork, pricing, and signing books, I left a half hour early for the chiropractor. John nicely stayed open so I could get treated and we had a very pleasant time. I was out about 4:00pm and the snow storm was just starting. Once here, Wendy made an excellent dinner, we are celebrating our anniversary on Saturday with Alex and Scott, and I will be ready for sleep very soon. The snow is beautiful. I have always liked it and loved to shovel it, but those days are gone. I trust Nick, our plower, to be there in the morning so I can get to work—he is a good man.

12/17/2020

2:52pm EST | Our Office, NJ

There was a big snow storm last night—somewhere between 8-10 inches for us—and I woke up to a gorgeous wintry sight. After exercising inside, I went

for a quick walk. I first cleaned off the generator so it could run if needed, and then I walked to one of the ends of our street. The roads looked passable, and after almost falling a few times, I gave up my idea for a walk and instead shoveled enough to be able to get my car out. It was not great for my back, but I was careful and really enjoyed the intense activity. Wendy was not thrilled I left while it was still snowing, but the roads were fine, there were very few cars out, and I got here with no issues. We had four press people in and one person in our office. Zack, our intern, came in later this afternoon; he is working on mailing out my books.

12/18/2020

3:05pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Dear Dad,

We have one of "those jobs" that is creating all types of havoc and mental stress. We delivered a job that was not perfect—our mistake. It should never have shipped, but in the aftermath, the customer has determined the replacements have to be perfect. We have tried our best, re-run the job multiple times, offered suggestions to make things right, but in the end, it came down to figuring a way to be able to quality control the job that would not take three people eight hours a day for five days. I always noticed when we worked together you would often put high levels of stress on me with the plan that an idea would come out that would help deal with the situation. I used to take credit for it, but it has happened enough times over the years that I now believe it is Divine Intervention. It happened again today, and if the solution for the above does not work, at least it will give me some peace over this weekend so I can worry less about it. I believe in reincarnation and a collective universe where all souls in the past. Of course, God has all of the knowledge of the Ages, and if we are open to them, can pass information in the form of "ideas" that seem our own but are really not. I find that these things happen often early in the morning just as I am waking up, while exercising, and also during times of extreme stress. You were right, Dad, to put me in the mental pressure cooker to help push out the ideas, but over time, I have found it is not from within me but from the outside. Thanks for all your help while you were training me. Even now you help me—it must be amazing for you to have access to people like Gutenberg and Benjamin Franklin. Another reason to be less afraid of death than might otherwise be the case.

Love you!

Andrew

12/19/2020

10:17pm EST | Our House, NJ

It was too cold and icy to bike outside, so after my normal weekend workout in our basement, I grabbed my walking staff, and had a wonderful walk up to and through the small patch of woods a few streets above our house. The snow there was still about six inches deep, but I had my boots on, and with the poles had no problem walking. It was exhilarating in the cold and I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

After lunch I went to see my mom. She is well and we talked about business; she is always interested in where we are headed. Everyone in the family is fine; she keeps a pretty tight watch on all of us. I spoke to David; he is well, but his hip replacement surgery has been moved to this Monday—the same day Janet goes in

for surgery. His recovery will most likely be much faster than hers; I have offered any assistance needed and I will pray for them both.

Once back here, Alex and Scott came over to celebrate Alex's birthday and our wedding anniversary. I picked up food from a local, very good restaurant, and when I went inside, I noticed that I was very uncomfortable being around the patrons without masks. My fear level of Covid has increased, and I am much more cognizant of people near me than before. It is a good thing for the foreseeable future and makes my quest to find vaccine shots for me, Wendy, my mom, and our work team all the more imperative.

12/21/2020

7:51pm EST | Our House, NJ

A gift from above the temperature was over freezing early this morning and I was able to bike. Today was a blur between pricing, book signing, and trying to fix the job that continues to go wrong. I have a meeting with the customers tomorrow to plot a way toward what they need and putting this lousy situation to rest. The chiropractor was excellent; John's daughter is now interning for us and is doing a great job. I spoke to David and his hip surgery went well; he is already up and walking and is due home tomorrow. When we spoke before, Janet was still in the operating room. We all hope she is out soon and both will make amazing recoveries.

12/22/2020

4:40pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The job that has been going wrong has been attacking my psyche when I get up to go to the bathroom in the early morning. It happened again last night at about 1:30am; it took me a while to get back to sleep. The big meeting for that happened a few hours ago. The customers were pleasant but adamant about what they needed and what specs they could modify in the short and long term. As long as the labels I checked last night, one by one, are approved by them, there is a pathway out of this mess. Unfortunately, UPS did not deliver as promised and we have to wait another day before the customer can see if our checking system was accurate. I have another night for a potential early morning issue; I am hoping that it won't keep me up tonight and the customer approves the labels we sent. The day was excellent; I got to bike again after completing a lot of paperwork and pricing. I finished the book signings, which felt really good to be done. Congress has passed the stimulus bill; now it waits for President Trump. I truly hope he signs it.

12/23/2020

3:15pm EST | Our Office, NJ

The weather was cold and clear this morning—just warm enough for me to go biking. The stimulus bill that was passed by Congress is now no longer acceptable to the president. If this bill is not passed by the end of this year, there will be potential

severe tax ramifications for anyone who participated in the PPP loan program.

Work has begun on the new 100th anniversary book. I have started sorting the letters to various people to see what will be suitable. This book is not for kids, so the letters will be personal and show some of the difficult relationships within our family.

Dear Dad and Grandfather,

As I am confident that you both have been watching over me and our family since you passed and especially over the last year, you have seen the havoc that the pandemic has created and the cataclysmic rate of change. On the other hand, it is no different than the World Wars, Great Depression, and other seismic upheavals that happened during your lifetimes. The only constant through all of it, besides the change itself, was that we all stayed "on the road" and sold for as long as we could. Technology, age, and time eventually side-lined you both and I was going well until the ability to travel was virtually eliminated. While our teams around the world have reacted and behaved brilliantly, I have still had a void in my life not being able to travel. I greatly miss seeing the world and the wonderful people in it, and having the chances to find new companies, create new alliances, and in general get a different perspective on what was happening in the world once away from US media. I am already past the age where most salesmen have retired, but since I am also the owner and have various sales teams around the world, I can still see customers without an issue. However, with Covid-19, the chances of most people wanting to see me are slim. The first step is for me to get the vaccine. The next step is seeing if any customers would see me, but even if they won't, there are still things I need to do in person. The first trip will be to see Ben, Kayla, and Carla in Denver. But after that, I also want to go to Israel to visit the farm that our company is sponsoring and help setup an apiary there; bees are now a part of my life. There is also another potential project in Malaysia as well as going to visit our people in Asia, Europe, Canada, and Mexico. Just because we don't go to see customers doesn't mean I don't get to see them. Direct contact, even for a day or two, is extremely important besides any training and marketing we do together. While my days "selling" on my own may be over, my days on the road are not, and besides, there is never a reason I can't hop on a plane or drive if a customer wants to see me and that is practically anywhere on the world. The rate of change is increasing and my role within our companies modified, but as soon as I get my two vaccine injections, I am ready for the airport.

*Love you both,
Andrew*

Zack

We have an intern; his name is Zack and he is fifteen years old. He is bright, quick, and highly confident in his abilities. I gave him an assignment today to go through our database of about 7,000 people and check them through LinkedIn to see if they had changed jobs. If they did, we would go after them to re-connect and hopefully get new business. He acted like it was not a big deal; he would continue until he finished and was happy about having a job. My kind of kid.

12/25/2020

9:31pm EST | Our House, NJ

I slept late, did my indoor exercises, and then walked since it was raining. It was very pleasant and quiet. With Covid, few people are out and visiting so things

were very calm. Past tradition would have us together for a movie and Chinese food with Barbara and Cliff, but instead, I got Wendy Thai food and I had a salad. Alex called; he and Scott are having a great time on vacation. I checked on David; he and Janet are improving—except he is having trouble sleeping. I sent him over a YouTube link for one of my favorite Jean Shepherd radio shows; hopefully it will help him relax.

12/26/2020

4:16pm EST | Our House, NJ

It started out cold here, but by the time I was ready to ride, it was 28°F. It was chilly, but since I was dressed correctly—thank you, Dad—I was fine. After lunch, I have been going through my old books, gathering material for our new centennial project and a lot of memories are being rekindled. I am amazed at the amount of ideas and projects we tried that did not work; I should not be surprised as I know the percentage of successful ideas is small—but still. The days have started getting longer again—a nice change for the coming months. No word back on my Covid test; no movement in the stimulus talks.

12/28/2020

3:08pm EST | Our Office, NJ

Yesterday was a very pleasant Sunday. I exercised, biked, went to see my mom, and then spent the rest of the day with Wendy. This morning I was raring to go after being off three days, and after my usual workout, I spent today doing paperwork, including starting the QEO Annual Internal Audit as well as working on the new book project. While we are using material already written, culling through 20 years of writing is a big job and will take some time. Mauro, our head pressman, who is fifty years old today, and I went up to the roof. The bees in one hive were very busy, but since we opened both up and there were bees last week I am not overly concerned. Besides, at this point in the year, it is up to God and the bees as to whether they will make it to spring. President Trump signed the stimulus package—a very good thing. US Stock markets hit new records.

12/29/2020

4:35pm EST | Our Office, NJ

After my workout this morning, I went to see Dr. Mesnard for my semi-annual checkup. He is a really nice, competent man and we spoke about the Covid vaccine; we are both in favor of getting it. He took blood samples, so in addition to checking to see if I had Covid without knowing it, and some other things, he will get a PSA to check regarding prostate cancer. It has been a recurring fear of mine for decades and I will wait and hope the results are good. Elsewhere, the Annual Interior Audit continues as well as various other paperwork requirements.

Mitch McConnell blocked a vote for a raise to 2000.00/person for those unemployed. Who knows if it will happen before the Georgia election for their two

Senators, which will determine who controls the Senate. I will continue our focus on our companies. Work also continues on our new centennial book.

Gratitude

We are in the process of going through all of the books, blogs, and almanacs that I have written over the past twenty years. We are creating a centennial book edition to celebrate our 100th year in business that should be ready this autumn. When I was 21 years old and just going into our family business, after having failed at being a broadcast journalist, I had some dreams of what could happen. It has truly been an amazing ride, and even the bad times were always stepping stones to better ones. I have learned that there are multiple ways to do things; no-one, especially me, is right most of the time. If I was to describe my view of life in one word, it would have to be grateful. I try never to take anyone or anything for granted, and am in a constant state of awe as to where I am and what has happened to me. If you are not already on our mailing list for the centennial book, please send me your address via email (mine is acj@idealjacobs.com) and we will send you a free copy.

12/30/2020

7:51pm EST | Our House, NJ

Hello and welcome to the January Edition of the Ideal Almanac!

Here is some perspective for going into 2021.

- *Be grateful to whomever you believe in if you answer yes to at least 10 of the following:*
- *You are alive.*
- *You are healthy and either survived Covid or have not gotten it yet.*
- *You have a job.*
- *You have a good job.*
- *You have a place to live.*
- *You have food for you and your family.*
- *Your major relationships are still intact.*
- *You love someone and someone else loves you.*
- *You have some savings.*
- *You have no debt.*
- *You have debt you can handle.*
- *You can work from home or have a safe environment at work.*
- *You have at least one person you can count on for help and support.*
- *You have at least one person that you love and loves you back.*
- *You have at least one person you can trust at least 95% of the time.*
- *You can look back at 2020 and remember a few good things that happened.*
- *You can still laugh, have fun, and be silly.*
- *You have at least one person who will actually listen to you and you will listen to them.*
- *You can look forward to getting up in the morning with the hope that at least one good thing could happen.*
- *You will have the chance to get the Covid vaccine within the next six months.*
- *You have hope for the future.*
- *You have hope for our world.*

If you can say yes to 10 or more of the above, you are an optimist and the world needs everyone like you.

It is the last entry for this book and this has truly been an adventure. God has been shining down on us and we have had a mostly really good year. Our global teams have been awesome, behaved brilliantly through very difficult times, and I am very grateful to everyone involved. My family has been mostly sequestered at home with Ben, Alex, Kayla, Carla, and Scott mostly working virtually. It has been bearable for them but by no means fun. I have been incredibly fortunate as we have only had to shut down for a few days here in New Jersey and I have not had to miss work. Being able to go to our plant and then come home again every night has been an incredible blessing and I do not downgrade how important it has been for my mental sanity.

Business has been good—even better than I had hoped—and it, along with the PPP loan from our government, gave me the confidence to plough a great deal of money into our R&D. As for next year, we will continue to go for it because it is the only path I know. I thank God, my family, co-workers, friends, customers, suppliers, and all the new people we will meet for the chance to be productively in the “game” and make a difference on a global scale.

Thanks for being along for the adventure.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

No endeavor, like setting up and printing a book is ever simple, but the conditions of a pandemic and you really see when people step up to the task.

I would like to thank Rachel Barton for the doing the editing, proofreading, front page design, and layout.

As always, Rich Green has been a major amount of help not only with my books and writing in general but also in most other aspects of my job.

To our global teams, you have exceeded my hopes of what could happen in a pandemic. You are amazing, wonderful and I truly appreciate you all.

To my wonderful wife Wendy, if I ever have to live through another pandemic I hope I get to do it again with you.

NAME LOCATOR

Jacobs Family

Morris Jacobs 1897-1997 & Rose Jacobs 1905-1967

■ Jerome Jacobs 1924-2015 & Phyllis Jacobs 1929-

 | Andrew Jacobs 1956- & Wendy Jacobs 1959-

 | Kayla Jacobs 1991-

 | Alex Jacobs 1988-

 | Ben Jacobs 1986-

 | Irene Jacobs Beyth 1953- & David Beyth 1955-

 | Rebecca Beyth 1986- & Gavin Stern 1986-

 | Isaac Stern 2019-

 | Aaron Bernard Stern 2021-

 | Jeremy Beyth 1984- & Elizabeth Ann Beyth 1984-2018

 | Ira Jacobs 1951- & Eve Jacobs 1952-

 | Lisa Jacobs 1984- & Mark Kerstin 1971-

 | Adrian Kerstin 2021-

 | Rachel Jacobs 1980- & Jeffrey Richter 1980-

 | Adina Richter 2015-

 | Jacob Richter 2011-

Aaron Family

Jeffrey Aaron 1930-2015 & Bunny Aaron 1934-2011

■ Wendy Jacobs 1959- & Andrew Jacobs 1956-

 | Barbara Aaron 1954- & Clifford Frish 1952-

 | Barry Frish 1984- & Emily Demast-Budner 1985-

 | Max Frish 2019-

 | Jessica Frish 1981- & Joseph Gothelf 1981-

 | Blake Gothelf 2013-

 | Cooper Gothelf 2010-



Business Associates

Ideal Jacobs US

Vincent Santoro, *VP of Global Manufacturing*
Mike Valentine, *VP of Operations*
Richard Green III, *Sr. Manager of Technical Sales*
Eileen Mroczek, *Sr. Manager of Customer Relations*
Dave Alexander, *Die Maker & Tooling Specialist*
Doug Winters, *Production Manager*
Igor Lebre, *Pre-press Manager*

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Paula Green, *Friend*
Jerry and Laura Levey, *Friends*
Gary Moscovitz, *Accountant, Godfather to Kayla*
Jean Shepard, *Radio Celebrity, Andrew's Mentor*
David William, *Godfather to Ben*
Dr. John Capriglione, *Chiropractor*

COLOPHON

This book was prepared using Adobe InDesign 16.2.1 on an Mac mini (2018) running macOS Big Sur v11.6. The original text was supplied from the author in individual Apple Pages files and then imported into Adobe InDesign.

Cover design by Rachel Barton and Annie Cheng using Adobe Illustrator 25.4.1. Layout, setup, and print prep were performed by Annie Cheng and Richard Green III.

The body text is set in 10pt Garamond Regular and 9pt Seravek ExtraLight Italic. Time stamps are set in 10pt Garamond Bold. Chapter headings are 24pt Myanmar Text Bold.

All type on the covers was converted to outlines before the files were saved in PDF format before being sent to the printer for publication. The finished layout was exported to a PDF document that will be used for digital distribution and offset printing.

RG3

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