

Learning to carry additional weight

I'm not exactly sure how it happened, but it did. 12 years and several months later, it seems that none of it can be taken back. The hardwiring that defines you is there to stay.

You're a worker. You're a real life problem solver. You're one of the strongest kids I've ever met, and I'm not just saying that because you're mine. It's the truth — and everyone around you sees it. You don't like to be wrong. You don't like to be in trouble. You don't like to fail, and sometimes that keeps you from even trying.

What kind of people allow their kid to struggle, or even hope for such a thing?

You're about 30 days into the seventh grade. A grade that puts in you in a whole different part of the school you've called home for the past seven years. A grade with different expectations and different teachers, and different relationships with your friends.

It's a grade where you'll have a lot to carry.

You've already started having small panic attacks about not knowing the right answers, about not being the one raising your hand to answer questions, and about having to do "school" again after a few months off. The teacher in me is cringing, but at the same



Photo by Lindsay Murdock

time I'm so very hopeful.

Hopefulness is one of the best things I can hope and pray you gain this year. But here's the thing though, son ... hopefulness is developed through struggle. And as hard as this is for me to think about, and even type for the world to see and read, we are going to have to let you struggle — over and over and over again.

I know what you're thinking ... what kind of people allow their kid to struggle, or even hope for such a thing?

I do. Your dad does. Your grandparents

do. Your coaches do. The livestock judges at the fair do. Even some of your best friends do. We all do. And I can confidently say that when you have a lot to carry, the only way it will ever seem like it's not too much to bear is when you have hope.

Hope is knowing where you want to go.
Hope is knowing how to get there.
Hope is believing in yourself.
Hope is learned.
You were born for this. You were born to stand out in a crowd. You were born to succeed. But you were also born to struggle.

We have to let you experience disappointment, deal with conflict, and have the opportunity to fail — simply so you can experience first-hand that you are able to rise up again. And through it all, I'm praying that you'll come out as one of the strongest, most courageous, brave young men the world has ever seen.

Your head's not meant to hang down forever. And in the moments when all you can focus on are your folded hands and your dirty boots, please remember that daring greatly in life isn't about winning or losing. It isn't about how much or how little you have to carry.

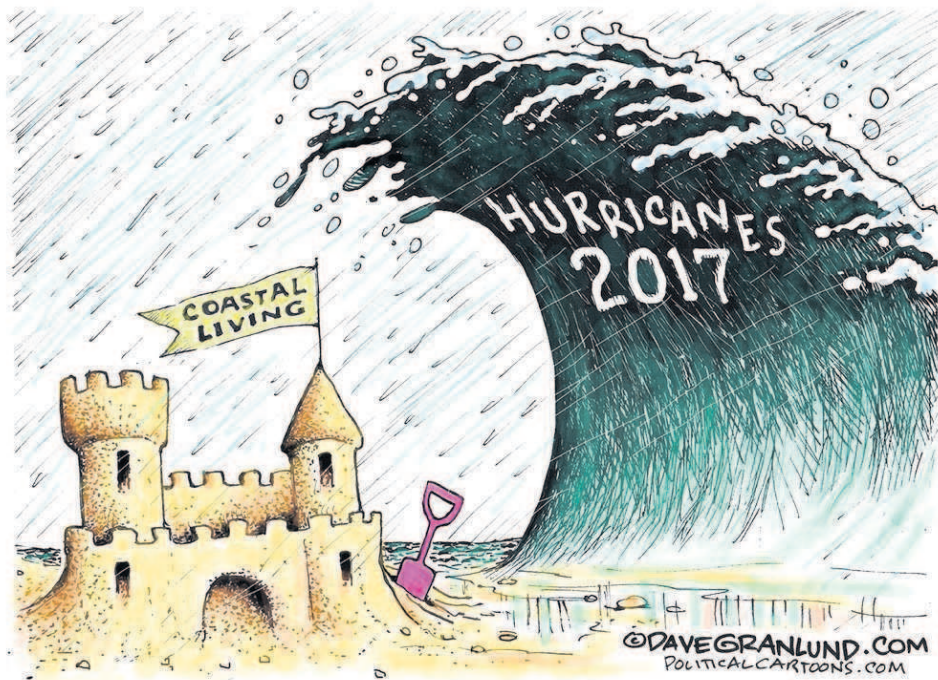
It's about having the courage — and the strength — to show up in those difficult situations and let yourself be seen. It's about walking into your robotics class and being willing to not get it right the first time. It's about stepping into the show ring this weekend at the Pendleton Junior Show with your last steer of the season and holding tightly to that show



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FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN

stick with your head held high. It's about living your life with confidence, even when you don't feel you have any, and seeing exactly what you're made of and truly believing it's more than enough. You are more than enough.

Lindsay Murdock lives in Echo and teaches school in Hermiston.



Quick takes

Distracted driving law starts October 1 in Oregon

This new law will not faze most people. They will still yap on their cell phones, just hoping no cop drives by and catches them doing it.

— Rod Wayne Nixon

Absolutely the most ridiculous law. They assume everyone with a phone in their hand is texting and distracted.

— Margie Packer Loomis

Texas made driving and texting illegal. Just hope they back it up. Too many have died.

— Mary Mackey

Does this law apply to police officers and state officials as well? I see police officers driving around talking on their phones all the time so what makes it fine for some and not for others?

— Lonnie Perry

Forest management

It's sad that it takes a disaster such as this to decide reform is needed.

— Valerie Jean Crosby

Trees are worth money. Why let it burn up? Log the mature trees leaving the next generation to replace them. The USFS was self funding for decades, similar to the post office. We didn't have mega fires then, and the climate was not significantly different than it is now.

— Logan Wood

Hermiston opens its first disc golf course

I use to play a lot of disc golf back in the mid to late '80s ... FUN!. Sad it took so long for it to catch on here.

— Ele Creel

Just a matter of time before a wreck is caused by a disc thrown too far, crashing into a car window.

— Cerrah Rose

Weston gets fitness center

Weston made it to the front page. Take that Athena!

— Patrick Wahl

Please let Josh know that his first grade teacher is super proud of his work. Congratulations!

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

Why NFL games are unwatchable

These headlines don't surprise me one bit:

"National Football League TV ratings down 13 percent in Week 1."
"NFL ratings in free fall."

But the NFL's rapidly declining popularity has nothing to do with televising too many games a week, too many commercials, too much violence or too many mediocre teams.

It has everything to do with politics — liberal politics.

I'm a very political guy, in case you hadn't noticed.

But like most normal sports fans, I watch football on TV to relax, to enjoy myself.

I love nothing better than to sit back on Saturday mornings and watch college teams play all day.

Colleges still let you enjoy the game, but NFL games have become unwatchable.

On Sunday, Monday and Thursday the first thing you see when you tune in to a pro game are players taking a knee during the "National Anthem" because of some political reason.

I don't give a damn what the quarterback, the head coach or the owner of the team thinks or tweets about politics, the president or the Steven King movie "It."

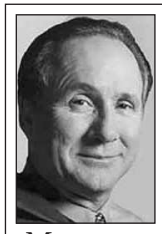
All I care is, "Are you going to win or lose? Can you pass, catch the ball or coach? Will the game be a good one?"

You wonder why so many people are so angry about politics these days?

It's because they can't get away from it — not even for three hours on a Sunday afternoon for a dumb football game.

I watch sports to take a break and to get as far away as I can from the 24/7 political news cycle that dominates our daily lives.

But the NFL and ESPN — which is laying off people because its ratings also are plummeting — have made it impossible to



MICHAEL REAGAN
Comment



take a respite from politics.

ESPN on-air staffers like Jemele Hill think it's OK to go on a rant accusing President Trump of being a white supremacist.

ESPN's liberal bosses should have canned her the way they canned conservative Curt Schilling a few years ago for saying politically incorrect things like Islamist extremists were like Nazis.

But they've accepted Hill's apology and, despite her previous political rantings, still employ her.

ESPN's owners are especially stupid to allow Hill to keep her job, since her attack on Trump offended millions of their viewers in Flyover Country who voted for him.

If it keeps practicing this kind of political bias, ESPN is liable to find itself being challenged by the FSN — the Fox Sports Network.

But I wouldn't like it any better if I turned on "Monday Night Football" and heard Al Michaels and his sidekick Steve Bannon railing about crybaby Hillary

Clinton and how awful her new book of excuses is.

If I want politics, I can watch "Hannity," listen to Rush or tune in to one of the Trump-bashing Sunday shows like "Meet the Press."

The NFL should keep political posturing or messaging of every kind out of its games.

It's up to team owners to pull up their jock straps and put an end to pre-game kneel-downs and protests before it gets out of control.

The owners need to tell their protesting stars and scrubs that, yes, you have a First Amendment right to kneel or sit during the "Anthem" if you want.

But they should add that if a player wants to make a political statement on game day, as owners they also have the right to make them sit out the rest of the season.

Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of "The New Reagan Revolution."

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