



You owe it to the world to pursue your weirdness

Ned Hickson

As an Oregonian who spent several years living in *Portlandia*, I feel the city's unofficial mantra "Keep Portland Weird" is a noble pursuit.

The world needs weird. Not the current presidential candidates kind-of-weird, which is like a Stephen-King-horror-novel-with-a-rabid-dog-and-terrifying-clown-kind-of-weird.

No, I'm talking about a

less volatile, better coiffed and more enjoyable kind of weirdness that helps us keep a fresh perspective on daily life.

Albert Einstein, Edgar Allan Poe, Leonardo da Vinci, Lucille Ball — all were geniuses in their own way who reminded us to see the world with wonderment by unapologetically pursuing their weirdness.

I'm no genius. I'm reminded of this every time I spend 5 minutes getting frustrated with the TV remote, then realize it's the garage door opener — usually after the

neighbor calls to tell me our Labrador is repeatedly being knocked unconscious.

Though I'm no genius, I do consider myself weird. And so do others. Particularly my teenagers, who avoid eye contact whenever we're in public because they're afraid I'll do something weird that will embarrass them.

Or as they jokingly say, "DESTROY OUR LIVES!" Ha! Ha!

Ok, maybe they're not joking.

The truth is, though they may feel being in the car with Dad while he orders from the

drive-thru in an Arnold Schwarzenegger voice could have a lasting impact on their reputations — or at the very least completely screw up our dinner order — I believe the example of infusing random acts of weirdness into daily life is an important one.

That's because being weird requires looking at a common situation in an uncommon way. As a parent, there are few skills I want my children to develop that are more important than the ability to think unconventionally. It's that type of thinking that leads to technological break-

throughs, builds self-confidence and develops problem-solving skills.

Not counting me and my TV remote, of course.

Being able to wield weirdness is like having Thor's mighty hammer to smash negativity and the mundane. Although if you think you're going to look as cool doing it, you're kidding yourself.

Regardless, it's an effective way of turning a bad situation into a better situation; an unfortunate circumstance into a laughable moment; Kanye West into... another laughable moment.

You get the idea.

The world is getting more plugged in and, coincidentally, more stressed out.

Weirdness is a necessary coping mechanism that benefits everyone. So please do the responsible thing by embracing your weirdness. Or even someone else's.

But if they're part of the Portland Naked Bike Ride, I'd have them put pants on first.

Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is now available. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com

Free monthly discussions on legal issues for seniors

Kelly Ford, an Oregon attorney new to the Florence area, has agreed to hold casual, monthly discussions on legal issues important to seniors at the Florence Senior Center.

Beginning at 1 p.m. on April 6, and continuing on the first Wednesday of each month, Ford will be available for drop-in talks. Themes can include estate planning, wills and trusts and other tools and techniques used by estate planners.

Ford will open with a specific topic, but the dialogues can change depending on the needs and questions of those attend-

ing.

Discussion topics will include:

- April 6: Common Estate planning mistakes and how to avoid them

- May 4: Estate settlement tools (Or: not everything goes through probate)

- June 1: The declining need for revocable trusts in Oregon estate planning

- July 6: When are guardianship and conservatorship necessary?

- Aug. 3: Planning for Medicaid to pay for long-term care in Oregon

Ford has been practicing in the Beaverton area for about 30 years and offered similar discussions at the senior center there.

"We are excited to be able to offer this kind of information to Florence-area seniors," said Christine May, senior cen-

ter board president. "Although the topics are geared to seniors, anyone interested is invited to attend."

The legal discussions are free, but participants are asked to contribute \$1 per session to help defray operating costs for the Senior Center.

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