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NEWSLETTER

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RECLAIMING YOUR LIFE HOW TO FIGHT THROUGH A HOPELESS SITUATION

If we have to take on a dangerous job to support ourselves and our family, we want to believe the person who writes our checks is going to look out for us. Unfortunately, due to the kind of workers' comp cases I take on, I can tell you this isn't always the case. Sometimes, shady employers don't take responsibility for their employees, and hardworking men and women find themselves left without hope. It's hard to see people who have lost all hope, but I am regularly amazed by the strength my clients have to overcome a hopeless situation and keep moving forward.

"It's hard to see people who have lost all hope, but I am regularly amazed by the strength my clients have to overcome a hopeless situation and keep moving forward."



I recently worked with one client whose employer would have been more than happy to kick him out on the street like a dog after his accident. For the sake of his privacy, I'm going to call my client "Jeremy Reynolds." Jeremy had it far from easy. He'd overcome PTSD from his childhood, his parents were in jail, and he was still trying to make the best of life. When I met Jeremy, he was in the hospital after barely surviving a terrible accident at his job.

What followed was like a scene from a horror movie. Jeremy screamed at the top of his lungs for help, there was blood everywhere, and it seemed like he was a goner. Fortunately, one of the other workers hit the reverse switch on the shredder and pulled him out. By then, Jeremy's right leg was entirely gone, and he was bleeding out gallons of blood. Somehow, Jeremy still had the presence of mind to think, "If I don't stop the bleeding, I'm going to die." Before he passed out, he managed to take a belt and wrap it tightly around what remained of his leg.

uncommon for companies who do dangerous work and don't want to pay for the expensive insurance bills. Thankfully, Virginia has what's called the Uninsured Employers' Fund, which provides "funds for compensation benefits awarded against any uninsured or self-insured employer." It's a great safety net for people working for employers who didn't fulfill their responsibility. Unfortunately, Lewis tried to claim that my guy didn't actually work for him.

"He wasn't an employee," Lewis insisted. "We were just working out there. I paid him for the help, but he didn't work for me." This is another tactic shady companies use to get out of forking over money for payroll taxes. They'll pay everyone in cash and pretend like they don't have any real employees. However,

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Jeremy worked as a groundsman for a tree cutting company, loading branches into the chipper shredder. One day, he was loading branches from a big pile, and his foot became caught in a branch. When he couldn't wriggle free, he got pulled into the chipper shredder.

When I saw Jeremy, he was in bad shape. The hospital had amputated what remained of his leg, he was struggling with PTSD from his accident, and the medical bills were mounting. Then I find out his employer, "Malcolm Lewis," didn't have workers' comp insurance. This isn't

The Life and Legacy of Reveille the Dog

The Texas A&M Mascot Through the Years

Meet Reveille IX, the highest-ranking member of the Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets. But she's not a student. She's a collie, and she's Texas A&M's mascot.

Reveille IX became the mascot in 2015. The role dates back to 1931, when the first Reveille became the school's mascot, establishing one of the most admired — and adorable — school traditions in the country.

The first Reveille became mascot by pure chance. As the story goes, a group of cadets were driving back to their dorms after a party when they hit a dog. Shocked, the cadets jumped out of the car and picked up the lost mutt. They brought the dog back to their dorm, disregarding the no-pet policy. The students intended to take the pup to the school vet first thing in the morning.

But before that could happen, an intruder broke into the dorm. The injured dog jumped into action, barking at the intruder. It was an unusual bark that was evocative of a reveille — the bugle call most famously used by the military, particularly in the morning hours. Inspired, the students dubbed the dog Reveille.

Of course, school policy didn't change. Pets were still not allowed, but that didn't stop the cadets who adored the pup. They continued

to hide the dog in the dorm until it was clear she wasn't going anywhere. Reveille was officially made mascot before the opening football game of that season. As her first duty, she led the marching band onto the field during halftime.

While the first Reveille was a mutt, the second was a Shetland sheepdog. The third, and onward, were collies. The mascot is always cared for by a sophomore cadet — a mascot corporal — who takes the dog everywhere he or she goes, including to class. There is even a tradition that states if Reveille barks at any point during class, the rest of that class is canceled for the day.



A SMALL TOKEN WITH A a Big Message

Have you ever had one of those days when nothing seems to go right? You wake up late, you can't find your keys, the kids aren't ready, and the day continues to unfold in a negative fog.

Those difficult days are the reason Megan Murphy started the Kindness Rocks Project. After her parents passed away, she found comfort in finding heart-shaped rocks and sea glass on the beach. She realized that these small tokens might make other people feel better, too.

Megan's friend, one of the first to pick up a rock Megan had left behind, sent her an encouraging message after finding it: "If you did drop this rock, you made my day."

Since then, Megan has inspired others with randomly placed messages of kindness. She finds a rock, paints a kind message on it,

and leaves it on the beach for others to find. And the idea has spread. As the project has grown, so have people's stories about finding kindness rocks. When people find a kindness rock, they get a boost to their day, but they also feel inspired to pay the kindness forward.

How to Make Your Own Kindness Rocks

If you want to spread kindness, start with a few smooth 3- to 5-inch rocks. Part of the adventure is in finding the rocks, so take the time to explore outside to find them. Maybe take the kids for a trek to a nearby park or beach.

Once you have your rocks, use nontoxic paint or spray paint to color them. Use bright colors so that others can spot them. After the paint has dried, use paint pens to write your messages on the rocks. These

can be as simple as one word or as big as an inspiring quote or verse.

After you've written your message, use a clear nontoxic sealant to protect your artwork so it will be there when others find it. Find an outdoor space to leave your rock — maybe even in the original spot you found it.

In a world that often seems dark, your message of kindness will serve as a beacon of hope for others.

**"One moment can change a day,
one day can change a life,
and one life can change the world."
-Gautama Buddha**



... Cover article continued

when I talked to the guys Jeremy worked with, they told me they had to show up at a certain time, wear shirts with the company's name on them, and use the equipment Lewis provided. They were paid a certain amount every day. If they didn't show up, they were fired. Sounds to me like they were employees.

While I was dealing with Lewis, who was avoiding a hearing and refusing to take any responsibility, Jeremy's situation only got worse. Jeremy's aunt, who he was staying with, passed away from a drug overdose, and he had to move in with his girlfriend's mom. He didn't have a penny and had to apply for welfare to keep paying for his medical treatment. There was no way he could possibly work during this time.

Finally, after a long fight, we were able to subpoena Lewis' bank records, prove he was running a business, and prove my client was one of his many employees. At this point, the Commission ruled Jeremy could receive weekly checks from the Uninsured Employers' Fund to pay for his lifelong medical needs. By this time, Jeremy had a quarter of a million dollars in medical bills. When he got his first check, Jeremy called the office. He and Lisa, our paralegal, were both crying on the phone. He didn't get a massive settlement, but the checks would cover his medical bills, pay for food, and help him get on with his life.

Jeremy came into my office not long ago, and the look on his face let me know he's doing so much better. He has a prosthetic leg, and he's able to walk around now. He came in smiling, and I couldn't believe this was the same man I met laying defeated in his hospital bed. Jeremy will be able to go back to work one day and continue with his life because he has hope again. In situations like this, Jeremy is a hero to me. He went through something horrible, but he stayed strong and was able to come out on the other side.

We don't know what's going to happen. They may never settle the case, but that's not what's important. There are a million different ways this could go in the future, but right now, our job is to help Jeremy stay medically secure and make sure he doesn't inadvertently mess up what he has right now. With luck, things will work out for the best.

Our clients have had their lives shattered, and we do what we can to help put the pieces back together. It's hard work, but I have a great team supporting me. Big settlements aren't the only way to know we've succeeded. Sometimes, I am lucky enough to watch a client come into my office, smiling for the first time in months, and that makes the stress all worth it. It's a privilege to have a win like this.

-Joseph Miller

Our Clients Say it Best

"Joe Miller and Lisa are amazing. They settled a case for my family and made us feel good about the process, and we were kept highly informed along the way. You can't go wrong with Joe Miller Law!"

-Maxx Z.

"I was overburdened with my workers' comp claim. Getting what was needed in a timely matter was frustrating. I was getting the runaround. Joe Miller Law was highly recommended by another law firm. I spoke with the paralegal, Lisa Hancock, at Mr. Miller's firm. She was more than kind and



pleasant and treated me like a family member. I wasn't just another client. Ms. Hancock treated me with respect and compassion. She took care of all my needs and gave me inner peace as my full trust was in the hands of Joe Miller Law. This law firm comes highly recommended! I have referred others that have received the same treatment! Thank you, Joe Miller and Lisa Hancock! I am forever grateful to you!"

-Lloyd E.

Joe's Monthly 'SOUL SNACKS'

"People often avoid making decisions out of fear of making a mistake. Actually, the failure to make decisions is one of life's biggest mistakes."

-R. Noah Weinberg

"Life will give you whatever experience is most helpful for the evolution of your consciousness. How do we know this is the experience you need? Because this is the experience you are having at this moment."

-Eckhart Tolle

Pasta With Turkey and Broccoli

Ingredients

- 3/4 pounds pasta (shells or orecchiette)
- 2 cups broccoli florets
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- Salt
- Parmesan cheese

Directions

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Add broccoli when pasta is 1 minute from done. Drain both and return to pot.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the turkey, garlic, crushed red pepper, and a pinch of salt. Cook while breaking up meat with a wooden spoon for 3-5 minutes.
3. Combine turkey with pasta and broccoli mixture, adding the remaining olive oil as you stir. Serve in bowls topped with Parmesan.

(Recipe inspired by realsimple.com.)