



## THE BLUE COUCH OF WISDOM: Where the Trust Is Built

Sometimes, things just work out.

A few years ago, my family and I moved into a new home, and homes like this always mean a chance to buy furniture, right? So, I picked out a brand-new, blue-velvet couch for my home office, and when it arrived, I put it together and proudly staged it. I was excited to show my wife, and when I called her in to take a look, she responded in a way that I hadn't expected. "Wow ... that's a very blue and velvet-looking couch ... Wow," she said, a little questionably. "I like it, but it doesn't really fit there. I bet it'd look great in your real office."

After having been married for many years, I've learned to read between the lines. She obviously didn't feel very fondly about the couch, and that was code for "get it out of here." Well, she ended up being right, and the blue-velvet couch now sits directly across from my desk in my main office and looks fantastic.

While the blue velvet couch had a little bit of a rocky start, it has come to be known as the Blue Couch of Wisdom. It's the place where problem-solving occurs. Clients, coworkers, friends, and family all come and sit on the couch while I am directly across from them. We talk, brainstorm, communicate, solve problems, work through complicated issues, or tell stories. It's a great place to spend time with others while getting to know each other.

On the Blue Couch of Wisdom, training takes place. It's a laid-back safe zone for the entire office to come in and walk through something, ask questions, or work out a complication. Whether it's work-related or personal, nothing is ever off-limits — and the Blue Couch of Wisdom is always open.



comfortable opening up and saying, "I don't know what I'm doing," "I don't understand," or "I need help." Being able to reach out without judgment is key for employee and company growth, trust, and development. Sometimes, we all just need someone to listen.

Patrick Lencioni, author of "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team," discussed the trust pyramid and how trust is the base level of the pyramid of a functional team. Without trust, you cannot build upon or expand on anything else. The Blue Couch of Wisdom builds trust while offering an informal and cozy place to grow as a team, bond with clients, and build relationships. It's also a great place for a nap if I ever need one!

And so, I thank my wife for the idea and motivation to move my blue-velvet couch to my main office. Without her, the Blue Couch of Wisdom would only be another piece of furniture.

*"It's the place where  
problem-solving occurs."*

In any career or office setting, having that kind of space and atmosphere is important. Everyone should have the ability to feel

*- Scott Snellings*

# A Timeless and Influential Book

## It's Time to Read or Reread This Classic

"How to Win Friends & Influence People" by Dale Carnegie has stood the test of time. Published in 1936, this book has sold more than 30 million copies worldwide. Relating to the key relationships of humans, the book embodies self-improvement, communication, relationship building, and compassion. Every working professional or individual rubbing elbows in their social group needs it in their toolbox!

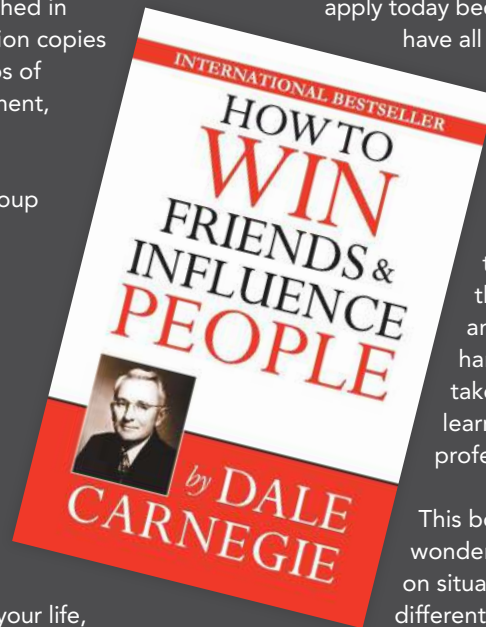
If you haven't already experienced the influential and game-changing words of Dale Carnegie, it's time to pick up a copy. If you've already read it, it's time to give it another read to review and remember because there is still much value to unfold.

Embedded within each page of this easy-to-read book are recommendations for creating, building upon, and improving successful and positive relationships within your life, whether it be with friends, family members, coworkers, network professionals, or supervisors. Written and published more than 85

years ago, its life lessons and thought-provoking suggestions still apply today because, while technology, education, and infrastructure have all advanced, our basic human tendencies and the way we interact remain the same.

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you," Dale Carnegie states. In "How to Win Friends & Influence People," he explores the importance of putting the needs, interests, and values of others before your own and how to handle situations for the best possible outcome. It takes a deep dive into getting to know yourself before learning how to bond with others on a personal and/or professional level.

This book, a brilliant study on human nature, will have you wondering why you didn't read it sooner while reflecting on situations and interactions you could have handled differently. But most importantly, Carnegie's pointers are sure to provide amazing insights while you learn to get along with just about anyone.



## Woman Attempts to Sue Wendy's

### For an Alleged Finger in Her Chili



Back in 2005, a woman became imaginative and filed a claim against the owner of a Wendy's franchise in San Jose, California, stating that she was served a bowl of chili with a human finger in it. Her allegation cost the fast-food chain millions in damages, and as it turns out, the woman's claim was false. She was eventually arrested and convicted of attempting to extort Wendy's.

On March 25, 2005, Wendy's was put in the spotlight under false allegations. A woman, Anna Ayala, visited a Wendy's with her family and ordered a bowl of chili. She then made a large scene, claiming that she bit into something crunchy and discovered that it was the fingernail of a human finger inside her chili! All of the employees in that particular Wendy's were astonished because they each had all 10 fingers still attached. Even more, all Wendy's employees at other locations who handled raw materials still had all of their fingers. When a forensic investigation was done on the finger, it was found that the finger was not cooked at 170 degrees F for three hours, like the rest of the chili was.

Eventually, it was discovered that Ayala had 13 different lawsuits open against different companies, and when her story began to waver, she dropped the lawsuit on April 12, 2005, claiming it was putting too much pressure on her. But Wendy's, having already lost millions of dollars, was hard-pressed to prove this was not negligence on their part. They set up a tip line and offered \$50,000 to anyone who had information on the owner of the finger. Eventually, after genetic testing, authorities discovered that the finger belonged to a Nevada man who was a coworker of Ayala's husband; the man had recently lost a finger in an industrial accident and had given it to Ayala to settle a \$50 debt. Both Ayala and her husband were charged and ordered to pay restitution. It was quite the finger feud!



# TAKE A **BREAK**



## THE ART OF QUIETING YOUR MIND BEFORE BED

All day long, thoughts run through your mind, and by the end of the day, your head is probably ready to explode. After all, it's estimated that in 24 hours you can have between 60,000–80,000 thoughts. At some point, your brain needs a break, and that's especially true before you try to go to bed. Here are some ways to quiet your mind, so you can get a full night's sleep!

### Keep your bed for sleeping.

If you aren't sleeping, get out of bed! Getting in the habit of scrolling through your phone, watching TV, reading, working, or even eating in bed teaches your brain that your bed is for things other than sleeping! If you find yourself tossing and turning, get out of bed and try a relaxing activity such as reading, journaling, listening to music, or meditating. When you get tired, try getting back in bed.



### Breathe deeply.

Breathing exercises can not only help calm your mind and spirit, but they can lower your heart rate, which is especially beneficial in relieving stress or anxiety when things are upsetting you.

### Write it down.

Instead of letting thoughts fill your mind right before bed (such as the next day's tasks or any worries you have), set aside time before bed to write it out. Whether you are a fan of journaling, writing letters, or simply just listing out your problems, goals, and thoughts, grab a pen and paper and make it a nightly routine. This way, your thoughts will be freed before your head hits the pillow.

### Try a light snack.

When you can't sleep, the last thing that you want to do is eat something heavy. In fact, when you eat a large meal right before bed, your digestive system can become overwhelmed. But, studies have shown that eating a light carbohydrate snack such as crackers or popcorn when you can't sleep may be helpful.

### Turn your room into a sleep haven.

Keeping your bedroom neat, relaxing, and calm can help improve your sleep! Keep all televisions, computers, and screens out of the bedroom and furnish it with soft colors and textures that are tranquil and soothing to you.

Pumping the brakes on worrisome thoughts racing through your mind can be tough, but trying these tips and tricks may earn you some relief and much needed sleep.

## MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH RAINBOW FRITTATA

Impress Mom with this delicious breakfast recipe!

### Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1/4 cup sweet potato, diced
- 1/4 cup yellow pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup broccoli, chopped
- 8 eggs
- Basil, thyme, salt, and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 avocado, pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced
- Cherry tomatoes, halved
- Sriracha hot sauce (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F and coat a cast-iron skillet with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In the skillet over medium heat, cook sweet potatoes, yellow pepper, and broccoli until soft.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, basil, thyme, salt, and pepper.
4. Pour egg mixture into skillet with vegetables. Don't stir but instead use a spatula to lift the edges of the egg mixture until it is evenly distributed.
5. Transfer mixture to oven. Bake for 5 minutes or until the dish sets.
6. Top with avocado and tomatoes. Drizzle Sriracha on top (if desired).

Inspired by EatingWell.com

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# Aiming to Keep Them Together

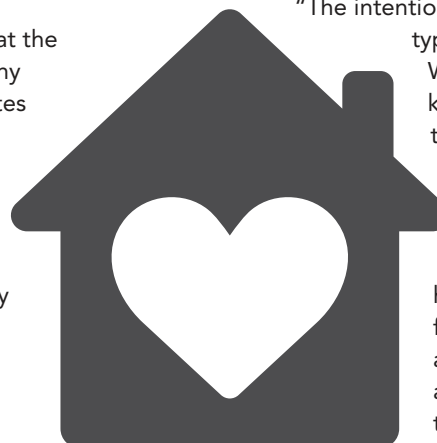
## Nonprofit Builds Free Homes for Licensed Foster Families

Studies show that over half of the children in foster care also have a sibling in the foster system. Of those children, more than 75% are separated. In North Carolina, Fostering Hopes joined forces with another nonprofit, H3 Collective, to build foster homes so they can keep large sibling groups together. Some of these homes are big enough to house five children, which is usually the maximum number of children the foster system allows under one roof.

Alex Williams, the founder of Fostering Hopes, explained that the need for foster homes and foster parents is so high that, many times, children are sent out of their home county. He estimates that roughly 50% of the 20,000 children in North Carolina's foster program will be placed outside of their home county. Adam Ponder of H3 Collective was proud to announce that Fostering Hopes and H3 are currently working together on a 3,600-square-foot, five-bedroom home for a licensed foster family, and the group hopes to have it ready for occupancy this summer.

As if living in the foster program isn't hard enough on a child, being packed up and moved across the state — sometimes

counties away from their brothers and sisters — is traumatizing. The goal is to provide children a home where they feel comfortable and safe with enough room for all siblings. Once this initial build is complete, Fostering Hopes and H3 plan to build many more large foster homes in Western North Carolina. They've even made the goal of expanding into 10–15 counties in the western part of the state!



"The intention is to provide hope to children who typically find themselves without it," Alex Williams told Fox News. "We hope to keep siblings together, to keep children in their home communities, and to provide dedicated families or parents for children who need them the most."

There is no better feeling than helping children grow, thrive, and flourish. The efforts of Fostering Hopes and H3 Collective are inspiring, heartfelt, and are bound to make a difference in the lives of many children and families.