



See What's New

7 YEARS STRONG

This summer, I have been training for my first marathon. Growing up, I was never much of a runner; in fact, I hated running. The thought of running 26.2 miles was not something I would ever consider possible, much less an activity I would ever attempt. However, it's amazing what becomes possible and enticing when you change your mindset to one of focusing on each day, pushing yourself mentally and physically, and having a very real "why."

This month marks the seventh anniversary of my best friend, Jacob Thompson, changing my life. He donated his kidney to me when I needed a transplant. On Oct. 31, 2017, Jacob kissed his eight-month-pregnant wife, Carly, before they rolled him back to the operating room. Shortly after that, they took me back.

Jacob saved my life that day. He also provided me with the ability to live life as I had before my kidneys began to fail. As is often said, you never realize the importance of your health until it is gone. I was determined to do all I could to honor Jacob and his gift from that moment on, including staying as physically healthy as possible.

The medication I am on to keep my immune system from attacking Jacob's kidney has side effects, one of which is creating osteopenia. This can eventually lead to osteoporosis, but exercise is one of the best treatments. So, my journey began. I want to maintain my mobility for as long as possible to be the best husband and father I can be for my family. That is my "why."

A little over two years ago, my good friend Marcus Brock convinced me to train for and run a half marathon with him, and we did. This year, I have completed two half marathons and have been training for the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., at the end of this month!

This will be one of the most physically demanding things I have ever done. I have learned much about myself and pushed through many barriers to get where I am. On those early mornings when I just don't want to get out of bed or during those long runs with too many miles ahead, I always go back to my "why." I begin to think about how blessed I am to have a friend willing to give me a piece of himself so I could live the life I do. That makes getting out of bed easier, and the miles stack up faster. I'm beyond thankful for his gift and everything it has allowed me to do over the past seven years.

It's amazing what you can accomplish when you find your "why." Things that seemed previously impossible quickly become possible, allowing you to become a better version of yourself.

- Scott Snellings



Driven To Help

Battle for Survival

TIKTOK IS CHALLENGING THE BAN

The clock is ticking for TikTok, the world's most popular social media app, as it faces a federal ultimatum: Either the Chinese parent company, ByteDance, sells its stake in the company, or TikTok will be removed from U.S. app stores by Jan. 19, 2025. It is difficult to fathom that an app downloaded tens of millions of times and receiving over \$100 million in revenue every month may leave the American market at the start of next year. But this is just the U.S. government's latest step since TikTok first arrived on the scene.

The TikTok Saga

Douyin, the predecessor to TikTok, started in China in 2016. In 2017, it merged with Musical.ly, an app for posting lip-syncing videos; at one point, it topped the charts on the Apple App Store and soon rose to global stardom. Then, the app got a new name, TikTok, and a revolutionary algorithm. The algorithm influenced users to binge-watch content and presented videos from various genres and topics to keep them hooked. While gaining popularity stateside, it drew no small amount of scrutiny from government watchdogs and federal agencies.

In September 2019, the Washington Post reported that images of democratic protests in Hong Kong were being suppressed, while posts with the #trump2020 tag received millions of views. TikTok denied political favoritism and alleged their app was a neutral platform. Despite TikTok's reassurance, the Pentagon recommended all U.S. military personnel delete the app from their phones, regardless of whether it was for personal or government work. In January 2020, the Pentagon banned the app entirely on all military phones.



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In May 2020, privacy groups began to raise concerns that TikTok posed a threat to children. Just two months later, India banned TikTok following a military clash at their disputed border with China. Despite these hiccups, TikTok claimed to have over a billion monthly users by September 2021. Further problems with the app materialized in 2022 when viral hoaxes and harmful content promoting eating disorders caused outrage nationwide. In December 2022, the FBI warned that the Chinese government could use the app to influence American citizens. In 2024, Congress drafted legislation to ban the app and force ByteDance to sell TikTok officially.

The Future of TikTok

President Biden signed H.R. 815 into law on April 24, 2024, which contains a provision that "prohibits distributing, maintaining, updating, or providing internet hosting services for a foreign adversary controlled application (e.g., TikTok)."

That is strong language and indicates the government is not likely to back down from its demands. Despite this, TikTok has challenged the law, arguing the ban is unconstitutional. More than a dozen social and racial justice groups recently supported TikTok's cause. On its website, TikTok describes the moves it has made to improve data security and privacy. Still, none of these measures have persuaded the federal government of their benign intentions. In June 2024, in response to the ban being signed into law, TikTok released a letter alleging that the Biden administration had negotiated with the company using "political demagoguery," or, in other words, in favor of appealing to voters rather than finding an equitable solution. Their case is headed to the U.S. Court of Appeals later this year.

TAKE A *BREAK*



PUMPKIN PIE FRENCH TOAST

Inspired by *AllRecipes.com*



Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tsp vegetable oil, or as needed
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 1/4 cup canned pumpkin purée
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 8 slices day-old bread
- Maple syrup, to taste

Directions

1. Lightly oil a skillet and heat over medium heat.
2. Whisk half-and-half, pumpkin purée, eggs, cinnamon, vanilla, and pumpkin pie spice together in a bowl. Stir in walnuts until evenly distributed.
3. Place 1 slice of bread in the bowl and let it soak briefly to coat both sides. Lift bread to let excess liquid drip back into the bowl, then transfer to the hot skillet.
4. Cook for 2–3 minutes or until golden brown, then flip and cook the other side until done.
5. Stir batter to redistribute walnuts and repeat with other slices of bread, cooking in several batches if necessary.
6. Serve warm with maple syrup.

The Strange Gas Law

Why the 9/10 of a Cent?

Gas prices are often a topic of conversation, but usually for less-than-pleasant reasons. Whenever the subject appears in the news, it is most often because prices have become *outrageously high*. However, this article will take a different approach. Have you ever wondered why gas price tickers include a 9/10 of a cent at the end? It started nearly a century ago but remains to this day for surprising reasons.

Great Depression Decisions

The 1930s were a time of great economic uncertainty. The stock market crashed in 1929, and the federal government took extensive measures to balance the budget. Among these was the Revenue Act of 1932. This law introduced several tax hikes, including a more than 20% increase in estate and personal income taxes. However, it also introduced a one-cent tariff on gasoline and fuel oil. While this may not seem like a lot in today's currency — the average cost of a gallon of gas now is around \$3.53 — back then, it was a significant burden on motorists. After all, the average price of a gallon of gas in 1932 was just \$0.18, so a one-cent tariff represented a more than 5% increase in price. In today's money, it would be equivalent to a \$0.22 tax per gallon of gas. In 1933, the gas tariff accounted for 8% of the federal government's tax revenue.

Fractional Prices

Gas station owners paid the new tariff when purchasing their fuel from suppliers, but they had the option of paying the tax themselves, in full or in part, to take the hit in place of their customers. This is where fractional prices first came into play: Gas station owners would advertise that they were paying, say, half of the one-cent tariff on gasoline, which means their prices would only increase by 5/10 of a cent. Over time, the tariff became less relevant, but fractional prices remained. This has largely contributed to the psychological aspect of paying 9/10 of a cent rather than a full cent — the same thinking behind charging \$1.99 rather than \$2 for a product.



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NFL'S RECENT ANTITRUST RULING

What Led to the Historic Fine Over Sunday Ticket

NFL Sunday Ticket, also known as Sunday Ticket, is a sports package allowing purchasers to view regular season NFL games not carried by local broadcasts in their area. Sunday Ticket has been around since 1994, with DirecTV offering it exclusively until 2022 when the NFL signed a seven-year, \$14 billion deal



with Google's YouTube TV. However, the NFL's exclusive deals for Sunday Ticket have come at a cost. After a trial in June that lasted just three weeks, a jury in Los Angeles awarded over \$4.7 billion in damages to the plaintiffs in an antitrust class-action lawsuit against the NFL.

The Trial

The Mucky Duck sports bar in San Francisco initially filed the suit in 2015; an appeals court dismissed then reinstated the case in 2017 before it became a class-action lawsuit. The lawsuit now covers about 2.4 million residential subscribers and 48,000 business subscribers. The plaintiffs alleged that the NFL's agreement with DirecTV, and now YouTube TV, violated antitrust laws. Not only did the NFL allegedly overcharge both residential and commercial subscribers, but it also removed competition. It forced fans to purchase access to all games rather

than offering the ability to purchase only the games they were interested in. For instance, if you are a Philadelphia Eagles fan but live in Florida, your local on-air broadcasts are unlikely to show Eagles games. In that case, if you wanted to watch all the Eagles' games, you'd have to shell out a good chunk of change to access those games. As of 2024, a subscription to NFL Sunday Ticket costs \$449 per year.

After five hours of deliberation, the jury agreed with the plaintiffs and awarded \$4.7 billion in damages to the residential subscribers and \$96 million to the business subscribers. Due to federal antitrust laws, those damages can be tripled. That means the NFL may be liable for up to \$14.39 billion in damages. The NFL has appealed the decision, but if upheld, each NFL team could be forced to pay nearly \$450 million in damages.