

The Tidy Times



Good news and information for the friends and clients of Cleaning Consultants Inc.

REWARD!

Cleaning Consultants provides office cleaning as well as commercial and industrial cleaning. You get \$50 if you provide a lead and we bid on the cleaning ... OR You will be rewarded \$100 if we are awarded the cleaning. Please see our contact info.

Sometimes Something's Just Gotta Give

Whether you're chasing around between two or three different jobs, trying to maintain a standard of living that used to be achievable doing just one, or burning the candle at both ends to fit in numerous extracurricular activities as well as holding down a full-time job, sometimes there just comes a point where something's got to give.

Although it might be easy to assume that a constant state of activity means forward progression, when things start to get too frantic, all that dashing around can easily become self-defeating. Not only does the body become exhausted, but as the brain goes into overload, mistakes start to be made, things begin to be forgotten and it becomes impossible to give your best to anything that you attempt. Far from moving forward, what often happens is that you end up spending most of your time sorting out the muddles that have been created due to time pressures and the inability to stay organized.

Both mind and body need time to relax, so if your life has started to look like one endless merry-go-round and offers no respite, bear in mind that sometimes you can achieve more by doing less. Focus on what's most important and give anything else the old heave-ho!



Living With Your Conscience

You don't have to be in your 70s or 80s to have witnessed a fall in society's moral standards. Even many of today's youngsters have seen things that were once unacceptable become par for the course in modern society. Just because "everyone's doing it," though, doesn't necessarily make something right, nor does it make it something that everyone could live with. Years ago, if someone found some money lying in the street, the chances are that they would pick it up and take it to the nearest police station so that it could be claimed by its rightful owner. Today, most would slip it into their pockets and keep on walking, and few would blame them. However, if the fact that the money might have been a pensioner's entire food budget for the week or a single mother's rent money for the month is going to prick your conscience, then where's the point in following everyone else's lead?

At the end of the day, each of us has to be able to live with our conscience if we are going to sleep soundly at night, and we all owe it to those over whom we have any influence (such as our children!) to do what's morally right. What kind of inspiration do you want to be to those around you?



Monthly Joke

Did you hear about the guy that lost his left arm and left leg in a car crash? He's all right now.

How does a spoiled rich girl change a lightbulb? She says, "Daddy, I want a new apartment."

What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work?

A stick.

What kind of coffee was served on the Titanic?

Sanka.

and what kind of lettuce? Iceberg.

You are dark and handsome. When it's dark, you are handsome.

Monthly Quotes

"I can do what I love or I can love what I do. Learn to love the task in front of you."

—DeWitt Jones

"Courage is bein' scared to death but saddlin' up anyway."

—John Wayne

When Parenting Skills Need a Helping Hand

For all the learning that we undergo in life, there are

still certain things that we are just expected

to understand and deal with instinctively.



For example, how to raise children isn't covered in the school curriculum, and other than the lessons that we pick up from watching our parents and the other people around us, we're basically left to figure things out for ourselves. Nevertheless, many people still feel slightly ashamed when things don't come naturally to them.

Where raising children is concerned, many women in particular feel that they must be missing some essential gene if they don't take instinctively to parenting.

There is, however, absolutely no reason why any new parent should automatically know how to deal with the many challenges and changes that youngsters bring into their lives. Nor is there any reason why parents should have to struggle on alone and without help.

Alongside the huge number of books and articles that can be found on the subject of parenting, many reputable organizations also hold parenting skills classes that offer invaluable and highly practical advice and tips on bringing up children.

The reason these classes exist is because there is a demand for them, so if parenthood is making you feel all at sea, forget what others might think and get yourself signed up. It's far better to admit that you feel at a loss and do something about it than to struggle on alone.



Kevin's Corner: Where Did the Chalkboards Go?

It had been many, many years since I had ventured into an elementary school. So at a young person's invitation I spent a few hours in this brave new world. I didn't like it. Was my experience an exception to the norm, an anomaly? My guess is that what I observed is indeed a microcosm of our educational system.

The first thing that I noticed was the general lack of order and discipline. Children talked out loud without being called on. And the teacher put teaching on hold while chastising individual kids for not sitting still, taking too long to get back from the bathroom (unescorted), misplacing papers and books, etc. I'll try not to sound like an old codger when I say that when I went to school the classroom was very quiet when the teacher was present. Period. We were there to learn. Teachers were there to teach. Good teachers were skillful in getting students to participate. But our teachers were not about to let the classroom be disrupted and thus steal their teaching time. Trouble-makers met the principal's paddle without delay.

The second thing I noticed was there are no more chalkboards. For some reason that is too low-tech. Now it's whiteboards and multimedia projectors. To be sure, you can do some things with high-tech equipment that you cannot do with low-tech chalkboards. But even proponents of technology admit certain drawbacks of using projectors instead of chalkboards. One teacher admitted, "The biggest drawback is that you can't easily write on your documents. There are some things that are better done by handwriting such as revising or editing." In an apparent frenzy to implement technology (to impress taxpayers?) there is a movement to eliminate hard copy textbooks and put them all on electronic devices. And some schools are not going to teach cursive writing anymore because it's too passé. Just learn enough to sign your name is all they say is needed. Ah, progress!

The third thing I observed was the most disturbing. It seemed like every facet of the child's life at school is micromanaged. The fourth-graders were lined up and marched into other classrooms for brief sessions of certain subjects. Then back again. The kids were constantly on the move. Like herding cats. On the one hand there was a general informality and lack of respect and deference by many of the youngsters. On the other hand every minor infraction was pounced upon, followed by a lecture or discipline of some sort. It was a paradox that I still can't explain.

Old vs New discipline: In my day, during recess if one kid had a smart mouth and called someone else "Fatso", sooner or later the fella wearing the husky jeans would get the smart aleck in a headlock. Then sit on him. No more problem. Today I envision this scenario: Smartmouth Sammy calls Rotund Tony a "Fatso". Six kids overhear it and run screaming to the nearest teacher about what a horrible thing just happened. The teacher commences an investigation and puts the school nurse on high alert that a stressful incident just occurred on the playground. Sammy is hailed before the Principal, Vice Principal, teacher and counselors. Sammy's parents are immediately summoned and must leave work and attend this serious intervention. The session is videotaped for future reference in case the parents later decide to take legal action. Sammy and his parents are preached to about political correctness and how calling someone a name could be considered as grounds for expulsion. And if this ever happens again, Sammy may need to go on behavior meds. The parents are **not** told that the school gets extra money if Sammy is labeled as having behavior problems and has to go on meds. An unlikely scenario? I hope so. But my brief experience of today's school was as irritating as the slow scrape of fingernails down a Nevermind.

Are You Missing Out on Early-Morning Team Briefings?

If you are employed in any type of business that operates shift rotations, if you work part-time or as part of a job-share, or if you take advantage of flexible working arrangements, there could be a whole “secret” side of the company’s operations that you are not even aware of. In many companies, the mornings begin with team meetings during which staff are briefed on any changes or updates that they need to know about and advised on their priorities for the day. If you are rostered for a later shift, however, there’s no guarantee that whatever information is disseminated earlier in the day will ever be properly communicated to you, and you may even be unaware that these meetings take place.



In more organized workplaces, the information passed on during team briefings at the start of the day is communicated to the rest of the staff via e-mail or printed newsletter or a posting on a staff bulletin board, but this isn’t always the case. Sometimes staff are filled in by their colleagues (which can lead to serious miscommunications, as in the game Chinese Whispers), and they hear nothing at all.

If, for whatever reason, you’re never at work for the early shift, make a point of finding out whether you’re missing out on vital team briefings. If so, encourage your manager to find an effective way to keep you and your other late-starting colleagues up-to-date..

Is Your Home Causing Allergies and Asthma?

Home should be a place of safe retreat, but if the place where you live harbors damp or mold, dust mites or cockroaches, then it could be doing you more harm than good. If there is a smoker in the house or even a furry pet, these too could be harming you and your family’s health by causing allergic reactions and asthma attacks. Here are just a few tips for making your home a healthier place for everyone in it.

1. Keep floors and carpets well vacuumed, or if possible, remove carpets altogether as bare floors are easier to keep clean.
2. Resist the temptation to allow your pets into the bedroom, and never let them sleep on your bed.
3. Cover mattresses and pillows with dust-proof covers and wash these regularly.
4. Vacuum your mattress to get rid of dust and dead skin cells.
5. Treat any patches of damp or mold and be sure to cure the source.
6. Use dehumidifiers or air-conditioning units to keep humidity levels down.
7. Fill in any indoor holes or cracks that could be harboring pests.
8. Always store foodstuffs in sealed containers to keep pests at bay.
9. Be sure to call in a pest control company immediately if you spot any evidence of pests in your home.
10. Require any smokers visiting your home to ‘take it outside’.

Is Being in the Company of Big Spenders Hitting Your Pocketbook?

Keeping hold of your cash can feel difficult at the best of times, but when you’re in the company of big spenders, it can become all but impossible.

Although you might not normally be the type to be influenced by the behavior of others, there are actually three main reasons why people are sometimes tempted to emulate the spending habits of others.

1. The “keeping up with the Joneses” effect. They don’t want to be seen as any less affluent than the people they associate with and so they not only match the latter’s spending, but even outdo it.

2. Watching others spend freely gives them a sense of entitlement, even though they may not be able to afford the expenditure. They tend to think, “If they can, then why shouldn’t I be able to?”

3. The loss of self-control. Although it’s often easy for people when they’re alone to talk themselves out of spending their hard-earned cash on things they don’t really need, being in the company of big spenders can tempt some people to think only of today and deal with the consequences later.

Think about the people you associate with and whether any of them have any of these effects on you.

If so, you might want to think carefully about the situations in which you meet with them to reduce your chances of letting yourself be led astray.





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A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO INFORM AND ENTERTAIN OUR CUSTOMERS

FEBRUARY 2012

Cleaning Tip: Countertops- Take It For Granite

Properly sealing granite countertops is the best protection. Everyday spills and regular maintenance can be handled with mild soap, a soft cloth and hot water. Always dry your granite countertop after cleaning it.

Since granite is a stone, try some stone soap. It's available at your hardware store or a stone dealer.

Light colored granite shows stains more readily than dark. Acidic content foods such as coffee, grape juice and tomatoes stain more quickly.

Make a poultice to draw acidic stains out of the counter. Use a little dish washing soap, flour and a little water to make a thick paste poultice. Spread it over the stain and cover with plastic wrap and let it sit overnight. The next day carefully scrape away the dried mixture with a wooden or plastic utensil. Rinse with water and a soft cloth. Grease, milk or water stains call for a poultice made of flour and a few drops of hydrogen peroxide, with the same overnight treatment. As always, try to safely test an area first. If your poultice doesn't produce the desired results, call your countertop manufacturer for suggestions. Avoid gritty objects and hot pans, which can compromise your seal on your granite.



From the desk of
Kevin Carter, Chief Icky Officer

From last month's Tidy Times issue,
Congratulations to those who

knew that you're not as likely to get food poisoning from bread as from some other foods.

SPECIAL NOTE: This month, I'm hosting a special open house meet and greet in the super cool Parlour train car at the train depot in Jasper, Indiana on **Tues, Feb. 21** from **4-6 pm**. [See gallery photos at SpiritOfJasper.com] Come by for refreshments and fun. With your help it will be a success and not a "train wreck". Now to the trivia question...1st place \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10~drawing: 2/22/12

Trivia: Which 1993 Harrison Ford film featured a train wreck? (What a mess!)

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| A. Raiders of the Lost Ark | B. Air Force One |
| C. The Fugitive | D. Sabrina |

E-mail your correct answer cleaning@insightbb.com or phone 800-897-5516 by Feb 22 to have a chance in the winner's drawing. **P.S.** PLEASE see me at the train on 2-21

Why Does Hair Turn Gray?

We all know that graying hair is part of the aging process, but have you ever wondered why your luscious locks gradually change from black, red, brown or blonde to silver, gray or white?



Each hair is made up of two parts – the external colored part known as the shaft and the root, which is enclosed in a hair follicle. Within each follicle are pigment cells that continuously produce a chemical called melanin. As well as being the chemical that makes skin turn darker when exposed to the sun, melanin is also responsible for giving hair its color during our younger years. As we grow older, however, the pigment cells inside the follicle start to die off, so that the hair increasingly appears silver, gray or white.

Once ten or more years have passed since the appearance of the first gray hair, all the pigment cells die and the hair becomes completely gray or white.

Although aging is the most common reason for hair to turn gray, other factors such as anemia, thyroid problems, poor nutrition and a lack of vitamin B can also promote the graying effect. In the majority of people, the first gray hairs tend to appear when they are in their 30s or 40s, but there are those who experience the first signs when they are still in their teens. Usually, though, genetic factors dictate the age at which we start to go gray, so you know who to blame!