

How your words or ways positively impact others



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Where has the last year gone? While we were in the midst of 2020, didn't it seem like it would never end? Now, looking back, doesn't it seem like it flew right by?

Did you do anything to make your year better personally? Did you make an impact on other people's lives with goodness in your own life? What were your successes and failures? If you had a do-over, what would you do more or less of and what would you do differently?

So many people have talked about the pounds they packed on in the last year—contributing the gains to quarantine, lockdown, working from home, boredom, stress, anxiety, etc. Was this you too? Have you had to make changes to reverse the outcome of the extra poundage?

I'll be the first to admit that I too hopped on that bandwagon last spring. By mid-summer, not only were my clothes tight, but I was on the verge of having to buy a whole new wardrobe! I was shocked by what I was seeing and embarrassed by the addiction to food and sugar I had succumbed to. Besides the visual changes, I felt as unhealthy as I looked. I knew I needed to do something and in learning about 75 HARD around that same time, I jumped on that challenge and started doing new things. I spoke about this in my February article—check it out on our website if you want to learn more.

What I didn't talk about was a particular part of that challenge and how it affected me. You see, one of the stipulations is that I had to drink a gallon of water every day. This was in addition to other liquids that I drank like tea, almond milk, protein shakes, etc. I had always heard that drinking eight, eight-ounce glasses was the way to go—half of what the challenge called for. So, at first, a gallon seemed impossible. But determined to succeed, I bought a thirty-two-ounce water bottle and drank four of them or more every day (and I still do)!

After a few weeks, I stopped feeling water-logged and being irritated that I had to visit the bathroom so frequently. Instead, I was feeling the benefits from all that water! I felt fuller all day, I had more energy, I had more clarity of mind and my skin even felt better. To top it off, about a month and a half into my new water habit, a friend visited my office, told me how great I looked, and then quietly asked "are you getting Botox?". I busted up with laughter and then I thanked her for the compliment. Later I realized that it was the water that had made my skin look better ... and younger it seems. I wondered, had I just discovered the fountain of youth?

Speaking of youth ... my youngest child and only daughter, Briella just turned seventeen and finished her Junior year of High School. 2020 was extremely difficult on her for so many reasons—reasons I cannot share out of her privacy. But let me just say, she struggled greatly and I, as her mom spent many hours on my knees and sometimes, on my face in prayer for her.

Not only were my prayers answered in ways I had hoped, but God did even more than I asked—growing Briella so greatly that I have cried many happy tears in celebration. I believe that He also used my new healthy ways to encourage her to become healthier as she began inquiring about and then adopting my new habits by eating better, exercising, and getting water-logged too.

Briella has always been a "picky eater". Since I understood, as I was the same in my youth, I simply allowed her to eat whatever she wanted (whether it was unhealthy or not) and bought the things she liked—processed foods packed with carbs, sugar, and fats. Since she has always been thin and

athletic with a young metabolism, there didn't seem to be anything wrong with her food choices. But as she contemplated making changes and began learning about food, she started making better choices. Amazingly, her tastes dramatically changed and she would often hear me say things like "I never thought I'd see the day when you would eat _____." This blank was filled with brussels sprouts (most veggies really), healthy yogurts, oatmeal, and many different healthy meals I would prepare that she wouldn't have previously touched.

As a gallon-a-day water-drinking, healthy-eating, exercising young lady, Briella's ways, habits, and even her mind began to change. It has given us common ground, things to talk about and do together, and has grown us closer. I am so grateful and in awe of how God used my healthy changes to grow my daughter in the ways He has. And I cannot wait to see what He does as she and I embark on a few more planned challenges together!

Do you ever wonder how your words or ways might positively impact others? There are so many areas of our lives that have the potential to do this. Achieving this has become one of my greatest desires—to live my best life, in every area, so that I might positively impact others, allow them to see Jesus in me, pointing them to what a life lived in Him can look like, and leaving a legacy of Jesus when I am no longer here.

I wish I could tell you all that God has done in my life: things He allowed so that I would become more like Him, ways He changed me because of adversities, gifts He has given me to use for His glory, people He has brought into my life to teach me, and others He brought so that I might also teach them. But we do not have all the time for my full story.

What I will share is this: I love to write, tell stories, and see the goodness in circumstances. I love Jesus with all my heart and yearn to share Him with all who will listen. Yet, I am not a mechanic, I have no mechanical aptitude, and I blew up the engine of my first car because I didn't know I was supposed to change the oil. And here I am, writing, telling stories, finding goodness, sharing Jesus, and bringing it all back to cars. That's God.

So today, I've told a little story, found a little goodness, shared a little Jesus and now I must bring it back to cars.

Just as some of us neglected our bodies in the last year, there are also many who have neglected their cars. Not on purpose, mind you—but out of lack of need with many working from home, and with fewer vacations, outings, and gatherings. This drastically decreased the miles driven by most Americans. Because of this, fewer people consider the implications it may have had on their vehicles.

However, now that our nation has begun reopening, families are considering summertime travels, gatherings are happening, and people are returning to in-person professions, it's time to start thinking about giving our vehicles some much-needed TLC.

Fresh Fluids

Just as our bodies crave and excel when giving them fresh water, our vehicles excel when they are given clean fluids. When your vehicle sits for an extended period of time, so do the fluids in it. Though they are not "in use", fluids are not only affected by miles driven but also by time as they degrade where they sit and may not clean the systems well when it's time to do their job again. When is the last time the fluids in your vehicle—oil, transmission, brake, coolant, differential, and power steering, were changed?

Functioning Battery

The battery is responsible to keep all the memory stored for the different computers in your vehicle, even when it is not moving. This creates only



a slight drain on the battery and is typically not a problem for a healthy battery that is being driven regularly. Therefore, a battery can last years. But if the battery is unable to charge as it should (when you drive regularly), depleting its energy, you may not be able to start your vehicle or you may notice other problems, especially if it's an older battery. When is the last time you got a new battery or had your battery tested?

Fit and Fabulous Brakes

Rust can form on your brake rotors when it's stationary—especially if it's parked outside and exposed to the elements in Minnesota. When you drive, the rust can get into the brake pad lining and cause noise, uneven braking, and even pulsation. As a safety issue, it's always a good idea to have your brakes inspected regularly—no matter how often you drive. Remember that brakes and other safety components of your vehicle have the potential to affect you or others in either positive ways if they are healthy or negative ways if they are not. When was your last brake inspection?

Filled Tires

Tires lose air naturally and over time—just have a look at your bike tires in the spring when you are getting it back out for the season—often times air needs to be added. The same can be true for your vehicle's tires, so it's a good idea to check the pressure regularly. Proper tire pressure also allows you to save the life of your tires, have the best gas mileage, and stabilize your vehicle when turning and stopping. When is the last time your tire pressure was checked?

Furry Friends—or Enemies

Critters like to take up residence in our vehicles—especially vehicles that are stationary for long periods of time. There are so many nooks and crannies to make their home in, filters that make awesome beds, and wires that are fun to chew on. So even though mice and other animals appreciate the comfort your vehicle provides, they are enemies when it comes to how your vehicle functions and may even affect the air you are breathing. When is the last time your vehicle was inspected for furry enemies?

These are just a few recommendations I have for giving your vehicle some TLC as you begin relying on it more and preparing for summer travels. The best thing to do if your vehicle hasn't been driven much is to do an overall inspection if you are mechanically inclined—unlike me. If you are like me and need to rely on professionals to know what to look for and assess with an inspection, you'll want to get your vehicle in well before your planned trip. This will allow not only for the inspection and maintenance to be

taken care of but also for any repairs to be completed without putting additional stress and pressure on you in a time crunch.

You must also keep in mind that many other motorists may not have considered the health of their vehicles until right before a summer trip as well. This is why it's important to be proactive and be mindful of things that may have been neglected with your vehicle and get it in before the mad-rush of summer. An inspected and healthy will keep you and your loved ones safe on the roadways and may even keep other motorists safe by addressing any safety concerns found.

Friends, the way we live our lives and the things we do and say truly matters.

The way we take care of our cars can make or break a vacation, can save or harm a life, can cause or relieve anxiety, and can waste or save time and money.

The things we say to others can build them up or crush them, cause anger or allow for grace, be life-giving or life-sucking, and reveal a black heart or the goodness of God.

The way we live our lives can have a positive or negative impact on others, leave a good or bad legacy, and honor or dishonor God. What's more, when we live for Him, there is no telling how He might use us in someone else's life.

Case in point: There have been so many occasions when I have wondered if I should quit writing on this platform. And then, when doubt fills my mind, God spurs me on with an email, a call, a letter, or another form of encouragement from someone because of how something I said affected them positively. For me, even if just one person is touched, affected, or change by my words ... even if just one person fixes a safety issue on their car that they may not have without my article and it saves a life ... even if just one person inquires about Jesus and comes to know Him because of what He has impressed on me to write ... or even if just one person feels that there is no hope, no reason to live, that they are not forgiven but they pray one last time for a sign that they should live and they pick up my article and read in black and white that they are forgiven, they are important, they have a purpose, and God loves them, and then they choose, because of the words God gave me, to not end their life (this happened) ... then every single word I write is worth the time it took or anxiety it gave me because I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am doing what I am supposed to be doing. I hope you are too. Glory to God.



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AND FIX CARS"**

