

A4TD's Nugget of Knowledge

#10 – June 26, 2020

Greetings Everyone ~

My Little View on the World

Isn't it interesting how we appreciate things so much more after the fact as opposed to when they are happening in the moment? Last March I was very lucky to enjoy a spur of the moment visit from dear friend who lives in Maryland. When I hugged her good bye at the airport, I certainly wasn't thinking that would be the last time I would hug a friend for who knows how long. Likewise, I never would have thought that the last time my husband and I went out to dinner . . . or the last time my very young grandson drooled all down my back . . . or the last time I set foot in March into the A4TD office . . . or – well – you get the idea. To paraphrase the lyric from Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi", "it always seems to go that you don't know what you've got till it's gone".



Looking out my window (again), however, it struck me that over these past months I have also gotten to enjoy a series of firsts! There is a large pine tree just outside my "office" window, and near its top is a very large squirrel nest. This spring I have gotten to enjoy the adventures of two baby squirrels that I assume are siblings. I've observed many things I don't recall seeing before as they've been finding their way in the world. Their tentative and awkward efforts to leap across tree branches and to break into my sunflower seed feeder. Their climb up my screen door in the misguided belief that surely there must be food at the top. The delightful way they chase each other in play and huddle together in the crook of a tree branch. In a certain odd way they have become surrogates for my grandchildren. I am learning a lot about squirrel behavior and it is making me happy.

The squirrels are just one example of firsts. There has been the joy of having someone bring my hardware store order to me while I waited in the comfort of my car. The satisfaction of cleaning and spray painting two rusty old chairs to put in my garden – something I'd been avoiding because I wasn't sure how to do it. The delight of seeing – for the first time - four

birds in the birdbath outside my window! The surprise of seeing a hummingbird relaxing and hanging out at the feeder – the first time I had seen one actually being still rather than flapping away. Maybe she was enjoying her own moment of firsts. Some of my firsts were things seen, some were actions taken, and all provided me an opportunity to truly live in and experience the moment.

Life will always be full of lasts and firsts, and now is no different. Some firsts are difficult or painful, but many present opportunities for learning, enjoyment and even hope. Each first taken makes the next one easier. (You've probably experienced that in your training.) I invite you to join me and step into some of the happy firsts in your lives. And since we've got some time on our hands, let's spend some time appreciating these moments from the get go!

Read on and enjoy.

Brain Games . . .

If months at home coupled with the summer heat have zapped from your brain all capacity for human thought, these games might help clear out the cobwebs and give your noggin a fine tune up!

<https://www.gamesforthebrain.com/game/whatwasthere/>

<https://www.gamesforthebrain.com/game/rotate2/>

<https://www.gamesforthebrain.com/game/mastermind/>

<https://www.braingymmer.com/en/brain-games/fuzzle/play/>

And for those of you who don't have a computer and are reading this on old school paper, here are a couple of brain teasers to ponder this week:

- 1) ***There is a word in the English language in which the first two letters signify a male, the first three letters signify a female, the first four signify a great man, and the whole word, a great woman. What is the word?***

- 2) ***If there is a bee in my hand, what is in my eye?***

Brain Health . . .

We know that across the country, the coronavirus is not only taking a physical toll on those individuals who contract COVID-19, it is also taking a toll mentally on many more individuals. The stress during this pandemic can be unbearable, which naturally affects our mental health. The Centers for Disease Control has a webpage that contains a great deal of valuable information on how to manage stress and access supportive services. You can find it here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Some important phone numbers include:

- Disaster Distress Helpline 1-800-985-5990
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-7233 (or text LOVEIS to 2522)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- Veteran’s Crisis Line 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

To find a health care provider or treatment for substance use disorder and mental health:

- SAMHSA’s National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

And from the National Alliance on Mental Illness:

- NAMI Helpline 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)
 - In a crisis . . . Text “NAMI” to 741741

A Training Tidbit . . .

Your Employment Portfolio

When you are competing for a job – and I believe that day will surely come - it is important to take every opportunity to stand out among the candidates. One important way to do this is to create an **Employment Portfolio** that highlights you and your skills and accomplishments. It is an easy way to impress a potential employer.

Regardless of the kind of job you are seeking, when you go to an interview, you should take with you an **Employment Portfolio** that contains these items:

- Copies of your current resume, tailored to the position you are interviewing for;
- Copies of the letter of interest / cover letter that was sent;
- Certificates of Completion for any courses you have taken;
- A list of your current references;
- A letter of reference from your host agency / training site supervisor;

- A list of volunteer and community service activities you have done;
- Current transcripts associated with any academic pursuits.

Now is a perfect time to put your employment portfolio together. Here are some steps you can take:

- Write / update your resume.
- Contact people who you would like to list as references to get their okay (I bet you will find them at home!).
- Compose or update your reference list with current contact information.
- Reach out to your host agency supervisor, if possible, to request a letter of reference.
- Take a free course online (we've given you lots of ideas) and obtain a Certificate of Completion.
- Make a list of your current and recent volunteer activities.
- If you have been taking classes, reach out to your school to get your transcript.

A Bit about SCSEP . . .

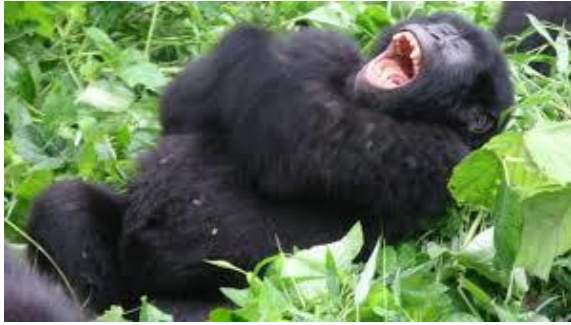
In order to enroll in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), there are certain eligibility requirements that a participant must meet. There is a cap on how much income you or your family may receive. Related to that is how many people live with you as a family. You also have to live within A4TD's SCSEP territory.

Every year A4TD has to "**recertify**" your eligibility for SCSEP. This involves the completion and signing of paperwork and the gathering of documentation to prove your residence, family size and income. A4TD professional staff have contacted many of you recently in order to carry out your recertification. Completion of the recertification on time is crucial in order for you to continue to receive paid sick leave or your training wages.

In the past, we would meet with you at an A4TD Mature Worker Resource Center in order to complete this paperwork, gather your supporting documents and get your signature. The COVID-19 safety protocols regarding social distancing make it impossible for us to continue that practice at the time being. Therefore, we are now being creative in our efforts to get this paperwork done in an alternative fashion. ***We invite you to share your ideas on how we can best get your signatures and supporting documentation in a safe manner.***

Just for Fun . . .

Did you know . . . that gorillas burp when they are happy? (However, not every happy being that burps is a gorilla!)



Here is a little quiz for you:

“What is a squirrel nest called?”

Stay tuned for the answer next time. (Or, feel free to respond back with the answer and you will get a shout out in the next Nugget!)

Last time I asked you **“How many people have walked on the moon”**

The Answer? Twelve (12). Kudos to Steve T. and Charles N-B

The extra credit question was **“how many have traveled to the Moon more than once?”**

The Answer? Three (3). (Jim Lovell, John Young and Eugene Cernan). Kudos to Rick S. and Charles N-B.

(Apologies to anyone else whose correct answer I may have missed!)

In case you need a break . . .

There aren't a lot of things we can control right now, but one thing we can control is our breathing. Here are a few breathing techniques that can release physical tension, increase mindfulness and counter the “fight or flight” response that kicks in during times of stress.

I invite you to practice these, relax, and then escape to this week's “get away” (see below).

1) **Falling Out Breath:** this exercise is a great way to release the physical tension in your body:

- Inhale deeply
- At the top of your breath, take another sip of air
- Exhale with a big sigh, releasing all the air in your lungs.

2) **Box Breath:** this exercise is helpful for increasing mindfulness:

- Inhale to the count of 4
- Hold your breath for a count of 4
- Exhale to the count of 4
- Hold your breath to the count of 4

3) **Emptying Breath:**

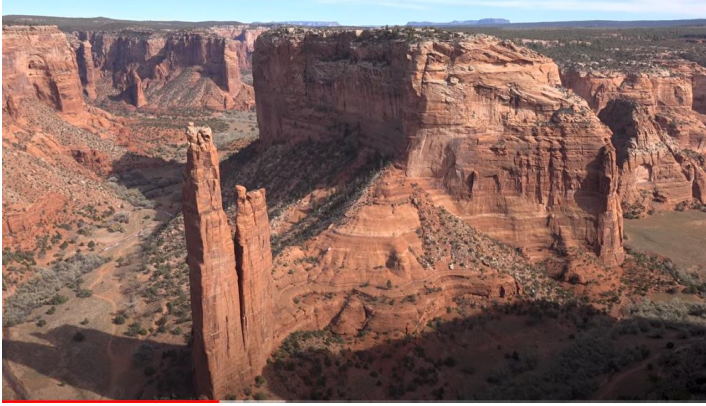
This exercise calms your sympathetic nervous system and activates your parasympathetic nervous system. (Your sympathetic nervous system triggers the fight or flight response to a stressful situation. The parasympathetic nervous system undoes that fight or flight response, decreasing respiration and heart rate and allowing for rest.)

- Inhale to the count of 3
- Exhale slowly to the count of 6, focusing on releasing as much air as possible.

This week's journey takes us to Canyon de Chelly National Monument, a vast park in northeastern Arizona on Navajo tribal lands. Its prominent features include Spider Rock spire, which is about 800-feet tall, and towering sandstone cliffs surrounding a verdant canyon. Several Native American people inhabited the area for millennia, and it is dotted with prehistoric rock art and the remains of ancient Pueblo villages.

Enjoy your own personal guided tour here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BR41difKew>





Now you can add seeing this to your list of firsts!

A Final Thought . . .

“You only get so many firsts. Each one is a blessing.”

~ Taylor Swift, American singer and songwriter

Ask A4TD . . .

Finally, remember that if you have a comment or a question for A4TD, “reply” to this message and share your thoughts or questions.

Until next time, may you enjoy many a happy “first”, knowing that A4TD is walking along side of you, supporting you and cheering you on. Be safe, be well and please take good care of yourself. I have to go now – I think I see a bird I’ve never seen before at the feeder!

Sincerely,

All of us here at A4TD