

Intelligence For Your Life

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Better Yourself Newsletter

THE BEST INTELLIGENCE FOR LIFE, LOVE AND HAPPINESS

A Garage Is No Longer Just For Cars, It's a Luxury Retreat

Where's the happiest place on earth? It's not an amusement park. Here's a hint: It may be right in your very own garage. According to USA Today, today's garage isn't the cluttered, dusty workshop your father had, with a radio, beach chairs, and coffee cans filled with nails.

These are organized luxury retreats, more like a cozy den than a place for your car to drip oil on the concrete. In fact, a lot of these luxury garages have floor-to-ceiling cabinets for tools, overhead hooks for boats and surfboards, as well as carpeted floors, flat-screen TVs, couches, and even air conditioning.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, there are 65 million garages in the United States alone – and more than 500 businesses that specialize in organizing garage spaces. These re-dos are not always cheap! A car collector in Sioux Falls, South Dakota spent \$60,000 on his garage. Features included marble floors and walls, skylights, a plasma TV, air conditioning, and sensors that automatically turned the lights and music on when a car drove in.

You can create your own haven for a lot less. Industry experts report that the average garage makeover purchase runs about \$500. However, real estate developers say that remodeling your garage is a good investment – because it increases the resale value of your home.



It's not just a guy thing, either. Women love the fact that these new-fangled garages are neat, clean, and almost nice enough for guests. However, if you're considering making over your garage into your own private retreat, don't make it too comfy. Once you put in that big screen TV, you won't be alone for very long!

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Changing Jobs Can Have a Positive Impact On Your Career

Quitting your job may seem risky, but sometimes it's a great career move! Susan Heathfield is a management consultant who specializes in human resources and she believes that changing jobs can have a positive impact on your resume. Here are three reasons for leaving a job that'll help you get your next position:

- **You can't get along with your manager.** This is actually a common problem, so don't be afraid to mention it. However, never badmouth an old boss. Just say, "We didn't see eye-to eye on a lot of projects and I want feel like I'm part of a team."
- **Your situation's changed.** If you've gotten married, had a baby, or decided to go back to school, no HR person will penalize you for looking for a job that fits your new life. So be honest.
- **Your values are at odds with your employer's.** Again, you don't want to trash your old company. Just state the policies that made you uncomfortable and describe your ideal work environment. For example, "I'm happy to take after hours emergency calls, but I feel strongly about not working on Sunday."

If your job doesn't work for you, don't be afraid to make a move. Just show potential employers that you have what it takes to climb to the top - you simply discovered you've been on the wrong ladder.



Intelligence For Your Life

Embrace the Simple Life and Save Money



These are definitely the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. How crazy? Gas prices are through the roof, which is forcing prices up across the board. Because most food and merchandise is delivered to market by diesel-burning ships and trucks. As companies are forced to spend more to deliver their products, consumers are forced to pay more to buy them. Still, there are ways to cut costs. How? By embracing the simple life! Here's how people are cutting corners, courtesy of MSNBC:

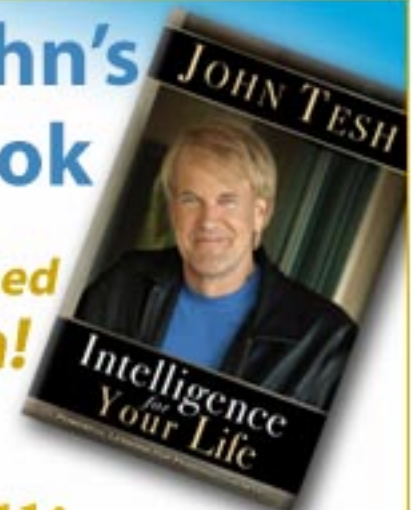
- Instead of going out to dinner, more and more people are staying home; throwing parties, dusting off board games, and renting movies so they can socialize and still save a buck. Those who do go out are more likely to avoid high-end restaurants, and hit less-expensive diners or alternative clubs instead.
- Penny-savers are also buying local produce at farmer's markets where they can deal directly with growers; planting vegetable gardens and cooking more. They're even watching cooking shows so they can learn to do more than just nuke some frozen mac-n-cheese.
- They're also hitting thrift stores and garage sales! They're basically trying to make saving money fun – "treasure hunting" for deals on used furniture, dishware, and knickknacks. Even teens are getting into the act. They're hitting eBay and Craigslist instead of the mall, searching for bargains on their favorite brand of jeans and snapping up slightly older versions of cell phones and iPods at bargain prices.
- Retailers are jumping on the simple life bandwagon too. They hope that if they offer deals, people will come to their store and spend despite the hard times. For example, Wal-Mart is offering deals on backyard items that can spruce up a "staycation" – that's staying at home during a vacation. Even Whole Foods is offering tours of stores for bargain-hunting customers; Sharing tips that include buying house brands, and eating food that's in season, and grown locally.

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How to Deal With Three Important Issues Involving Your Teen

These come from Rosalind Wiseman, author of Queen Bee Moms and Kingpin Dads – and we found this in *Family Circle* magazine.



► **Issue #1:** Your daughter's not allowed on the phone after 9 p.m. – but she gets calls from boys as late as midnight. The fix: If they're using your land line, keep the phone close by. When it rings, be very clear that they can't call after 9. If they're dialing your kid's cell, know this: Experts say that teens should give up their phones at bedtime, to make sure they get a good night's sleep. So, if your teen's cell rings after hours, answer it, and explain the rules. If you're strict about this now, it'll save you a lot of headaches as your kid gets older.

► **Issue #2:** Your son wants to share his problems, but when you offer advice, he gets annoyed and shuts down. The reality is: Sometimes kids just need to vent. So, next time he unloads, try saying, "I'd like to help. It's fine either way, but are you telling me this because you want me to listen, or do you want advice too?" Then let him tell you what he wants.

► **Issue #3:** Your daughter wants to wear a skimpy outfit. A lot of kids can't see the connection between sexy clothes, suggestive body language, and having an intimate relationship. In fact, studies show that a teen's brain isn't developed enough to understand the consequences of their actions until they're well into their 20s. So, if your daughter puts on an outfit you think is too tight or too revealing, ask how the clothes make her feel. Stay calm even if she mentions feeling "older" or "sexier." The key is to lay down the law, yet be respectful of her individuality. Tell her that while you admire her fashion sense, your family has non-negotiable values. You'd be happy to take her to the mall to find other cute outfits, but short and skimpy is not going to happen, period. Psychologists say that if you can make your values clear without yelling or demeaning your daughter, she's more likely to accept your decision.

Does Your New Romance Have a Future?

So, you're dating someone you're totally crazy about! Is this intense attraction you feel for them love - or temporary infatuation? Here's how to tell whether your budding romance has a potential future, or is more likely to crash and burn as the passion fades. Ask yourself these questions from eHarmony online.

• **How much do you know about the other person's life?** Sure, you may know what they do for a living and where they live, but have you met this person's friends, spent entire weekends together, or been included in each other's daily lives? The best way to know if it's love or infatuation is take an honest look at how unified the two of you are. This doesn't mean just the level at which you're opening up, but how much your partner is letting you in, too.

• **Do you share common life goals, dreams and ambitions?** When the newness wears off, you probably won't want to invest your time, energy and intimacy with someone who doesn't share a similar vision of your future. So, before you get too involved, discuss things such as your long term-relationship goals and how you feel about kids. Also, find out where each of your careers rank on your lists of priorities, and how similar your ethics and morals are. While broaching this conversation might feel uncomfortable, it's an important discussion to have a couple of months into a budding relationship. Why? Because it forces you both to communicate in an honest and open manner, in hopes of cutting down on wasted time and hurt feelings.

• **Is the feeling mutual?** Although YOU may feel that things are sailing along smoothly, your partner may have other ideas. If only one of you is interested in a future together, it's better to know that before you get in too deep. So – ask. This is another conversation for the two-month mark or so. If you discover that your relationship has potential, congratulations! You may be well on your way to happily ever after. Either way, it's important to know where you stand as soon as possible so that you can proceed with caution, care, or commitment.