

# Don's Home News

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## What Me Worry? Are We a Society of Big Chickens?

It was Chicken Little who cried, "The sky is falling!" Yet even as kids, we knew a falling sky was nothing to worry about.

But today, worry is so much a part of our lives that it's become an epidemic. Falling sky? No. Exploding sky? Possibly.

In a recent *Maclean's* article, Anne Kingston reports: "Everybody has his or her own worry list, which might or might not contain H5N1, vaccine fear, bioterrorism, your kid passing his finals, cyberterrorism, those grey hairs, the grid going dark, drivers who text, stock market collapse, job loss, gluten, debt, that guy eyeing your job ... E. coli in packaged salad."

Kathryn Tristan has written a whole book about it. As she writes in *Why Worry?*: "At least *half* of the U.S. population will at some time in their life suffer from anxiety, depression, or addiction. And it's not just in the U.S., this is a global epidemic!"

So what is it we're so afraid of, and why, exactly, are we so afraid?

In fact, worry is a natural human condition, and has been around forever. It evolved as a protective mechanism to help avoid catastrophe: For example, a little worry kept the hunter away from the horns, the seeker away from unseen danger. But our worrying seems less protective and more counter-productive.

We worry about things over which we have no control. And this may be the source of our worry epidemic: We're not in control.

Does that make us all big Chicken Littles . . . or just Big Chickens?

## Are You Wondering How Much Your Home Is Worth?

Do you want to know how the price of your home has changed in today's market? Do you want to know for how much other homes in your neighborhood are selling?

If you're wondering what's happening to prices in your area, or you're thinking about selling your house, I can help. Just [email](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) me for a no-obligation, professional evaluation.

I won't pressure you into listing with me or waste your time. [Read about how I feel about pressure!](#) I'll just give you the honest facts about your home and its value.

I'll also give you the "inside scoop" on what's happening in the housing market near where you live!

Call me at 404-939-1309 or email me at [donzahnle@gmail.com](mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com) and we will arrange a time to get together.

## Home Sweet Home Meets 21st-Century Design Trends

According to a recent Houzz survey, in which 1,700 people shared their home decorating dreams, desires, and intentions, home decorating decisions are now driven by age and gender. Here are a couple of salient survey results:

- Seventeen percent of respondents under 35 expressed a preference for wallpaper, compared to only 3 percent of people over 65.
- A quarter of the men surveyed said that trends influence their decorating decisions; and, maybe surprisingly, only 14 percent of women admit to being "trendistas."

But there's a disconnect here: Houzz editorial staff writer Mitchell Parker suggests that men aren't trend followers because they want to be fashionable; more likely, they're thinking about their home's future resale value.

Of survey respondents who plan on hiring an interior designer or home decorator, roughly 12 percent said they would use online e-design services rather than consult a professional directly.

The Houzz survey also revealed a clear trend toward loungier bedrooms, with 60 percent of respondents indicating that they plan to add seating in their "master suite," 52 percent are looking to add a TV, and 8 percent are considering adding luxuries such as a fireplace or even a mini fridge.

In fact, TVs have become necessities just about everywhere; many people consider them essential in guest rooms, kids' bedrooms, and even in formal dining rooms too. The exception is younger homeowners, who are ditching the traditional TV to watch programs on their devices.

# Take a New Look at Love This Valentine's Day

April is supposed to be the cruelest month, as penned by poet T.S. Eliot in "The Waste Land."

Maybe so, but many of us would nominate February for the cruelest month title, both for its calendar position (just after New Year's) and its weather (gray and cold). But February has an ace in the hole: Valentine's Day.

What could be warmer, brighter and, well, lovelier, than a day devoted to love? But is it always about Eros – romantic love – as we tend to define it now?

Maybe the ancient Greeks had something when they used four – not one – words to connote different types of love: *Eros*, of course; *agape*, which is a deeper, selfless type of love; *philia*, meaning friendship; and *storge*, the

affection parents have for their children.

These days we tend to get caught up in the trappings of Valentine's Day – shopping for gifts, planning date nights, and buying chocolate everything. Why not look beyond the traditional and consider those other kinds of love?

For example: Make a point of telling your friends how much they mean to you. Or try *agape* and make a charitable contribution in the name of love to people in need. You frequently tell your kids and spouse how much you love them (if not, you should), but *storge* can also mean telling your parents how much you love them.

Valentine's Day can be special, not just another buying opportunity. This year, why not make like the ancient Greeks and spread your love around?

## Quick Quiz

Each month I'll give you a new question.

Just email me at <mailto:donzahnle@gmail.com> for the answer.

When are you most likely to be contagious and pass the flu to someone else?

## Why Not Pass Me to a Friend?

If you've enjoyed this newsletter and found its information useful, please pass it to a neighbor, friend or co-worker.

And if you have any comments about it, don't forget to give me a call or send me an email!

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## Worth Reading

### How Innovation Can Lead to Life Purpose

By Henry Doss  
*Forbes.com*

Philip Hardin believes there's a science to finding your passion. Hardin is the CEO of YouScience, an online tool that helps students discover their purpose quickly while expanding their career options. Its algorithm uses aptitudes and interests to help students determine what jobs best "fit" them and their passion. In this interview with Henry Doss, Hardin looks at what's right and wrong with traditional career counselling. Will this tool work for a student you know?

**More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Feb-reads1>

### Get More From Difficult People

By Patrick Allan  
*Lifehacker.com*

Making important decisions can be difficult enough on your own, but adding a difficult person into the mix can stall or derail the decision-making process. So here's a tip for working with someone who seems to live to oppose: Shape your requests as questions. This creates an invitation and allows individuals to participate in – or even lead – the process. **More:**

<http://tinyurl.com/Feb-reads2>

### Try Something New for 30 Days

By Matt Cutts  
*TED.com*

Techie Matt Cutts wrote a book he doesn't like. "It's awful," he declares in this TED talk. Cutts pulled himself out of a rut by doing something new for 30 days. He wrote. He biked to work for fun. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. He took a picture a day, and found beauty in everyday life. Cutts talks briefly, giving you time to practice what he preaches – do something new. **More:** <http://tinyurl.com/Feb-reads3>

# Questions to Ask a Contractor Before You Hire

It's renovation time, and, as part of your preparations, think about the last time you hired someone to rebuild or remodel your home. There was probably an initial phone conversation, followed by a site visit where you were probably given a quote for the project and a discussion of a timeline. Then, they showed up to start the job.

You may have asked them for testimonials or photos of previous work. But did you ask if they had their own insurance?

According to experts, it's essential that hired contractors and subcontractors are adequately insured. (Some experts suggest they should carry \$1 million

liability at minimum.) If they're not insured, the work they do for you comes at a high price. If they are injured, or if there is damage to your property because of their actions, you could be the one to take the financial hit. Your homeowners insurance may have to pay if the contractor doesn't have a liability policy.

To avoid liability, it's always wise to vet contractors at the beginning. Ask friends and neighbors for recommendations, and check out the candidates through your local Better Business Bureau. If you're unsure about what credentials your contractor should have, contact the national contractors association.

Ask what insurance the contractor has before you hire. Then ask to see the insurance certificate as proof that the contractor's policy is in place. There have been incidences of forged certificates, so be wary. Also, check the date to ensure it will remain valid throughout the entire period he or she will be working on your project.

Finally, be sure you can work with the contractor. Whatever the project, you must have a high level of confidence in your contractor; inevitably, things will go wrong on the job, and you need to be able to work closely with him or her to help solve problems.

## You Can Stop Time from Flying By ...

When we were kids, time seemed to crawl. The months between seasons, holidays, and birthdays just dragged and dragged. But in adulthood, time seems to fly by. And apparently, it's not just our imagination.

One of the explanations for "time flying" is Habituation Hypothesis – a psychologists' term that explains the differentiating details we don't tend to notice when we go about our lives on autopilot. According to psychologists, we tend to notice fewer and fewer of the details that make each day unique; time seems to pass more quickly. Children, however, are always having new experiences and so notice more.

Dopamine may also affect how we experience time. According to an article in the *New York Times*, the neurotransmitter, when stimulated by ADHD drugs such as Ritalin, increases its function in the brain and seems to speed up the perception of time. Those drugs that block dopamine receptors slow the perception of time.

As for you ... if you want to stop time from flying, skip the drugs and start noticing those details that make your day special.

## February's Smile: Houseguests Who Won't Go

Let's be honest, houseguests can be a bore. They interrupt your favorite TV show, throw you off your game in the kitchen, drink too much, and step on Fluffy. So, how do you get them to go?

Writer Jennifer Grudziecki may have the solution: In [Sparknotes.com](http://Sparknotes.com) she recommends avoiding having houseguests "like a severely communicable disease." If that fails, employ the well-tested passive/

aggressive "Cold War" technique: Don't engage with them. Ignore them, and maybe they'll go away. No? Well, try this: "Go out without them, be socially unacceptable, and make awful food."

For the bozos who still don't get it, it's time for the direct approach. Just say: "It's time for you to go home." Walk them to the open door, help them through, and wave goodbye.

## Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

**What can I do now to prepare for spring buying season?**

Spring is the best time to sell a home. After a dark winter season, spring is a breath of fresh air – literally. Here are some tips on readying your home to prepare for the upcoming spring buying season.

Conduct an early home inspection. Check inside for places where leaks, insects, and rodents can get in. Walk around your home and look for cracks, peeling, and chipped bricks.

Prepare for rain – spring is the wettest season. Ensure your entrance or mudroom is ready for wet shoes.

Paint. Nicer days are coming. Open the windows and enjoy an afternoon of painting.

De-clutter. Spring clean before spring arrives. Early buyers will appreciate a clutter-free, sparkling-clean home.

Boost curb appeal. February isn't great for landscaping, but you can still spruce up your exterior. A tidy yard is a harbinger of spring.

To search for listings online click [here](#)

[donzahnle.com](http://donzahnle.com)

		8	1		6			
9						2		
7			3	9	5	4	1	
	3			4		1		
6								4
		7		3			6	
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			9		4	8		

**Sudoku instructions:** Complete the 9 × 9 grid so that each row, each column and each of the nine 3 × 3 boxes contains the digits 1 through 9. Contact me for the solution!

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Thanks for reading! If you would like to tell me what you think about this newsletter, or if you're thinking of buying or selling real estate, please get in touch.

To discontinue receiving this Newsletter just reply to this email with "REMOVE" in the subject line.

## Recipe: Carrot Soup with Crystalized Ginger

Fight those February blues (and any flu bugs that might be hanging around) with this delicious soup.

### Serves 6

2 tablespoons olive oil  
 1 ½ cups chopped onion  
 ¼ cup roughly chopped crystallized ginger, plus a few pieces for garnish  
 3 garlic cloves, minced  
 2 pounds carrots, peeled and sliced  
 4 cups water or vegetable stock  
 2 sprigs fresh thyme  
 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions, ginger and garlic and sauté until softened, about 5 minutes. Add carrots, water and thyme. Simmer, covered, until carrots are tender, about 30 minutes.

Remove thyme sprigs and process soup in a blender or with a stick blender. Return to pot then add vinegar and salt and pepper to taste.

Serve with a sprinkle of chopped crystallized ginger.

