

Lasting IMPRESSION

A SOLDIER'S JOURNEY: The Heart of a New Recruit

By: Nathan Suddreth, United States Marine

The air was thick with the smell of sweat and freshly churned dirt. The young recruit, Adam, stood in line, his body stiff from the early morning drills, his uniform heavy with the dust of a long day. Boot Camp was everything he had been told it would be—grueling, unrelenting, a place where weakness was chased out, and resilience was forged. Yet, standing there, as the sun dipped below the horizon, his thoughts wandered far from the shouting drill sergeant or the endless push-ups.

It was November, and the holidays were fast approaching. He could almost hear the laughter of his family back home, the sound of clinking dishes, and the warmth of his mother's kitchen. Thanksgiving was just days away, and for the first time in his life, Adam wouldn't be there to experience it. His mind drifted to the smell of roast turkey, mashed potatoes, and the sound of his father's corny jokes that somehow felt like home.

But here, in Boot Camp, there were no familiar faces, no comforting meals. Instead, Adam found himself surrounded by strangers who, like him, were enduring the same hardships, trying to silence their doubts as the long days pressed on. The camaraderie was building slowly, but still, it didn't fill the space where the warmth of home should be.

He had never doubted his decision to enlist—until now. Lying in his bunk at night, his body aching from the day's demands, Adam found himself questioning what had led him here. He was missing his sister's birthday, the annual family gathering, the comforting routine of life before the Marines.

The letters from home helped, though. They were a lifeline to a world that seemed far away. His mom wrote about how proud they were of him, how they missed him but knew he was doing something important. His sister scribbled drawings in the margins, always adding a little heart that made him smile. Still, as the holidays loomed, Adam couldn't help but feel a pang of loneliness that clung to him like the cold morning fog.

Yet, through the homesickness and the long nights, a different kind of warmth began to take root. It wasn't the warmth of a fireplace or a family dinner but something deeper. His love for his country, for the ideals he had grown up believing in, started to outweigh the doubts. He wasn't just here for himself; he was here for millions going about their lives, unaware of the sacrifices made on their behalf.

He thought of his grandfather, a Vietnam vet, and the stories he had told over the years—stories of loss, triumph, fear, and courage. *"We did what we had to because we believed in something bigger than ourselves,"* his grandfather once said, pride unmistakable in his voice. Adam realized now that he was living out the same legacy.

Thanksgiving came and went in a blur of drills and commands, but on Christmas Eve, something shifted. As the young Marines gathered, a small group started singing Christmas songs. Their voices, rough from the cold and exhaustion, carried a kind of unpolished beauty. For a few moments, the barracks transformed—no longer a place of hardship, but a shared refuge from the storm.

Adam joined in, his voice quiet at first, but then stronger, carried by the simple act of togetherness. He realized then that this was his new family—these men and women, missing home as much as he was, wrestling with their own doubts but showing up every day, fighting through it all.

As the night wore on, Adam's heart swelled with a quiet resolve. The holidays back home would always be there, waiting for him when this chapter was over. But for now, he was where he needed to be—serving something greater than himself, surrounded by others who shared his purpose.

Adam no longer second-guessed his decision to join the Marines. He had made a sacrifice, yes, but it connected him to generations of soldiers who had done the same. The love for his country and the promise of returning home someday, stronger, more resilient, filled the empty spaces. He had no regrets.

The stars were bright that night, shimmering above the barracks. As Adam lay down to sleep, he knew in his heart that despite the hardships, despite the homesickness, he wouldn't trade this experience for anything.



POURING HAPPINESS

Have you ever thought about the ways in which you can pour happiness into someone else's life? It may sound simple, but Ryan Estis, a renowned speaker and performance expert, delved into this concept and explained how it can make a huge impact on people's lives.

Pouring happiness doesn't necessarily mean splurging on material things or grand gestures. It's about the little things that make someone feel appreciated and valued. It can be as simple as giving a compliment or expressing gratitude for their hard work. Research shows that positive feedback, even as small as a smile, can improve people's well-being and increase their motivation.

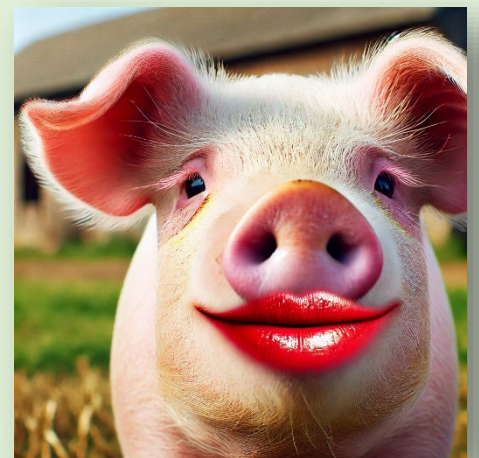
Moreover, happiness is contagious. When we pour happiness into someone else's life, they are more likely to spread it to others around them, making a ripple effect. In turn, this can boost the overall morale and atmosphere of the workplace or community.

Ryan Estis explained that pouring happiness can be particularly valuable in a work setting. A happy employee is more engaged, creative, and motivated. When they feel valued by their coworkers and superiors, they are more likely to put in their best effort and achieve their goals. In fact, studies have found that happy employees can increase a company's profitability by up to 22 percent.

In summary, pouring happiness is not just a feel-good concept; it has tangible benefits for individuals and organizations alike. By showing appreciation, gratitude, and positivity towards others, we not only improve their well-being, but also create a ripple effect of happiness that can have far-reaching effects. So, let's all make an effort to pour happiness into someone's life today!

DR. MICHAEL BERRY AND THE EPA: Cleaning for Health vs. Appearance

Dr. Michael Berry, a well-known environmental health expert and former Deputy Director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has been shaking up the cleaning world with a simple but profound idea: cleaning for health is far more important than cleaning for appearance. For Berry, it's not enough to just make your space look like a "Pinterest-perfect" dream; if you're not attacking the dirt, allergens, and germs hiding in plain sight, you're really just putting lipstick on a pig. And no one likes germy pigs.



In a world obsessed with shiny countertops and perfectly vacuumed carpets, Dr. Berry is here to remind us that what we don't see is way scarier than that dust bunny you missed behind the couch. Sure, a clean-looking room might give you a momentary sense of satisfaction, but Berry's here to burst your bubble: "Congrats on the sparkly floors, but how's your indoor air quality? Oh, you don't know? Yikes."

Berry emphasizes that real cleaning isn't just about making your house look like an ad for a cleaning product—it's about tackling the invisible enemies lurking in your carpets, upholstery, and air ducts. Dust mites, bacteria, and pollen are silently partying in your living room while you're busy admiring how clean it looks. As Berry might put it, if you're only cleaning for appearances, you're basically rolling out the red carpet for germs. And trust us, they're not the kind of houseguests you want.



Berry's work with the EPA shed light on a dirty little secret most people don't think about: indoor air can be dirtier than outdoor air. That's right. You might be avoiding the smog outside, only to breathe in a cocktail of dust, allergens, and pollutants inside. "Hey, why get a fresh breeze outside when you can get an extra dose of pollutants in the comfort of your own home?" jokes Berry, probably while shaking his head in disbelief.

His studies revealed that many indoor pollutants—dust, pet dander, and even some outdoor pollutants like car emissions—find their way into your home. And no, lighting a candle and pretending it's all fine won't help. Berry insists that real cleaning requires removing, not just masking, these invisible threats. So, the next time you see a spotless living room, you might want to ask, "Yeah, but how's your air doing?"

According to Dr. Berry, cleaning should be viewed as a public health service, not a beauty contest. "Stop trying to make the dirt look good and start getting rid of it!" If cleaning was a competition, he'd say, "Sure, you won the 'Best Looking Room' award, but you lost the war on allergens."

He pushes for cleaning protocols that focus on health, advocating for evidence-based methods like HEPA filtration and deep cleaning that actually removes contaminants instead of just swirling them around like a bad dance partner at prom. After all, if you're not getting rid of the stuff that can make you sick, what's the point? It's like brushing your teeth with candy—you're not fooling anyone.

Cleaning, he argues, should be about more than just keeping up appearances—it's about keeping people healthy. So, the next time you feel satisfied after a quick tidy-up, just remember it's what's lurking in the air and deep within your carpets that should really keep you up at night. Dr. Berry has made it clear: you can either clean for health, or you can just keep putting on that show for appearances. But if you choose the latter, don't be surprised if your home's a little less Martha Stewart and a little more "House of Hidden Germs."



Dr. Michael Berry's advice isn't just food for thought—it's more like a five-course meal with dessert. His message that "cleaning for health is more important than cleaning for appearance" is a wake-up call to those of us who think a freshly mopped floor means the job's done. Spoiler alert: it's not. The real work is in tackling those invisible nasties that could be messing with your health.

So, the next time you find yourself admiring that sparkling clean countertop, take a moment to ask: what would Dr. Berry say? Probably something like, "Great! Now where's your HEPA filter?" Because in the end, the only thing worse than a dirty house is a clean house that's secretly dirty. And with Berry's advice, there's no excuse for letting germs win the beauty contest.

HURRICANE MILTON: THE UNINVITED GUEST WHO FORGOT TO WIPE HIS FEET

A Client's Journey Through the Storm

Back in October, we faced a tough spell with back-to-back hurricanes, Helene and Milton. While Florida is no stranger to storms, the relentless power of these two tested the resilience of many. A week after Milton had barreled through Sarasota, just 30 straight-line miles away, I received a call from a long-time client in St. Petersburg Beach. Her voice, usually full of warmth, was edged with uncertainty, and I could tell she needed more than just cleaning services—she needed reassurance that everything would be okay.

Two years ago, we cleaned ten beautiful area rugs for her. They were vibrant and full of character, each one telling its own story. After the cleaning, she asked if we could put them under the billiard table in the living room, so we carefully stored them for her as she had requested. But when Milton made landfall just south of St. Petersburg Beach, it brought with it an unexpected wave of challenges. Her home, a single-story, on-grade block construction, took on two feet of water. Though the predicted storm surge was mitigated with Milton moving slightly south, it was still enough to cause significant damage.

The floodwater that swept through her home was what we call Category 3 water, or "*black water*." It's the kind of water you don't want anywhere near your cherished possessions, as it contains not only rain but also a mix of contaminants like bacteria, chemicals, and debris. It's destructive and can ruin even the most durable of items.

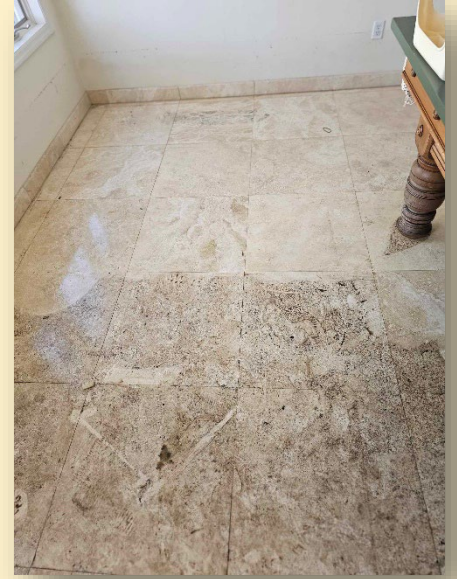
When Nathan and I arrived, we knew it wouldn't be an easy task. As we began to pull the rolled-up area rugs from beneath the billiard table, our hearts sank. A cornucopia of dyes was bleeding out of the rugs, creating a sad, colorful reminder of the storm's aftermath. I gently explained to our client that these rugs, which she had cherished for so many years, were beyond saving. I could see the look of sadness and disappointment in her eyes—these were not just rugs; they were memories, comfort, and a part of what made her house a home.

Nathan and I stepped outside for a moment to discuss what we could do. We felt the weight of her sadness, and we knew that the news we had just delivered was a hard pill to swallow. After some thought, we decided to take it upon ourselves to do something more. We weren't just there to clean—we were there to bring a glimmer of hope.

We decided to clean the marble floor in the entire living room. It wasn't part of the original plan, but it was something we felt we could do to help her see a bit of light through the storm's dark clouds. As we worked, scrubbing away the grime and remnants of Milton, a small but visible transformation began to take place. The marble shone brighter, reflecting light in a way that felt hopeful.

When we were finished, she looked at the freshly cleaned floor, and for the first time since we arrived, she smiled. It was a simple act, but it made a world of difference. It gave her hope that with a lot of work, the remnants of Milton could be managed, and that someday, this chapter would be in her rearview mirror.

In times like these, it's not just about cleaning rugs or floors—it's about being there for our clients, helping them see that even after the darkest storms, there is always the possibility of a brighter day. And that's what we're here for. To help, to listen, and to make things just a little bit better, one step at a time. After all, we aren't in the *cleaning business*, we are in the *caring business*.



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Thanksgiving Spill Survival Guide: Carpet, Rug & Upholstery Edition

Beef Gravy

What to Do:

1. Blot the spill with a paper towel to remove excess grease.
2. Mix warm water with a few drops of dishwashing liquid (not too much soap).
3. Dab the mixture onto the stain with a clean cloth, working from the outside in.
4. Rinse with warm water and blot dry.

Cranberry Sauce

What to Do:

1. Carefully scrape off any excess sauce without pushing it deeper into the fibers.
2. Mix one tablespoon of white vinegar with 2/3 cup rubbing alcohol.
3. Use a sponge to dab the solution onto the stain, blotting from the outside in.
4. Rinse with water and dry with a clean towel.

Red Wine

What to Do:

1. Blot as much wine as possible immediately (don't rub!).
2. Sprinkle salt or baking soda on the stain to absorb the remaining liquid.
3. After 10-15 minutes, vacuum up the salt.
4. Mix two cups of water with a tablespoon of dishwashing liquid and a tablespoon of vinegar. Blot the stain gently until it fades.
5. Rinse and blot dry.

Pumpkin Pie

What to Do:

1. Scrape off the excess filling without grinding it deeper.
2. Mix a tablespoon of dish soap with two cups of water and blot the spot using a sponge.
3. Rinse with warm water and blot dry.
4. If the stain persists, try a small amount of hydrogen peroxide—just be sure to test in a hidden spot first!

Mashed Potatoes & Butter

What to Do:

1. Scrape off the excess and sprinkle cornstarch or baking soda to absorb oils.
2. Let it sit for about 15 minutes before vacuuming.
3. Dab the area with a mixture of warm water and dish soap, then rinse and blot dry.

Turkey Grease

What to Do:

1. Blot with paper towels to soak up as much grease as possible.
2. Sprinkle baking soda or cornstarch over the area and let it sit for 15 minutes to absorb oils.
3. Vacuum up the powder and use a water/dish soap mixture to dab the stain.
4. Rinse and blot.

Pecan Pie

What to Do:

1. Scrape off as much of the pie filling as possible.
2. Blot the area with warm water and a few drops of dish soap.
3. If syrup remains, apply a solution of vinegar and water to lift the sticky residue.

Pro Tips for All Stains:

- Always blot, never rub!
- Test cleaning solutions on a hidden area first.
- If a stain doesn't budge, call us at (727) 460-7749.

This chart will keep your carpet, rugs, and upholstery looking festive and fresh throughout the holiday season!

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Jerry@carpetexpert.net