

LIVELIFEBIG™

NEWSLETTER

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“David, Don’t Stand on the CHEESE!”

By Dan Koprowski

In honor of Autism Awareness Month, we’re sharing a story written by our Disability Team’s Director of Client Onboarding, Jennifer Koprowski’s husband, Dan. This month is for increasing awareness, understanding, and acceptance of people with autism and we think this story is a beautiful way to do just that.

“David, don’t stand on the cheese!”

Those words actually came out of my mouth. Why? Because my then-3-year-old autistic son was standing on a big block of cheddar cheese in the middle of the kitchen floor, of course.

There were other strange exhortations. “David, stop sticking the bologna to the window” comes to mind. Perhaps my favorite, and one that’s sure to attract attention in any parking lot, is “David, don’t lick that car!” Truth be told, this happened so often that we’ve forgotten all the unusual combinations of words we’ve been required to string together over the years.

When David was young, we unconsciously chalked the bizarreness of each of these behaviors up to our son’s autism. We just assumed that he acted a little strangely because he wasn’t “neuro-typical.”

We knew he didn’t process sensory input the same as most people and just figured that some of these other things were extensions of the same phenomenon. Shows how much we knew. We have a daughter too, and she’s as typical as David is autistic. Never stops talking, our “typical” child. Never stops moving and shaking. Like most kids, she’s an avid explorer and something of a scientist, at least insofar as experimentation

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Jennifer & Dan with their son, David.



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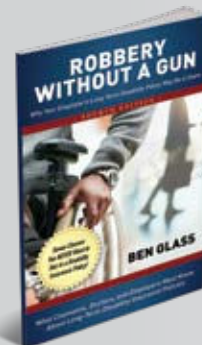
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ERISA disability insurance

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"David, don't stand on the cheese!"

makes one a scientist. And you know what? We have to tell her to stop cutting her own hair, stop eating playdough, and stop watering the dog. Those things aren't really so far removed from cheese-standing, bologna-sticking and car-licking, are they? Okay, maybe, but the point is that kids—all of them—require special handling sometimes.

That's the point of this essay, really: to remind us that all of our kids, typical or otherwise, are going to act like *kids*.

I used to watch my son as he sat at the computer and played the same "Reader Rabbit" game over, and over, and over. At first glance, he seemed unnaturally fixated on the screen and, again, I chalked it up to his autism. Then I remember how I used to obsess over a junior high friend's new Atari system, and the difference doesn't seem so big.

We often tried in vain to solve a crying spell or temper tantrum. We lowered lights, changed sound levels in the room, endeavored to remove stimuli that might be setting David off. It was only later, when things quieted down, that it dawned on us that he was a child and might just have been frustrated because he didn't get his way.

It's amazing how quickly we attribute a special needs kids' behavior to whatever condition makes him or her "special." Too often, I think, parents of special needs kids forget to look for the simple causes of common problems. We see hoof prints, and rather than looking for horses, we look for zebras.

Simply put, we look past our kids' "typical" behavior. We can, perhaps, take a cue from our typical children and remember that even an autistic child is, above all things, a child, and can be expected to behave accordingly.

That being the case, I encourage the parents of autistic children to heighten their awareness of the normal aspects of their kids' behavior. Rejoice in some of the temper tantrums and crying jags. I know that sounds ridiculous, but what you're seeing in some of that behavior is normal. Think about it:

your kid, who seems chronically disengaged from the world, is essentially expressing an opinion. We can't condone every behavior, because discipline is still part of parenting, but we *can* stop, look and listen to our kids a little more.

Observe your kid's behavior carefully; pick out and build on that which seems typical. You might be pleasantly surprised by the result. Take some time to separate the truly autistic behaviors from the more typical ones that might be masked by their presentation.

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You might find that your kids, even the most involved of them, are more normal than you thought. That should do your heart some good and might make the next trip to the mall a little easier. Look around; your kid isn't the only one fixated on the Disney video playing on the 14 television screens in some store window.

Focusing on that which makes our kids typical is a good way to relieve some of the stress of dealing with the not-so-typical. It's also a healthy reminder that, despite the sometimes-unusual nature of our kids' behavior, they have the capacity to fit into our communities. In our continuing efforts to increase public awareness of autism, let's accentuate the positive and strive by example to encourage people to see our kids as kids, first and foremost.

David is almost 27 now and doesn't stand on cheese anymore. That and countless other behaviors have come and gone, some never to return, others that reappear after long absences. He still spends his fair share of time exploring the atypical realms of human behavior, and there's rarely a day when we don't wonder why he's doing something the way he's doing it. The challenges – ours and his – never end. But through it all, David still shows flashes of behavior that let us know he's in there, somewhere, trying desperately to understand, and make himself understood in the world around him. Just like everybody else. ■

Earth Day



By: Nadia Iacoletti, one of our rockstar interns

Did you know that up until 1970, many Americans were oblivious to the environmental destruction caused by years and years of industrial development? Thanks to one junior senator from Wisconsin, every year the world celebrates our planet on April 22nd, and millions are more aware of the importance of protecting the environment.

The year is 1969. A massive oil spill has just occurred off the coast of California, and Senator Gaylord Nelson decides that something must be done to raise awareness about the deterioration of the environment. Drawing inspiration from the anti-war movement, he recruits Congressman Pete McCloskey and activist Denis Hayes to help organize teach-ins on college campuses. The day they chose to hold them was April 22nd.

The movement quickly spread across the nation. April 22nd was quickly coined “Earth Day” and soon many organizations, faith groups, and around 20 million Americans joined the fight to save the environment. Rallies and

protests were held coast to coast, eventually leading to significant gains in Government regulation that continue to protect the environment today. Before 1971, the Environmental Protection Agency was created, and the Clean Air Act, National Environmental Education Act, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act were passed. Within the rest of the decade, the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act were passed as well.

Twenty years after the first Earth Day, the movement went global. In 1990, 200 million people advocated for the health of the planet in various forms, helping to pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit. Senator Nelson was

eventually awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his role as the founder of Earth Day.

Today, as environmental threats are more prevalent than ever, Earth Day holds a unique sense of urgency, unlike any other holiday. The time to act is now, because if we as a global community do not change our ways, we will surely face severe consequences in the years ahead. Pollution, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, deforestation, and more are all pressing issues that endanger every form of life on the planet. This year while observing and celebrating Earth Day, think of the change one junior senator was able to make. After all, there is no planet B. ■

Reminder About Our Firm’s Communication Policy

Our promise to you is that while we are working on your case, we don’t take inbound phone calls, faxes or emails. Ben Glass takes no inbound unscheduled phone calls whatsoever. It makes him much more productive and helps get your case resolved faster. You can always call the office at 703-544-7876 and schedule an in-person or phone appointment, usually within 24-48 hours. This is a lot better than the endless game of “phone tag” played by most businesses today. Remember, too, that email is “quick,” but is checked no more than twice a day. Replies are then scheduled into the calendar. So if it’s really important, don’t email—call the office instead.

This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, ERISA disability, and small business issues. It is not intended to be legal advice. Every case is different. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.

INSIDE THE MIND OF

BEN GLASS



JALLOH BRINGS JOY IN HIS WORK

I want to tell you about a great friend of BenGlassLaw, Alusine Jalloh. He tells us to call him “Jalloh,” since its easier for us to pronounce and remember. Jalloh works very hard. He drives one of those very large Fed Ex trucks and it is filled with packages each day when he arrives at the distribution center. He often does not get home to his wife and children until after 9:00 at night. Even during peak holiday season, he worked his truck and delivered hundreds of packages a day by himself.

Jalloh comes to our office almost every day, even if he doesn't have a package for us. I know when he is here because I can hear his cheery voice talking to our Director of Happiness, Susie. Jalloh has a joyful spirit. He is from Sierra Leone, a small country on the west coast of Africa. He will often spend a few minutes with us, enjoying an afternoon snack and soda. In those few minutes, we often talk about his journey and his values. He came to America to give his wife and three children the best opportunity for success.

Next time you hear of someone complaining about America or “big corporations taking over” or “not enough opportunity to make a living” invite them in. I'll set up the meeting and they can take that complaint to Jalloh. ■



My New Book

Speaking of refereeing, I've launched my latest book, ***You, a Teenage Soccer Referee***. Information at TeenageSoccerReferee.com. You should buy the book if (1) you are a teenager and you have started (or are thinking about) refereeing; (2) you are the parent of a young referee – there are important things you need to know to make your child's journey successful; (3) you are an adult in youth sports and you are concerned about the culture – the book has ideas about how you can help reset youth sports in America. ■

photo credit Dan Glass www.DanGlassPhotography.com

Ben Glass speaking to local high school soccer referees about “Being a Leader on the Field.”

Inside The Mind of Ben Glass

In addition to running his own practice AND a separate business that teaches lawyers how to grow great businesses, Ben also coaches other small biz owners on how to start and grow a business that leads to your perfect life. Ben has a limited number of slots available for coaching non-lawyers in 2022. If interested, reach out to Ben at ben@benglasslaw.com. If you are a lawyer, check out GreatLegalMarketing.com



Books I am Reading Now



- ***Tribe of Millionaires, What if One Choice Could Change Everything?***
By David Osborn and Pat Hiban
- ***Confessions of a Gold Bug, The Untold Story of how America's Best Known Gold Advocate Beat the Odds in Business, Investments and His Personal Life***
By James Blanchard
- ***Christian Minimalism, Simple Steps for Abundant Living***
By Becca Ehrlich

WHAT WOULD BEN SAY

NOT SO FUN FACT: In the last three years over 50,000 high school referees and umpires have quit. COVID made it difficult for a lot of older officials to come back. The layoff was too long. For many, though, the increase in abuse by coaches and spectators has just made it too hard. Why bother?

THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT WILL CHANGE THE TRAJECTORY OF YOUR LIFE. If your life/business is not where you want it to be there are two big things to think about changing. (1) Your mindset. (2) Your actions. It's an absolute shame that kids can graduate from high school without being introduced to books like Think and Grow Rich, Atlas Shrugged, and Deep Work. How about a mandatory course on Steven Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Successful people? The formulas for living the life you want to live are not hidden. They do involve **rational thought** followed by **deliberate action**. I'm taking on a very limited number of non-lawyer coaching clients. If you are serious about changing your life and are willing to commit at least a year to learning the journey, reach out. Ben@benglasslaw.com

WE HAVE A LOT OF VERY GOOD ONLINE REVIEWS. If at least some of your conversations with friends are not leaving you in deep thought, then you need new friends or you need to carve out some quality time to talk about important things with good friends. Everyone needs a 'board of directors' or 'advisory team' to get better at life. It's really hard to do this on your own.

YOUR LIVE LIFE BIG ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS MONTH. Reach out to someone you don't know and bring joy to their day. It's not that hard. The next time you say "how are you" to someone you don't know that well, listen to their answer. Be curious. Ask them to tell you what they do. Try to learn something from the conversation. Don't let them "get away" with "fine." Be genuinely interested in making their day by making them feel important by your curiosity. ■



Excising Negativity

This month, we had an angry call from a local doctor about our handling of a case. Turns out that a little over a year ago, we'd referred a patient to her because we needed the patient evaluated for an injury and his treating doctors (all U.S. Government employees) were refusing to participate in his auto accident case. She'd sent us a bill that got mis-filed (our mistake). When we called at the close of his case to check his outstanding balances, she laid into our team member about the fact that the bill had gone unpaid for so long.



When I say, "laid into," I'm talking about a fifteen-minute rant in which she threatened to bring in the "Inspector General" (whatever role that is) to get to the bottom of why we hadn't paid her. She went so far as to make our staff member repeat the phrase "I, _____, apologize to you Dr. _____ for this inconvenience."

Because all our calls are recorded, I immediately went back and listened to the call. What I found was that our team member did exactly what we would have wanted... she stayed calm, told the doctor she understood her frustration, and tried to solve the problem. It didn't help.

What do you do with that kind of negativity?

We've decided to excise it from our office. I sent the recording of the phone call off to be transcribed and sent it to the doctor along with her check. I've let that doctor know that she is now on our no-fly list. Yes, we maintain a list of providers that we won't do business with... fortunately that list is short... but we have a list of doctors' offices where – if the potential client says their name in a consultation – we'll tell the client "Sorry, we can't help you."

Life is too short to deal with that kind of toxicity over a \$750 bill that no one from her office had followed up on in a year. ■

BESTS OF THE MONTH

What I'm Reading

Ride of a Lifetime – Bob Iger;

Vivid Vision – Cameron Herold;

Complete Guide to Fasting – Dr. Jason Fung

What I'm Watching

Vikings Valhalla and *Love Is Blind 2* on Netflix.
Hey, we all get guilty pleasures, don't we?!

What I'm Listening to

Lots of *Dr. Dre* since the Super Bowl! But also, the
Main Street Business and *Tribe of Millionaires*
Podcasts



Goodbye Old Friend

Sad news in the Glass household. This month we said goodbye to Doug, our 14-year-old German Shepherd mix who has lived with Krista and I since 2010. We adopted Doug early in our marriage from Lost Dog Rescue. We didn't realize that we'd named him "Doug Glass" (Douglas) until the receptionist at our vet pointed out how funny her office thought his name was. This taught us a lesson about saying the full name out loud when selecting names for our kids.

Despite the fact that he lost his mind every single time mail was dropped into the mail slot of our first home, he was a good dog.

Doug enjoyed few things more than lounging in the sunbeam on our back porch or bits of leftover steak handed down from the table. The Glass bros will miss him. ■

BGL's Best Bites:

CHUTNEY CHEESE BALL



The curry powder makes this a beautiful yellow color that's perfect for serving with Pepperidge Farm Butterfly Crackers to make a perfect appetizer for Easter or spring celebrations.

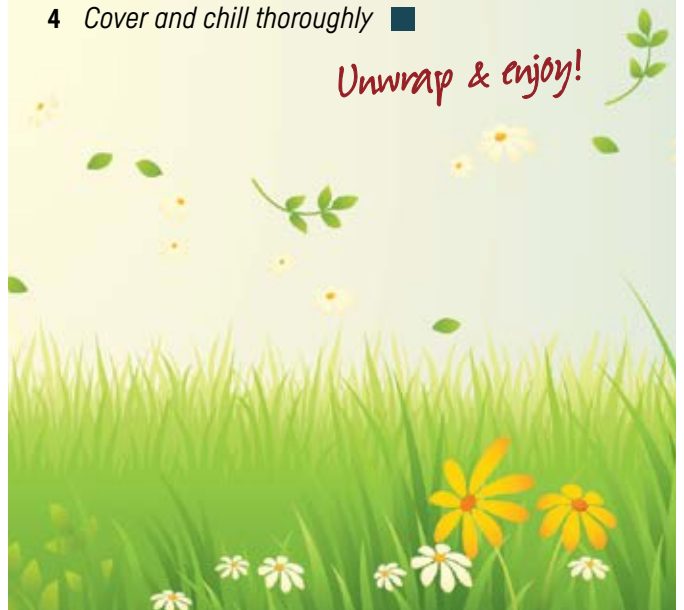
Ingredients:

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 5 oz. Major Grey chutney (or your favorite mango chutney)
- 1 t. curry powder (or more to taste)
- ½ t. ground ginger
- ½ c. chopped pecans (optional)
- ½ c. flaked coconut

Instructions:

- 1 Use a mixer to combine all ingredients except the coconut into a bowl.
- 2 Form into a log or ball
- 3 Roll in coconut or pat flaked coconut onto cheese mixture maintaining shape
- 4 Cover and chill thoroughly ■

Unwrap & enjoy!



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MEET KRISTA | BGL'S NEWEST TEAM MEMBER

I recently joined BenGlassLaw as the Human Resources Director. I've worked in HR for almost a decade and received my SHRM-CP certification in 2018. I'm excited about this opportunity not only because I love working with small companies, but I get to work with my husband and father-in-law. While this might seem like an unconventional move, I think it will make Thanksgiving dinner conversations a lot more interesting.

Growing up in Pennsylvania I always thought I'd have a career in law enforcement. I was part of a police cadet program in middle school and graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Delaware. After college I jumped around to a few different jobs (legal assistant, logistics specialist) but never took a job in law enforcement. Not to worry, I think everything happens for a reason. I met my husband while working at law firm back in 2007 and now over 10 years later I've come full circle to working with him again.

I'm a mother to 3 energetic boys (ages 3, 7 and 8). They keep me busy when I'm not working or working out. We love to watch Marvel movies, go to the beach and play boardgames. I'm a huge Harry Potter fan and I'll use any excuse to make my family wear matching shirts with me. ■



Krista Glass with her husband Brian and their three boys