

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

December 2016

Nothing is Impossible

GARY SINISE

USING STAR
POWER TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE

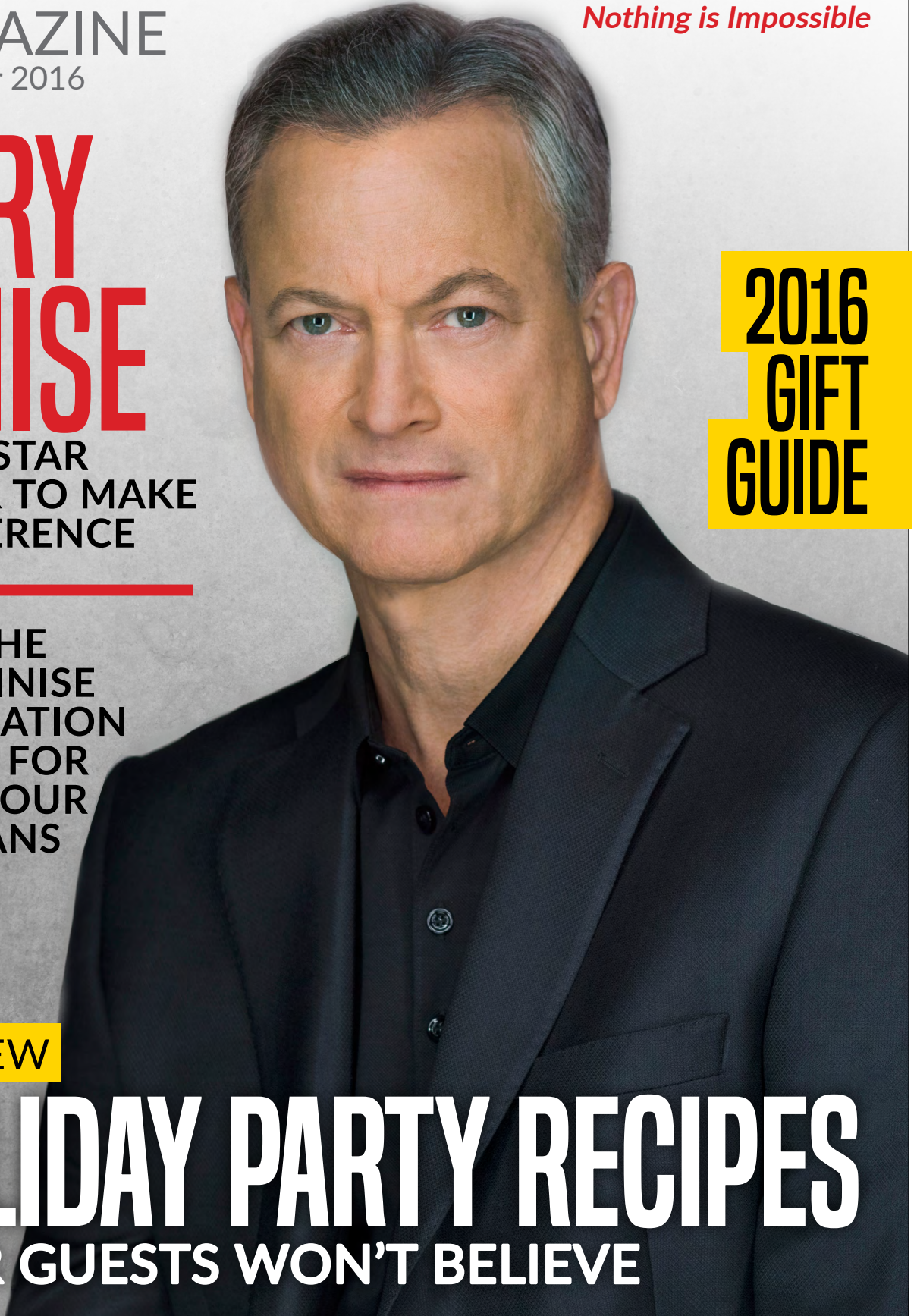
HOW THE
GARY SINISE
FOUNDATION
FIGHTS FOR
ALL OF OUR
VETERANS

2016
GIFT
GUIDE

ALL NEW

HOLIDAY PARTY RECIPES

YOUR GUESTS WON'T BELIEVE



ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

Nothing is Impossible

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THE SEASON OF GIVING

We crafted this issue with the themes of the season in mind. With the features on Gary Sinise (Pg. 14) and Michael Schlitz (Pg. 23), we invite you to remember causes bigger than yourself. In Gail's column on Pg. 5, she shares her methods for keeping stress at bay, and expert panelist Heather Quinlan reminds us on Pg. 41 to find meditation in everyday tasks.

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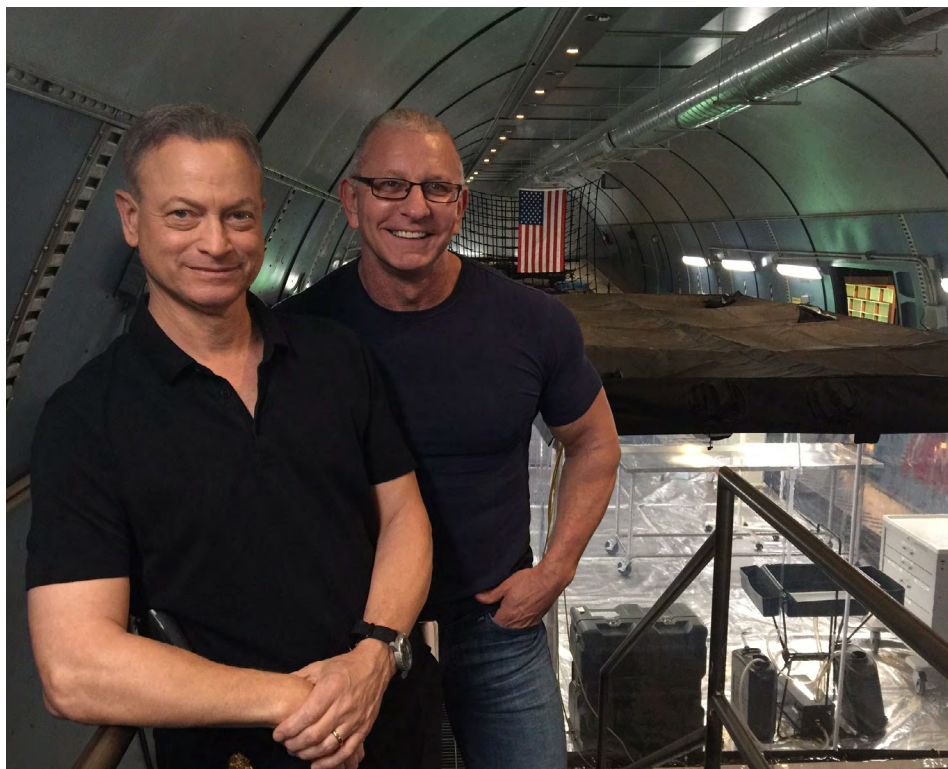
GARY SINISE, A TRUE PATRIOT

I couldn't ask for a better friend. Neither could our military.

When I first started *Robert Irvine Magazine* I knew that the first person we'd have on the cover after myself was my good friend Gary Sinise. This month, I'm proud to do just that. Not only is Gary an incredibly gifted actor and one of the nicest, most generous human beings you could ever meet, he has dedicated his life to improving the lives of our veterans.

As you'll read in our cover interview on page 14, supporting our veterans has been a cause that predates Gary's fame and fortune. He started by doing what we can all do, which is volunteer. After decades of volunteer service he formed the Gary Sinise Foundation, which has built custom smart homes and had an incredibly positive impact on the lives of so many veterans.

Gary has been called the new Bob Hope, a title he brushes aside with characteristic humility. But I believe the label is an apt one, and I've been proud to stand by him and contribute over the last few years, and I look forward to doing the same for years to come. Gary isn't just a bright light for our veterans, but an inspiration to me; I created the Robert Irvine Foundation with his example and guidance, hoping to carve out another place in this world where our veterans can find the support they deserve.



Robert and Gary on the set of *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders*.

I believe that the beacon of a truly free nation like ours is needed now more than ever in the world. The blanket of freedom we enjoy is provided by our soldiers. Everything we have falls apart if we forget those brave men and women. Gary's interview underscores this point. Our focus on the sacrifice of Robbi Schlitz, the mother of wounded veteran and GSF ambassador Michael Schlitz (on Pg. 23) proves how important this is. And despite the great works of the GSF and others like it, I believe we're

still falling short of providing the support our veterans need. When you're done reading the issue, consider donating to the Gary Sinise Foundation [HERE](#). As Gary often says, "We can never do enough for our veterans, but we can always do a little more."

Yours in health,

A stylized, handwritten signature of Robert Irvine in black ink.

THE WAY THROUGH

The holiday season is a pressure cooker of stress.
Personal time can be your safety valve. BY GAIL KIM-IRVINE

In December, it feels like every loose end in your life needs to be tied off. It's as if December 31 is a cliff that you're rushing toward, rather than an arbitrary date on a calendar. I do my best to remind myself that I don't need to square away every little thing, but I have a tendency to fall for the illusion anyway. One can only see the words "year-end" so many times until you feel like they have to finish every single project you've started, priorities be damned.

The end of the year can be especially hard for my personality type; I am a planner, always thinking of what I need to do next, and I often don't feel like I have a right to relax unless I cross everything off of my to-do list.

That's where I've been able to learn from Robert. My husband is a workaholic, a machine who seems to go 24/7. The number of commitments he has—between his businesses, live shows, and USO tours—is huge. He might not have a day off for weeks at a time. When he finally does hit a lull in the schedule, he schedules a day to sleep in, work out, and recharge his batteries. In that one day, he's able to refocus all of his energy with a bit of extra sleep and a good workout. I've learned that if you follow those two points you can get through any life stress.

For me, the gym has always been



Follow Gail on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

a priority. Relaxing has been tougher. But I've been getting better at scheduling time for myself and I can't recommend it highly enough for this time of year. Sometimes I'll use my recharge day to meet with friends and see a movie. Sometimes I schedule an hour-long bath. It can seem selfish in the face of how much you think you have to get done, but without that time to yourself, you're not going to get much done at all! At first, stress is just a feeling, but if

you let it simmer for too long it starts to manifest itself in physical symptoms. That's when your body breaks down, you get sick, and you can't get out of bed. Our bodies are smarter than us, and will literally force us to chill out by making us feel like crap.

I believe you should always treat the gym like an important business meeting. Schedule it and don't miss it for anything. Add your personal days into the mix and you'll get through the holidays stress-free.

ZIKA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Separating fact from hype.
By Dr. Michael Schutz

Q: “I have to travel for business to an area that’s had several cases of the Zika virus. How dangerous is it and what can I do to protect myself?”

—James K., via the web

A: Zika is a virus that is transmitted by blood or bodily fluids exposure. The usual route of transmission is from a mosquito to bite. The mosquito bites an infected person and becomes infected, then the mosquito bites the next person and that person is exposed to the virus. The route of transmission is similar to Malaria or West Nile virus. The virus can also be transmitted via sexual relations or from mother to child.

The transmission of the virus from mother to an unborn child is the biggest risk of Zika virus infection. This results in neurologic problems for the child including microcephaly (or an abnormally small head) and other severe developmental neurologic problems. It is not known if this neurological damage occurs if the mother becomes infected during pregnancy or before, or



how long the infection has to be present before damage occurs. Adults can be affected with Guillain Barre syndrome which affects the peripheral nerves.

The most important way to prevent infection is to prevent the mosquito bite. This involves a number of steps.

1) Apply insect repellent on exposed skin when going outside.

EPA registered insect repellent products are the most effective. Some products are not suitable based on age. Check the label. If using sunscreen and insect repellent together, put on the sunscreen first.

2) Wear long sleeved shirts and pants to reduce the exposed skin area. You can treat the clothes with permethrin according to

DOCTOR SCHUTZ

product directions.

3) Use screens or air conditioning to keep mosquitos outside and mosquito netting if sleeping outdoors.

4) Reduce or eliminate standing water to reduce mosquito populations. This should be done weekly. The water can be found in old tires, buckets, flower pots, toys, or any object that can hold even the smallest amount of water.

5) Pregnant women or women who are thinking about becoming pregnant should avoid travel to areas where Zika is found. If in doubt, discuss this with your physician. Blood tests can tell if you have been exposed to the virus.

6) Miami Dade county in Florida and Puerto Rico have had documented Zika transmission by mosquito. If you or your partner are planning a pregnancy, contact her physician to discuss prevention.

Sexual contact can also spread the disease. Safe sexual practices including use of condoms can reduce the risk, especially if you are thinking about becoming pregnant in the future. Testing for infection is very important to better assess the risk of infection in pregnancy and to identify risk.

There is no treatment for Zika and prevention is the key. If you have any questions, contact your health care provider for more information.

Adapted from the CDC Guidelines
Dr. Michael Schutz is a urologist practicing at the Jersey Urology Group in Somers Point, NJ.



Women who are or may become pregnant need to be especially vigilant about Zika. Men can also contract Zika and spread it through sexual contact. If you or your partner have been to an area with known cases of Zika, ask your doctor to be tested for the virus.

ONE PIECE AT A TIME

They may not feel like much, but tiny piecemeal workouts add up in the long run.



Our workouts of the month address the issue of being short on time with a series of 20-30 minute workouts. The rationale behind those workouts: Intensity takes the place of time.

But what do you do if you don't even have that kind of time? You could try an all-out blitz of situps, pushups, pullups, and squat jumps for as much time as you have, even if it's only 5 minutes. And why would you want to do that? You already knew you could do quick, simple exercises in a pinch, but you've always avoided it because

it seemed like doing so isn't even effective. But according to a recent study, it turns out that ultra-short but intense duration exercise might be a lot more effective than previously thought.

The researchers found that just one minute of all-out exercise delivered the same benefits as 45 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise. Bear in mind that the study has yet to be duplicated and that we don't recommend trying to cram a one-hour workout into 60 seconds. Nevertheless, the finding is quite promising and lends more credence

to the benefits of high intensity interval training (HIIT). At the very least, this new study should encourage you to do what exercise you can whenever you can.

Whether it's situps and pushups during commercial breaks, a brisk walk after dinner to help you digest (and sleep better), or holding a plank while customer service has you on hold, every little bit adds up in the long run. The more you start to look at free time in your life as an opportunity to exercise, the fitter, healthier, and happier you're going to be.

IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

FIT IN NO TIME

Crunched for time? These 3 workouts will get you in out of the gym in under 30 minutes.



WORKOUT #1: OFF AND RUNNING

Directions: Perform the following workout as a circuit. After a 5-10-minute warmup, set a timer for 20 minutes. Don't rest between exercises. Continue the circuit until 20 minutes is up.

EXERCISE	REPS
Run/Jog	400 Meters
Lat Pulldown	12
Pushup	10
Walking Lunge	20
Hammer Curl	15
Plank	30 seconds

IN THE GYM: WORKOUT OF THE MONTH

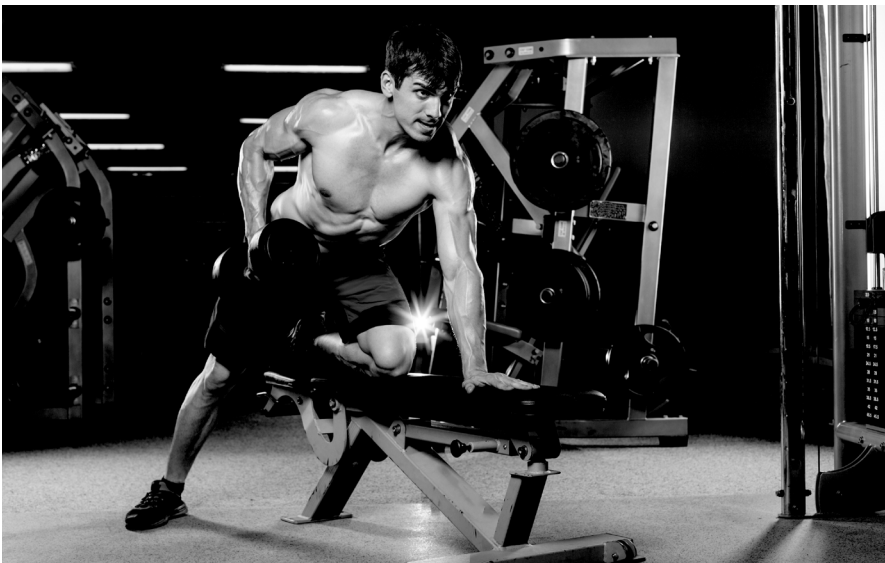


WORKOUT #2: DUMBBELLS ONLY

Directions: Perform the following workout as a circuit after a 5-10-minute warmup. Don't rest between exercises and rest only 1 minute at the end of each circuit. Perform 15 reps of each exercise. Complete the circuit 4 times through.

EXERCISE

Dumbbell Squat
Dumbbell Bench Press
Dumbbell Row
Dumbbell Shoulder Press
Decline Situp



WORKOUT #3: BARBELL ONLY

Directions: Perform the following workout as a circuit. After a 5-10 minute warmup, set a timer for 20 minutes. Don't rest between exercises. Perform 15 reps of each exercise. Continue the circuit until 20 minutes is up, then cool down.

EXERCISE

Barbell Overhead Press
Barbell Curl
Lying Barbell Triceps Extension
Barbell Squat
Barbell Row
Barbell Upright Row
Plank (60 seconds)



IN THE KITCHEN: PRO TIPS



EASIER THAN PIE

Try these simple baked apples for a delicious winter treat—
with no added fat, sugar, or guilt.

What makes apple pie so great? Is it the crisp golden crust? The scoop of vanilla ice cream on top? Or is it the warm, soft apples? Of course we'd be lying if we said we didn't love the combination of all three, but ultimately, it's the apples that carry the day. How can we be so definitive? Try this classic technique for baked apples: Just core the apples, cut them in half, dust them with cinnamon, then set them on a cookie sheet and put them into a 375-degree oven

for 30 minutes. Leave the skins on as this helps hold the apple together as it softens. The end product is as irresistible as the center of an apple pie and proves that you don't need to add any sugar; as the natural sugars in the apples melt and combine with the cinnamon, you get a rich and tasty treat. The aroma that fills your house is a nice bonus. Just be sure to make extra; people tend to come out of the woodwork when they smell these.

BBQ DRY-RUBBED PORK ROAST

A painless way to cut back on carbs.



SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 tsp paprika
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp dry oregano
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 sirloin-tip pork roast (2 pounds)

MAKE IT

- 1) Preheat a grill to medium heat
- 2) Combine all dry rub ingredients in a bowl.
- 3) Thoroughly cover the pork roast with the dry rub.
- 4) If possible, place the roast on an area of the grill with indirect heat. Otherwise, place it in a roasting pan to prevent the bottom from burning.
- 5) Cover the grill and cook for 30 to 45 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 145 degrees. Allow the roast to rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.

THE MACROS

- CALORIES: 308
- PROTEIN: 42 g
- FAT: 10 g
- CARBS: 5 g

STEAK AU POIVRE



Turn your kitchen into a steakhouse.

SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

¼ cup + 2 tbsp grapeseed oil
2 shallots, thick julienned
1 lb crimini mushrooms, stemmed and quartered
3 oz brandy
1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
3 oz heavy cream
6 strip steaks (8 oz)
4 tbsp cracked black pepper
Sea salt

MAKE IT

1) Heat a large saute pan over medium-high heat. Add 2 tbsp of grapeseed oil, then add the shallots and all the mushrooms. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until mushrooms are slightly caramelized. Deglaze carefully with the brandy (it can catch fire).
2) Add the thyme and heavy cream. Continue to cook the mushroom-shallot mixture and allow the cream to reduce in the pan for 3 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
3) Heat 2 large pans on high heat and split the ¼ cup of oil between the pans. Crust the beef with

cracked black pepper on one side only. Season with salt. Place the steaks in the hot pans, crust-side down, and sear for 3 minutes.
4) Flip the steaks and sear for another 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and continue to cook to desired temperature. Tent loosely with foil and let rest for 3 minutes before serving with mushrooms.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 686
PROTEIN: 72 g
FAT: 33 g
CARBS: 15 g

GARY SINISE WILL NEVER FORGET



Karen Hill/CBS

When America failed its veterans after Vietnam, the nation compounded the mistakes of an already tragic era, making millions of soldiers and their families feel like their sacrifices had been in vain. Gary Sinise has spent his life fighting to ensure that this terrible period in our history doesn't repeat itself. He has parlayed his fame and fortune into the Gary Sinise Foundation, raising awareness for veterans' issues and building homes for the wounded veterans who need it most.

BY MATT TUTHILL

GARY SINISE

*It is fitting that the face of veteran plight in popular culture turned out to be Gary Sinise. By the time Sinise took on the role of Lt. Dan in 1994's *Forrest Gump*, he had already been actively engaged in volunteering and raising awareness for veteran causes for over a decade. His poignant portrayal of Lt. Dan, wounded in Vietnam and forgotten when he returned home, helped shine a light on a dark period in American history and issue an artful warning to younger generations who hadn't experienced the horror firsthand.*

In 2011, after decades of volunteering and throwing the weight of his celebrity behind veterans causes, he founded the Gary Sinise Foundation to create an even bigger impact. In addition to raising money to build specially adapted smart homes for disabled veterans, the foundation hosts Invincible Spirit Festivals on military bases to raise morale for troops and their families. Sinise is usually front and center with his Lt. Dan Band. Robert is also a mainstay at the festivals. (You can read what the festivals entail and about Robert's involvement [HERE](#).)

*Sinise has enjoyed a long and storied career in theater, television, and film which began when he founded Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company when he was fresh out of high school in 1974. From there he went on to act in dozens of movies including *Forrest Gump*, *Apollo 13*, *The Green Mile*, and *Mission to Mars*, to name just a small handful. Most recently he starred for nine seasons on *CSI: NY* and he is currently starring in *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders*,*



Gary Sinise as Lt. Dan in *Forrest Gump*. At the time of filming, Sinise had already been highly engaged in veteran causes; his brothers-in-law served in Vietnam and opened his eyes to the poor treatment many veterans got when they returned home.

airing Wednesday nights on CBS.

In an exclusive interview with RI Magazine, Sinise says the greatest benefit to a résumé as long as his is the fact that it gives him a bigger platform from which he can help the troops.

RI MAGAZINE: Most people

would be surprised to learn that you took up the cause of improving veterans affairs long before you took the role of Lt. Dan in *Forrest Gump*. What was it that spurred you to take up this cause?

GARY SINISE: It goes back to the late '70's and early '80's when I really

GARY SINISE

started thinking about military service and what our veterans were going through. When I was in high school, the Vietnam War was raging. I remember my parents being very scared that I was going to get drafted, that it was going to go on. The country was being torn apart by divisions over the war. All the college campuses were exploding because there was a draft and lots of people were being drafted into military service who really didn't want to be there.

The Vietnam War was not going well according to the press at that time. As I was in high school, I remember a little bit, but not a lot. The little that I do remember are the casualty reports on television every night. At the height of the war, we were taking 500 to 1,000 casualties a week. It was very devastating. There were many, many wounded. I would notice these news reports, but then I would just go back to being a high school kid worrying about playing in a band, or acting in high school plays and whatnot.

After high school I started a theater company, Steppenwolf Theatre, and I met my wife to be, Moira Harris, through that company in 1976. Through her, I met her two brothers who were Vietnam veterans. Boyd McCanna Harris and Arthur Har-



Sinise speaks at the dedication of a custom built smart home, part of the Gary Sinise Foundation's R.I.S.E. program (Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment). Follow the foundation on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

ris. One was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, the other was a West Point graduate and served as a platoon leader, a lieutenant, and then went back for a second tour as a company commander, a captain, and then became a major.

Then my wife's sister also joined the army out of college and she married a soldier who was a combat medic in Vietnam. I had three Vietnam veterans around me at that time. I began to get this lesson about what it was like to serve in Vietnam, what it was like to come home after the war, how the nation literally turned its back on our veterans. I started to think, "Oh, yeah, I remember all that now." Then I started

to feel guilty because I wasn't really paying attention that much as a high school kid.

I just had this terrible sadness for what happened to our Vietnam veterans. I felt a guilt and a shame that I had been so unaware. I started to try to do something in the Chicago area to support Vietnam veterans and got involved with some local Vietnam veterans groups and ended up doing some theater pieces that were about Vietnam. One of them was written by a group of Vietnam veterans; I rehearsed it in '83 and it opened in '84. I started a program in my theater where we would let veterans in free of charge for that particular play on Tuesday nights.

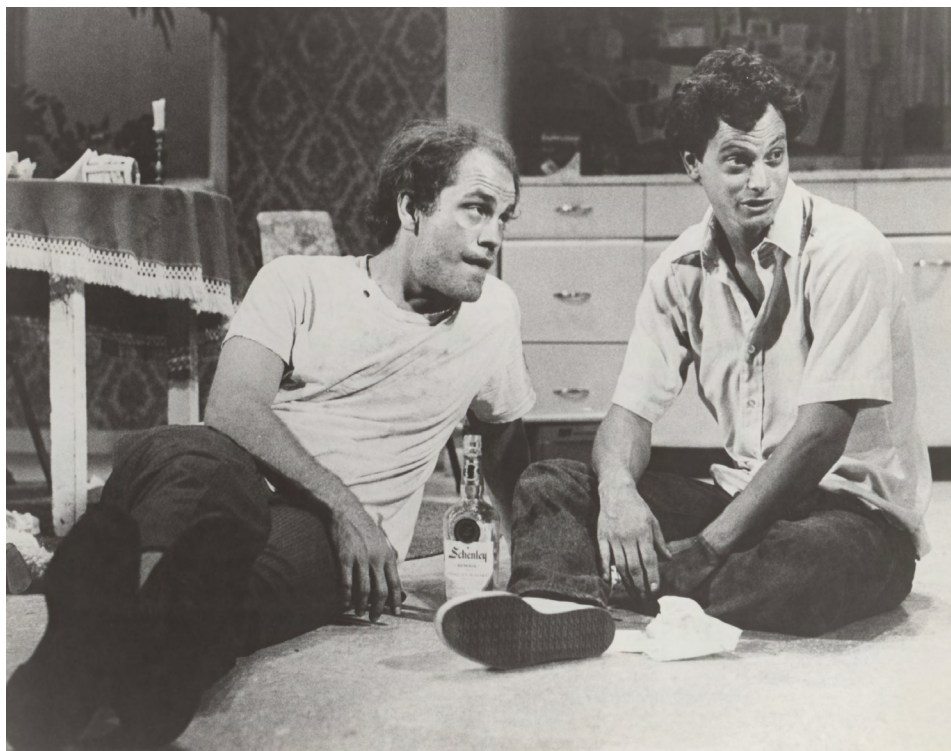
GARY SINISE

Every Tuesday night was a veterans night. We would have 200 veterans out there watching this play. It was very healing for a lot of them because ... This is back in the mid 80s. It was right around the time when the country was starting to say, "Hey, we're sorry for the way you were treated."

In the late 80s and early 90s I supported Vietnam veterans who had seen the play—specifically Tom Lubberda, a Marine, by raising funds to help them build a veterans memorial in Lansing, Illinois. And because I helped them with that, they put my brother-in-law, Boyd on the wall because, unfortunately, right before I ended up doing that play I was talking about, he passed away of cancer. He was a Lieutenant Colonel at the time. I was very sad about that because I was looking forward to showing him the play and telling him how much his influence on me was reflected in my desire to make that a great show.

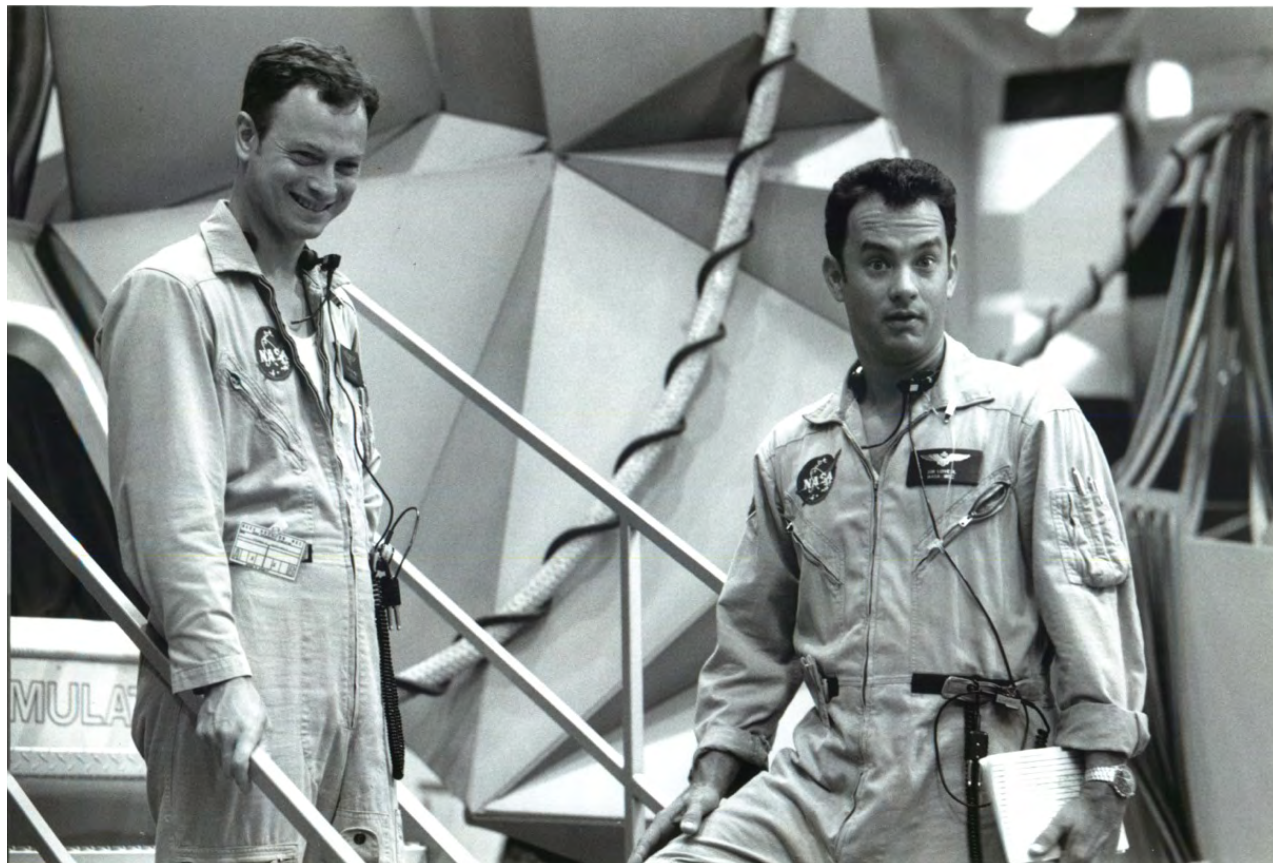
Recently I supported the restoration of that memorial, and as one of my other brothers-in-law, Jack Treese, the combat medic, had passed away on October 1, 2014, Tom Lubberda added Jack's name to the memorial as well. I wasn't expecting that. It was very nice of them to do that.

Over the years, I would do little things here and there to support our Vietnam veterans. Then I had the opportunity, about 10 years later, to audition for *Forrest Gump* and to play the Vietnam veteran. That got me started working with our wounded because he was a wounded soldier. That was the relationship



Top, Sinise acts in a production of *True West* alongside John Malkovich. The two would later star in a made for TV film, *Of Mice and Men*, which Sinise directed. Bottom, Sinise visits with Lt. Colonel Bryan Forney in the ICU of Brooke Army Medical Center. Forney was critically injured with severe burns in a helicopter crash in Thailand. Forney lost his left arm but has recovered.

GARY SINISE



Sinise with Tom Hanks on the set of 1995's *Apollo 13*, their second collaboration in as many years, following 1994's *Forrest Gump*.

that began with the Disabled American Veterans Organization going back to 1994. I've had a 22-year relationship with them.

After September 11, I knew where I was going to place my energy to support my country after those attacks. It was towards the men and women who were deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq in reaction to that attack.

I started volunteering for the USO and to support many, many different military charities, and raising money, and playing concerts, and traveling, and trying to keep awareness up for what our men and women were going through in Iraq and Afghanistan. It all came to a head when I decided that this felt like a calling

to me to serve the men and women who defend us. I decided that I would take the good fortune I've had in my career and apply it to the creation of the Gary Sinise Foundation.

RI: I know one of the signature things that the Gary Sinise Foundation does is build specially adapted smart homes for disabled veterans. How many homes have you built to date?

GS: I've been involved with, or am involved with, over 50 at this point, but in various incarnations. When I started with the first couple of homes that I worked on, I didn't have my foundation. I was doing that by supporting another organi-

zation. We built homes through an entity called Building for America's Bravest. They asked me if I would do a concert to raise money for a quadruple amputee. He was the first surviving quadruple amputee injured in 2009. We've had five of those guys since then. I ended up being involved in building houses for all of them.

After launching my foundation in 2011, we created our R.I.S.E. program, Restoring Independence Supporting Empowerment. We've worked on several projects since our launch, some in collaboration with other organizations, some are in process, and some are slated to go into construction in 2017 and 2018. From the beginning it's over

over 50 that I've been involved with, but at this point all the homes are built under our R.I.S.E. program, supported by many great companies and individuals.

RI: One of your ambassadors, Michael Schlitz—we wrote Part I of his story in November and we have Part II in this issue. What kind of ambassador has he been for the foundation?

GS: I met Mike about six years ago, I think it was 2010. My friend Leeann Tweeden who I'd been on some USO trips with, brought him to the set of *CSI: NY*. Mike had just been to UCLA to go to Operation Mend which is a great program where a number of surgeons and plastic surgeons all come together to try to do corrective surgery on those who have been badly wounded. Mike has undergone dozens and dozens of surgeries (91) as you might suspect.

As the home building effort grew and grew, I called up Mike one day and said, "It would be my honor to build a house for you," and we ended up building a house for Mike. He's a great Army Ranger, very good communicator, resilient guy who's been through a lot, obviously, and has become a pal. At one point, I asked Mike if he would like to be an ambassador for my foundation. As I was expanding, it started to become more difficult for me to continue to shoot TV and then travel all over the place doing events, and speaking. We created the Ambassadors Council as a program of my foun-

dation and started asking certain pals of mine if they would come on board to help raise awareness by doing events for us and speaking on my behalf and for the foundation. Mike has been a great ambassador as has my pal Robert Irvine.

RI: Twenty-two veterans a day commit suicide. I'm sure you've seen that statistic. There's been somewhat of an effort to draw

"I always worry about how our veterans are going to be treated, no matter who the president is."

attention to that, but the 22 Push-up Challenge that's been going around on Facebook hasn't gotten anywhere near the kind of publicity that something like the Ice Bucket Challenge did. That statistic is so huge and so alarming. Why do you think we're still seeing these numbers?

GS: We're going to, unfortunately, face the residual effects of military service, and long, long wars and deployments for years. This has been the longest war in our nation's history. It still goes on. We still have troops in Afghanistan and have had them there for 15 years. That's longer than any conflict we've ever been in. Every effort that we can make to keep awareness up, and to draw attention to where the problems are, and to shine a light on them, we

should make.

The mental health problem is a very serious problem and it's not always combat related. You have people in the military that are stressed out for a number of reasons. Maybe they haven't even been to combat, but the pressure and the strain that is placed on our military is gigantic. Our military—they're trained to kill people. That's the nature of war. That's what you do in war. You fight and you kill people, and you see people get killed and maimed. You see innocents lose their lives and lose their families. You see all kinds of horrific things and then you have to come home from that and try to push on.

That can be very, very difficult. As I said, we've had a number of service members over this long period of time, since September 11, who have deployed over, and over, and over, and over again. The amount of stress that that places on their family and them is gigantic. Imagine a kid, he's eight years old and for the next 10 or 12 years, his mom or dad is gone in war eight or nine times over that 10- to 12-year period. That's a lot of stress on a family. So I believe that we can never do enough to give back and show our support. We've got to keep trying to do our best to do more.

RI: I would argue that the length of the war has worked against it in terms of keeping awareness up for what these guys are facing. In the very beginning of the conflict, there is a ton of news footage that

GARY SINISE

you get from the war zone. Over a decade plus, it starts to taper and it seems like most of the coverage now—yes, you’ll see a brilliant front of the battle lines kind of report on 60 Minutes—but for the vast majority of the time on TV, they’re talking about it in abstract terms as a policy decision that is happening somewhere in Washington. Do you think if we were presented with the face of this more often, we’d understand it better and we wouldn’t tolerate the plight of these veterans?

GS: You’ll get no argument from me on that. I agree with that. That’s absolutely true. This has been a very long war. If our troops are not on the front pages for some big event, or something like that, we tend to forget that we have people continuing to serve in harm’s way. That’s where awareness raising comes in. I’ve tried for 15 years to keep awareness up and to keep reminding people that we have families, military families, sacrificing on a daily basis whether they’re on the front pages or not.

RI: Our President Elect has publicly defamed a Gold Star family as well as John McCain—who I know you supported in ‘08—saying he likes veterans who, “weren’t captured.” Are you worried that veterans affairs won’t be treated with the attention and compassion that they deserve under our new president?

GS: Here’s how I’ll answer that question: I always worry about how our veterans are going to be treated,

no matter who the president is. You always hope that each president will make improvements, but the Veterans Administration is a pretty giant bureaucracy and a pretty big beast to get a handle on. There’s a lot of good people that are trying, but it’s a difficult beast. I’m hopeful that the new president will, as he has said, improve the lives of our veterans. I wish him well and the new administration well on that. I want to see them make improvements to the VA. I’ll also say that it’s always important

to have good solid non-government, non-profit organizations out there serving the needs of the men and the women who serve.

We are the citizens of the United States who benefit from the freedom that is provided by these defenders. To take some responsibility for trying to ensure that they’re taken care of and to place our energies into supporting organizations or helping particular veterans in our own communities—that’s something that we can do. We don’t have to wait around



Sinise with his wife, Moira. The two met at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago, which Sinise co-founded.

GARY SINISE

for the government to do that. Every citizen has an ability to reach out to somebody and help them.

RI: Excellent point. You've been called the new Bob Hope. Is that a nickname that you embrace?

GS: Those are very big shoes to fill. I'm just trying to do my part.

RI: You've had an incredibly storied career and been in some films—like *Forrest Gump* and *Apollo 13*—that will go down as a couple of the all-time greats. Are you at a point in your career where you do appreciate looking back at things like that or are you not much for nostalgia?

GS: I'm somebody who has been blessed with some good success. The way I look at that success now is through the work that I'm doing

on behalf of our veterans, and the charitable efforts, and the foundation. The reward of having a good career is that I get to do good things for our defenders and the people that I care about. I've had financial success. I've had creative and artistic success. I was blessed to start a theater company at an early age that has lasted for over 40 years and continues to do great work in the city of Chicago. That gave me my education as an actor. I was able to take that education and use it to go into the movie and television business and make some money and have this public platform as a recognizable actor to be able to talk about things that I feel are important—such as standing strong for the men and women who serve our country no matter who their Commander-in-Chief is.

The hard lessons that we learned from the Vietnam War is that we should never turn our backs on the people that serve our country even if we don't agree with the war they're fighting. But that's what happened during Vietnam. It was a shameful period in our history. It was bad for our country. I think we learned some valuable lessons from that because you can see that there is a great respect for the men and women who serve our country now. It was a bit tougher during the height of the Iraq War if you recall. The media was printing story after story about how the war was failing. It was a tough time. Any positive stories of progress and success were overshadowed by things like Abu Ghraib and all the things that were going wrong in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a very tough



Sinise in a scene from Season 1 of *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders*. Season 2 will premiere on March 1, 2017. You can catch up on Season 1 at CBS.com.

GARY SINISE



At left, Robert challenges Gary to a charity burger flipping contest at an Invincible Spirit Festival at Naval Medical Center San Diego in February 2016. At right, Sinise performs onstage at the same festival with his Lt. Dan Band, one of dozens of charity concerts they perform every year. Follow him on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

time for our service members over there. It felt to me a bit like what it must have felt like for our Vietnam veterans. I wanted to do something to make sure our military folks felt appreciated for what they were doing over there.

I tried to do my best to talk to the press about what I would see when I would go to the war zones at that time. I saw some great Americans trying to do their best to get through that as best they could and to get rid of a terrible dictator and try to help some people over there. It was a tough scene for a lot of them. Fifteen idiots from Abu Ghraib were dominating the new and, with the exception of a few positive news stories here and there, the other 150,000 who were serving hon-

orably were being virtually ignored.

We don't want any of our service members to ever feel like their service wasn't worth it. That's what I feared so much during that period because I'd seen that happen with our Vietnam veterans. I had terrible fear that our men and women would come home from Iraq and Afghanistan and think no one cared, nobody appreciated. That they would think, "I got wounded for nothing. I lost my buddies for nothing."

I want them to know that I appreciate what they do, that I recognize the sacrifices they and their families make, and I don't forget. I'm grateful that we have people like them who are willing to go out there and do the hard, dangerous work to keep us free

and safe. Therefore, I hope that they feel like their sacrifices were worth it. We can never forget that freedom is not something we just automatically have in this life.

Freedom must be fought for and protected. I hope our defenders always remember that there are millions of Americans who value the freedom that they provide, we recognize where it comes from, and we don't take it for granted. If I can do a little something to remind them of this and to inspire others to step up and give back to them, then that is a way that I can serve. And service to others is a great healer.

To learn more about the Gary Sinise Foundation or to donate, visit GarySiniseFoundation.org.

THE FAMILY SERVES



Gravely wounded in Iraq, Mike Schlitz might not be alive today if it weren't for the fact that his mother Robbi has been with him every step of the way. Her love and sacrifice underscore the gulf between how much our wounded veterans need and how much we give them.

BY MATT TUTHILL

MIKE SCHLITZ

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is Part II of a two-part feature. For Part I, download our November 2016 issue or click [HERE](#).

The message came in varying forms. There were subtle hints, like when the visitor chairs were removed from her son's bedside. Then there were not-so-subtle clues, like when doctors and nurses began

prodding her at every turn to begin emotionally letting go of her son. Robbi Schlitz heard it loud and clear. She knew there was a very good chance that Michael was going to die. But no amount of advice, no matter how well-intentioned, could get her to stop being the dotting mother she had always been. As long as Michael was breathing, she would be there.



Schlitz was originally scared of public speaking, but realized that people would listen closely to him because of the nature of his injuries. Today he serves as an ambassador for the Gary Sinise Foundation, giving a voice to the voiceless.

She had birthed him, nursed him, and nurtured him in all the ways that only a mother can. She had been there through the ups and downs: when he got in trouble as a kid for blowing up neighbors' mailboxes, when he decided to feed his adrenaline junkie by becoming a competitive bull rider at 16, when he dropped out of high school during his junior year. She was the first call he made when he was toying with whether or not to re-enlist, and she held the opinion he valued most. She always gave him the answer he needed to hear: that the military gave him the structure he needed in life.

From the time he joined the Army in 1996 until the IED explosion that maimed him in 2007, it had been hard to argue with the decision to re-up. School had never been his thing. He grudgingly finished high school only after a recruiter told him that the Army wanted to see he wasn't a quitter. Besides, whenever Michael thought of leaving the Army, he wasn't lining up any "safe" options for himself.

"He would talk about being a police officer or a fireman," Robbi says. "At one point he wanted to be a fire jumper." Here she pauses and laughs to herself. "He wanted to jump *into* fires."

At the time of his final re-enlistment in 2006, Michael was 30 years old and 10 years into military service. "With another 10 he could retire and choose to do whatever he wanted, and he'd be young enough to do it," Robbi says. "Of course, it was easy to make that call when we weren't at war. Then 9/11 happened

MIKE SCHLITZ

and the world turned topsy turvy—and it got harder.”

In February 2007 when Michael was gravely wounded in Iraq, Robbi got a phone call that made her numb. She recalls actually feeling sorry for the guy who was calling, then drawing all the blinds in her apartment, stuck in the powerless place where she couldn’t go to meet him because the Army didn’t even know where he was being sent. When Michael was finally transported to San Antonio, Robbi met him within hours and scarcely left his side for the next nine months. She ultimately left her job to be his caregiver.

“It is a proven fact that the wounded heal faster after going home,” Robbi says. “If Michael had not had a home and someone to care for him he would have ended up an inpatient at a veterans’ hospital. I did not stand by him for 9 months to lose him to a veterans hospital.”

ADVOCATE AND CAREGIVER

A military hospital can be intimidating for any civilian. Today, Robbi spouts military shorthand like SAMMC (San Antonio Military Medical Center) and TBI (traumatic brain injury) and a dozen more as part of her regular vocabulary, but at the time the constant flood of acronyms made her feel like she was on another planet. Initially, Army personnel told her to call whenever she had a question or wanted an update, which she did with regularity. But when they tried



“Mike has been a terrific ambassador,” Gary Sinise says. In 2014, The Gary Sinise Foundation built a custom adapted smart home for Schlitz and his mother.

to keep Michael’s many flat line episodes to themselves she stopped calling.

“They lied to me sometimes,” Robbi says. “They thought it was better for me not to know, but I would always find out. Because someone who didn’t know that I didn’t know would say something. I’d go to see him and one of the nurses would say, ‘Wow. Close call

last night.’ I quit calling because what was the point?”

The incidents were not without a silver lining; in navigating that environment to become a better advocate for Michael, she was able to teach other family members of wounded veterans to be better advocate for their loved ones.

“The biggest thing I learned was to keep asking,” Robbi says. “If

MIKE SCHLITZ

someone tells you they can't give an update or that you can't go in to see a patient, find someone else and ask them."

At about the six-week mark, Michael woke and demanded to speak with his brother Jonathan. He has no recollection of the ensuing conversation, but Robbi remembers it clearly.

"He's downstairs getting lunch," Robbi told him. "Why do you need to talk to him?"

"I need to say goodbye," Michael said. "Dad's here and I'm going with him."

"I said, 'Tell Dad not now. You're needed here. He loves you enough that he'll understand.'"

When a nurse overheard the exchange, that's when pressure began to mount for Robbi to begin letting Michael go. But Robbi had already dealt with a devastating loss at far too young of an age; she lost her husband Dale to a stroke just a few days after the couple's 40th birthdays (they were born less than 24 hours apart). It was a crash-course in the fragility of life that made her take nothing for granted. When they told her to preemptively set up a meeting with a grief counselor, she politely declined. When they took away the chairs in his room, she stood. When nurses made their rounds to tell everyone that visiting hours were up, she stayed until the second or third reminder. When they moved him out of ICU and to another wing of the hospital for the next three months, Robbi got her chair back and stayed at his side 10 hours a day.

Through wind and rain she

shielded her candle of hope, but when Michael finally woke and was conscious of his new reality, when he was at last out of the woods after flat lining 10 times, he was covered head to toe in bandages, permanently disfigured to the point where he saw no meaning in his new life.

"He said 'Momma, no one's going to love me the way I look,'" Robbi recalls. "He said, 'I don't have hands, I don't have a nose, ears. I don't know what I'm gonna do. I can't live in this bed for the rest of my life.'"

"I said, 'You're not going to. You're going to walk and do things with your life. There's a reason you made it.' As he started progressing, he said, 'There's nothing I can do.' I said, 'Yes you can. You can be the voice for those that don't have a voice. You are going to fight a new battle. You're going to take care of your brothers and sisters in arms using everything you know.' He said he couldn't talk in front of people, that he didn't like crowds. I told him he could overcome that. And if not that, then he would find something else."

"Michael is Michael. Only the wrapper has changed. The man he was is the man he is today. He has prosthetic ears that he never wears anymore because his friends didn't notice one way or another. After a while of knowing Michael you don't see the wrapper. You only see the man."

STARTING OVER AS A PARENT

The thing most people don't understand about prosthetics is that no matter how skilled the user be-

comes, hooks are still an extremely difficult way to interface with the world. Buttoning a shirt or a pair of pants becomes a serious ordeal. So does reaching for anything above your head. Robbi has become Michael's hands for anything that's too difficult to handle on his own. To help restore his independence, she sewed keyrings onto the zippers of his pants.

The experience of once again having to baby her son was surreal and jarring for both of them at times.

"I started over as his parent," Robbi says. "When you first become a parent you check fingers and toes. I was checking him like that. Early on I realized his fingers weren't going to make it. His gloves were melted onto them. His feet were in good shape. There were parts of his legs where I could see tendons and bones, but I did my momma check on everything. As he progressed, we went through his first steps, words, eating, we did all the firsts that you do as a parent with a baby—only he was a little bigger."

Because she provided daily wound care, she grew accustomed to the gruesome nature of his injuries.

"I was constantly seeing it and we become... not desensitized, but it becomes part of the normal and the shock value wears off," Robbi says. "You're looking for progress more than anything, and how you're going to move forward. But I went through the stages of grief for everything he was going through. I went through denial, all the stages, I think... but not anger."

Not even at the insurgents who planted the IED.

MIKE SCHLITZ

"You're too exhausted to be angry. It would take away from needing to be there for Michael."

THE FIGHT NO ONE SEES

Michael and Robbi met Gary Sinise on the set of *CSI: NY*. Sinise was immediately taken with Michael's positive attitude in the face of all he had endured. Shortly after the meeting, he called Michael to extend an offer: the Gary Sinise Foundation wanted to build a specially adapted smart home for him and his mom.

"Michael told him no," Robbi recalls. "A lot of guys do. They don't want to take something when they think someone else could use it."

Robbi was touched by Michael's generosity, but reminded him that they didn't have the money to build him what he needed, and that the home they lived in at the time was 2,500 square feet.

"He called Gary back and said, 'You know, I think it might be a good idea.'" Robbi laughs.

The connection with the Gary Sinise Foundation also turned out to be the perfect outlet for Michael's new career as a public speaker. As he honed his public speaking skills, he realized that his burns would be an asset in his new line of work.

"You can't miss my injuries," Michael says. "Other guys who have wounds that you can't see, people might not listen as closely. When I get in front of a crowd, they stop to listen."

And fittingly, when Michael does get up to speak as an ambassador for the Gary Sinise Foundation,

his message is that we need to give love and attention to all the soldiers whose wounds aren't out in the open. The hidden wounds are often what drive a man to suicide, and with 22 veterans committing suicide every day, the epidemic shows no signs of slowing.

"We live in a society where you have to touch it, feel it, see it," Robbi says. "Well, I can't touch a brain injury, but it's still real. I can't touch PTSD, but it's still real."

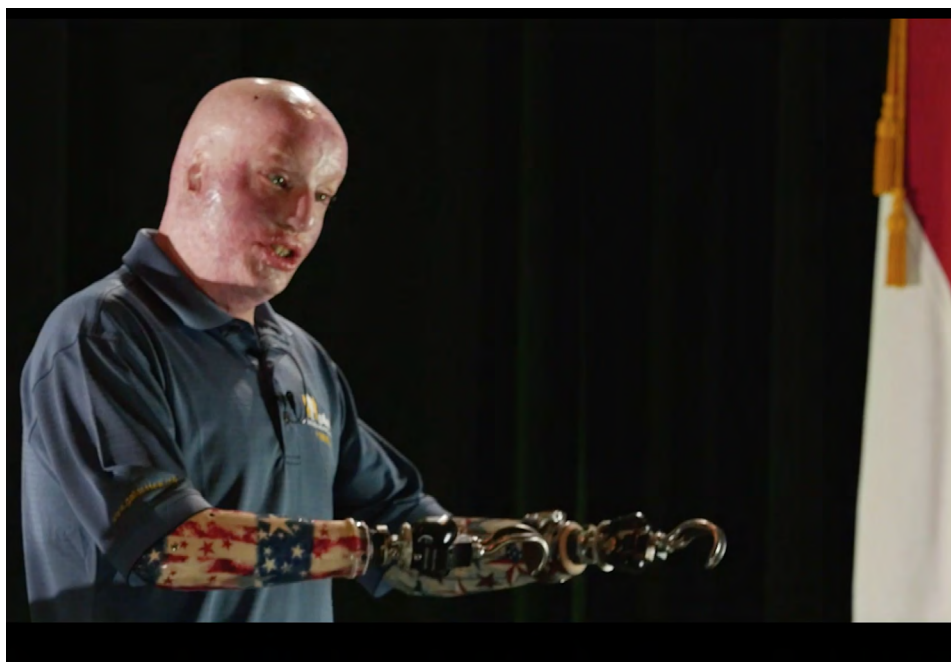
Robbi says she can only hope that we start to pay more attention to the veterans with hidden trauma and she's proud to see Michael go to bat for them as a Gary Sinise Foundation ambassador.

But if there is one group that remains forgotten, she knows firsthand that it's the caregivers. When a man or woman joins the military, their family truly serves

with them. Robbi is living proof of that. The sacrifices that she and other people like her have made are impossible to quantify, and like so many war wounds, invisible.

"There have been times when people have pushed me out of the way to get to Michael," Robbi says. "Like, 'Oh, you're just his mother.' The wives go through it, too. The wounded soldier is placed on a pedestal, as he should be, but there comes a time when they need to come down from there and back to reality. That reality is family. If we don't treat the wounded as a family unit, how can we be surprised that their marriages break up, that they have all kinds of financial problems, that there is so much suicide?"

"There is a struggle there for the whole family that the world never sees."



Schlitz has regained much of his independence, but his prosthetics are still limited. His mother Robbi often has to be his "hands." Without her support, Mike might not be alive today.



ROBERT'S HOLIDAY PARTY

**TRY THESE ALL NEW RECIPES
AND SERIOUSLY
IMPRESS YOUR GUESTS**

Soup and Salad

CHILLED HEIRLOOM MELON SOUP WITH JUMBO STONE CRAB CLAW, SHRIMP AND CALAMARI SALAD

CRAB, SHRIMP, AND CALAMARI SALAD
SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED

4 jumbo lump crab claws
4 knuckle meat from claw
½ cup ¹⁰/₁₆ shrimp (cooked)
1 tbsp marinated white anchovies (chopped)
5 pieces meyer lemon (segmented)
1 tbsp meyer lemon juice
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp spicy oregano
1 pinch chili flakes
Maldon salt to taste

MAKE IT

Combine all of the above ingredients and allow to macerate for 5 minutes.

HEIRLOOM SOUP

SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED

32 oz peeled and seeded heirloom melon
Salt to taste
⅛ cup olive oil

MAKE IT

Puree the melon until smooth, slowly add the oil until fully incorporated, season with salt and pepper. Strain the soup and chill well before serving.

PLATING

Pour the soup into dishes (about ¾ full) top each with fresh mint. Place a small mound of the salad on each plate. Drizzle any left over vinaigrette from the bowl on each salad. Serve the soup on the same plate.



THE MACROS

CALORIES: 311
PROTEIN 18 g
FAT 18 g
CARBS: 23 g

Crispy Lobster “Roll”

WITH **CHANTERELLE MUSHROOMS, BUTTERED LEEKS,
FRESH CORN, LOBSTER BROTH**

SERVES 4

YOU’LL NEED

THE ROLL

12oz. Lobster Claw and Knuckle
1 tbsp carrot brunoise (small dice)
1 tbsp shallot brunoise
1 tbsp celery peeled and brunoise
Chopped fine herbs (thyme, parsley, oregano,)
4 sheets wonton wrapper

BUTTERED LEEKS

1 leek (white only)
1 cup vegetable stock seasoned
2 oz butter
Thyme
Salt and pepper to taste

**CHANTERELLE AND
CORN RAGU**

1 cup corn
1 cup chanterelles
1 tbsp chopped shallots
1 tbsp torn basil
3oz. vegetable stock
1 tbsp butter
Splash of white wine



MAKE IT

- 1) Cook lobster in 150° water bath 8-10 minutes, cool, and reserve. Lay out wonton wrappers and add 3 oz of mixture onto the brick, fold over sides and roll tight. In a non stick pan brown the roll in olive oil and butter until lobster is hot.
- 2) Braise leeks in all the ingredients until tender, remove and cool. Reserve leek broth to make vegetable stock.
- 3) In a hot pan cook chanterelles in olive oil until soft. Add corn & shallots—cook one minute.
- 4) Drizzle with olive oil.



THE MACROS

CALORIES: 263
PROTEIN 18 g
FAT 14 g
CARBS: 22 g

PLATING

Warm the leeks with butter, add the chanterelles and corn mix on the leeks, ladle some of the stock from the leeks on to the base of the bowl and place the “roll” on the chanterelles. Garnish with fresh herbs.

Pan-seared Snapper

WITH **BLACK BELUGA LENTILS, FENNEL, SWEET CORN WITH SAFFRON, RUBY RIVER GRAPEFRUIT CONFIT**

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED

THE FISH

4 fillets of snapper (3 oz)
1 tbsp fennel pollen
1 tsp white pepper
½ tsp orange zest
1 tsp garlic
1 tsp shallot
1 tbsp chives
1 tbsp fennel fronds
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

MAKE THE RUB

Grind the spices and combine with the herbs and garlic/shallots, add oil, rub on all sides of fish.

THE LENTILS

½ cup black beluga lentils
4 cup vegetable stock
Thyme

MAKE THE LENTILS

Add the lentils to the stock bring to a boil and bring down to a simmer. Cook for about 18 minutes until lentils are tender. Reserve extra liquid for finishing.

SAFFRON-SWEET CORN

1cup sweet corn
1cup raw soffrito (red onion, fennel small diced same size as corn)
1 tsp saffron threads
½ cup orange juice
½ grapefruit segments
Salt and white pepper
1/2 tsp fennel fronds
1/2 tsp savory oregano
Drizzle extra virgin olive oil



MAKE THE CORN

Sauté the corn with the soffrito add saffron threads for 2 minutes, add the orange juice and allow to reduce to glaze, season and finish with evoo and herbs.

MAKE THE FISH

Sear over medium-high heat until cooked through.

PLATING

Warm the lentils with reserved stock, add the saffron sweet corn and olive oil and plate. Place cooked fish in center of the plate and garnish with fresh citrus segments and zests that have been tossed together with herbs.



THE MACROS

CALORIES: 402
PROTEIN 21 g
FAT 28 g
CARBS: 15 g

Salted Chocolate Pudding



SERVES 6

YOU'LL NEED

3 oz unsalted bitter sweet chocolate, melted
11 oz heavy cream
2 tbsp whole milk
4 extra large egg yolks
3 tbsp sugar
1 Cookies & Cream FitCrunch bar
12 pieces citrus segments
1 pinch sea salt
4 tbsp whip cream
4 mint sprigs

MAKE IT


1) In a bowl over a sauce pan of simmering water, melt the chocolate. In a second sauce pan heat the milk, cream and sugar until the sugar is dissolved.
2) In a separate bowl, lightly whisk the yolks and to prevent the yolks from scrambling very slowly add the hot cream to the yolks until its all incorporated. Then add the chocolate.
3) Place bowl with the mixture back over the hot water and with a spat-

ula slowly mix for about 5 minutes making sure to not separate the oils from the chocolate.

4) Fold in the diced FitCrunch bar and pour into serving glasses. Garnish with sea salt on the chocolate, whip cream, shaved chocolate, and mint.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 383
PROTEIN 10 g
FAT 32 g
CARBS: 17 g

The background is a dark, textured wooden surface. In the top left corner, there is a large, shiny red bow. In the top right corner, there is a small brass bell. In the center, a pair of hands wearing dark, fuzzy sleeves is shown wrapping a white, square gift with a red ribbon. The ribbon is already partially wrapped around the gift, forming a cross shape. The text "HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE" is written in a large, white, serif font, and "2016" is written below it in a smaller, white, serif font.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

2016

Find the perfect gift for the cook or fitness buff in your life—or get them something just for kicks. Our list this year is a balanced mix of useful and fun.

GIFT GUIDE

FOR THE KITCHEN



LAZY SUSAN CORDLESS WARMING TRAY

Fresh, hot appetizers can turn mediocre real quick as they get cold on the counter in a traditional serving bowl. This cordless warming tray keeps your hot bites piping til the very last hors d'oeuvre is served. Just plug it in for eight minutes, unplug it, and use it as a serving tray. The internal heating stones will retain heat up to 120 degrees for the next hour. Perfect for pizza and more. \$99.95, hammacher.com

FONDUE FOR TWO

For a romantic evening in or a delightful snack with a friend, this fondue for two pot makes it easier than ever to make and serve fondue. Just light the included candle, add cheese cubes, a dusting of corn starch, and herbs. The square mahogany pot on a wooden board is also ideal for serving up warm sauces.

\$29.99, uncommongoods.com



NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE APRON

Robert lives by this motto and you should, too. Remind yourself and the people in your life that the impossible becomes possible every day with this high-quality chef's apron emblazoned with perhaps the most powerful three words in the English language.

\$25, chefirvine.com



GIFT GUIDE

FOR THE KITCHEN

BARBARIAN BAR TOOL

No need to hoard an arsenal of bar tools when you have the Barbarian. It's a citrus press on steroids that also packs a corkscrew, bottle opener, zester, can lance, a variety of knives, and a jigger for perfect measuring. And you can forget the phrase, "They don't make 'em like they used to." The Barbarian is solid iron, virtually indestructible, and so strong you could probably use it to bend your old wine keys into a piece of modern art. \$59.95, barbarianbartools.com



MUSICAL WINE GLASSES

Run a moistened finger along the rim of these wine glasses and suddenly you're a musical prodigy. Like running a bow across a violin, the glass responds to pressure and tempo. Dinner parties and drinks amongst friends will never be the same.

\$65, uncommongoods.com



PREMIUM INNOVATIVE DEFROSTING TRAY

Take a rock solid frozen steak and thaw it completely in 10-30 minutes. No need to leave it on the counter all day or microwave it and risk ruining it. The secret is the thermal conducting liquid in the center of the tray which naturally draws cold out of your food.

\$89.99, sharperimage.com



FOR THE GYM



HYPERICE HYPERSPHERE

Pressure from a dense object—like a foam roll or a lacrosse ball—can go a long way to breaking up painful muscle knots in your back, quads, hamstrings, and shoulders. They're even great for loosening up the arches of your feet. But what happens when you take that same concept and add a motor so powerful it could shake the fillings out of your teeth? The Hyperice Body Ball. Combining incredible power, durability, and portability, it has everything you need to keep your body limber and help you recover fully between workouts.

\$149, hyperice.com

FITBIT FLEX 2

Ready to go wherever your workouts take you, including the pool. The FitBit Flex 2 tracks all of your activities, including sleep, and will even poke you with reminders to move if you've been idle for too long. The removable tracker fits into an assortment of accessories, including bangles and pendants.

\$99.95, bestbuy.com



FOR THE GYM



TIMOLABS CORBETT I WATERPROOF BLUETOOTH SPEAKER

There's no need to listen to music out of the puny speakers on your phone—even near a water hazard like the beach or your bathroom. This waterproof bluetooth speaker resists corrosion and water damage with a thick, durable hide. Just how waterproof is it? Drop it in ocean, watch it float to the top, and then tell us.

\$62, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



AER TRAVEL PACK

This travel pack from AER offers great protection for laptops; the 15" sleeve is suspended so your computer won't bang against the floor when you set the pack down. The main compartments is roomy enough for a few changes of clothes and the thick cushioned straps make it a comfortable, balanced carry.

\$220, aersf.com



GARMIN SMART SCALE

If you're just weighing yourself, you're not getting the full story. This body composition scale from Garmin uses electric current to measure body fat and muscle mass, as well as bone and water weight.

\$149, [bestbuy.com](https://www.bestbuy.com)



JUST FOR FUN



FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT BUFF **XBOX ONE S**

The revamped Xbox One S boasts some major improvements over the original, including 4K blu-ray and video capabilities. The One S runs most video apps including Amazon Instant Video, Netflix, HBO Go, Showtime Anytime, Starz Play, and many more. Games get a nice visual upgrade with the One S, so if you're buying for a gamer, grab a bundle; *Madden*, *FIFA*, *Gears of War 4*, and *Battlefield 1* are all available, so are beefier 1 terabyte hard drives.

Starting at \$299, xbox.com

FOR THE COMIC GEEK **DC COLLECTIBLES**

The armored Batman action figure can be a toy for kids or a high-end collectible you'd be proud to display on your desk, recreating the iconic suit worn in *Batman V Superman* with impeccable detail. If you're shopping for a real comic geek, fans can catch up on 75 years of essential Wonder Woman history with this four-volume [box set](#) just in time for next summer's movie.

\$50, shopdcentertainment.com



FOR THE GAME OF THRONES JUNKIE **OMMEGANG GIFT SET**

Among Ommegang brewery's most popular offerings: beer themed after cultural phenomenon *Game of Thrones*. This gift set includes a collectible etched glass and a pair of 750 ml bottles. Fan or not, it is damn good beer!

MSRP \$22.99, at local distributors

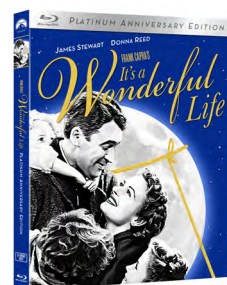
JUST FOR FUN



◀ **FOR THE
AUDIOPHILE
MONSTER ELEMENTS
OVER-EAR HEADPHONES**

For pristine, studio-quality sound that offers true bass, highs, and midrange, this is the price (\$350 MSRP) you've come to expect. But these over-ear Elements headphones from Monster buck expectations everywhere else, starting with the wireless bluetooth connectivity that sacrifices nothing. Where they really earn their keep: they look incredibly sharp and are shockingly light weight, comfortable enough to wear for hours.

\$349.99, monsterproducts.com



**FOR THE
NOSTALGIA-MINDED
IT'S A WONDERFUL
LIFE 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life* ▲ is now 70 years old, and yet every frame holds still holds up. This two-disc restoration features the original black-and-white and colorized (not necessary) versions, both in 1080p. For the collector, this set also contains limited edition art cards featuring original advertisements.

\$11.99, amazon.com

**FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
GIANT JENGA**

This Giant Jenga set is made to order. The price reflects a 21-level set, but you can ask the craftsman to add more for \$9 per level. Each block receives a clear coat to make it waterproof. The ultimate outdoor game for the whole family leaves nobody out. Comes with a tote bag for storage.

\$180, etsy.com



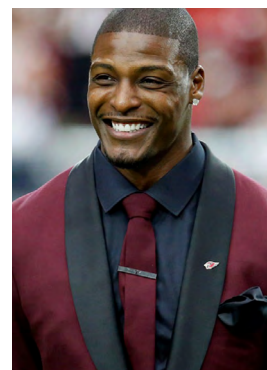
FOR THE SNEAKER HEAD



NIKE AIR PRESTO ESSENTIAL

The mesh isn't the only thing that's flexible; the outsole has patented grooves to maintain flexibility in all directions, for stability regardless of what you're walking over. \$120

Former NFL All-Pro safety Adrian Wilson spent a dozen years patrolling the Arizona Cardinals defensive backfield. You name it, he did: jumping routes, leveling ball carriers, and covering ground so quickly that he forced



quarterbacks to throw the ball away from him. Because he made a living with his feet, it makes sense that he became something of a shoe connoisseur. Today, he has turned that knowledge and passion into High Point Shop, an award-winning designer sneaker store in Scottsdale, AZ. Wilson took a quick timeout to make some gift guide picks for *RI Magazine*. These are his top four choices for the sneaker head in your life. You can shop online at highpointshop.com



ASICS GEL LYTE V GTX

The combination of leather, rawhide suede, and workboot laces give these a serious outdoorsy look that goes well with earth tones. The gel pockets turn short walks into a poor man's foot massage. \$150



NIKE AIR MAX ZERO QS "Ultramarine"

Nike says these were designed in 1985 but not released until today. Now that these pre-concepts for the original Air Max are widely available, you can customize your own pair and get them in five weeks. \$190



NEW BALANCE 998

A retro look with a modern feel, the New Balance 998s are a mix of retro and suede for a seamless balance of comfort and style. The Abzorb outsole knocks the impact out of your steps. \$180

QUIET PLEASE

We've forgotten to block out the outside noise and listen from within—and it's costing us more than we realize.

By Heather Quinlan



Meditation doesn't require special music, clothes, or anything else. It can be as simple as sitting quietly and disconnecting from the world.

You've heard your parents and grandparents reminisce about a simpler time when gasoline was 31 cents a gallon, anyone with a decent full-time job could buy a house, and a stamp (remember those) only cost a few pennies. Today, you've probably heard your peers refer to the good old days as a time of recent memory, like the late 90s.

Gas was more expensive then

and it certainly wasn't easy to own a home, but if you think of life at the end of the 20th century, we only had dial-up internet, no iPhones, and no social media. There was no means to keep us all constantly connected, and much less pressure to keep up with rapidly changing technology. Along with that technology and the constant connectedness it offers came more stress and anxiety to keep up, not

just with the Joneses, but the world.

While a lot has changed in a short period of time and it seems harder to keep up, the longing for a simpler time is an illusion. The present time in which we live is always fraught with uncertainty. Only once it's in the rearview does it seem simple. So how do we simplify today? Meditation.

There are a lot of different ways to practice meditation, but in

KEEP IT SIMPLE

essence, it is nothing more than contemplation and reflection.

More and more studies are proving the ancient practice of meditation increases happiness, reduces stress and anxiety, improves concentration, and slows aging. And that's just to name a few of the many benefits. So why aren't you doing it? All in a good day's work, you've had time to check Facebook, post on Instagram and Snapchat, and scroll through LinkedIn several times. Somewhere in that tangle of distraction, the thought must have crossed your mind that you need a break. The good news is you can start meditating now.

It won't cost you a thing, you don't need to sign up anywhere, and you don't need to hike into the Himalayas to sit in silence for a month.

Just start with 5 minutes a day to sit quietly with no phone, TV, computer, or music. Listen to your thoughts without judgement, fear, doubt, or expectation. It can be any time of day; when you first wake up, just before you go to bed, or during a break in the middle of the day.

You can even turn everyday tasks into a meditation. Drive without the radio on. Go for a run without any music to distract you. Spend a weekend without social media. Over time, your meditation will become as regular and necessary as brushing your teeth and you can build on those 5 minutes.

The noise of modern life has created a lot of anxiety and false needs that didn't previously exist. But you don't have to look to the past to find simpler times. That simpler time can be right now with just a little bit of discipline in training the mind to be quiet.

Heather Quinlan is a certified Bikram Yoga instructor and health coach. Visit her website at: hquinlan.com and like her page on [Facebook](#).



If you find that you can't set aside specific times to meditate, try turning everyday tasks into moments of reflection. When you're driving to or from work, shut off the radio in your car. Also try a social media detox for at least a weekend and then try to extend that detox into the following week. It's guaranteed to lower your anxiety levels and help you feel more at peace.

GO TIME

Keeping track of Robert this month.

PALM BEACH FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL

Fresh of his most recent USO tour of the Middle East, Robert returns to the States in December and will be appearing at the Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival on the 10th and 11th. Tickets to both events that Robert will be participating in are sold out. If you weren't lucky enough to get a ticket, keep it tuned to Robert's Facebook and Instagram pages to see what kind of surprises he'll be cooking up.

SNOWBALL EXPRESS

Robert will be volunteering in Dallas, TX during the Snowball Express, a benefit for the children of fallen veterans, which runs from December 11 through 15. The Snowball Express gathers these children to make new, positive memories visiting amusement parks, attending concerts, and much more, all while honoring their parents. To learn more about the Snowball Express or to donate, visit snowballexpress.org.

SIDEKICKS

Robert's Signature Sidekicks are now available in Walgreens throughout the US. Sidekicks are fresh, healthy, and flavorful sides that prepare in 10 minutes or less—no chopping required—and are available in four varieties: Garlic Balsamic Broccoli, Provencal Rata-




Follow Robert on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

touille, Sesame Ginger Stir-Fry, and Braised Collard Greens. Try them out and take a picture of yourself with the package to be featured on Robert's Facebook page. [E-mail](#) it to us with the subject line: #SideKickSelfie

CINNAMON TWIST

The newest addition to Robert's line of FitCrunch protein bars is a seasonal flavor that will be gone soon! Stop into a GNC near you to grab a Cinnamon Twist FitCrunch bar while they last.



*"The Christmas Spirit is
not what you drink."*

— Ian Anderson

*"All of humanity's troubles
stem from man's inability
to sit quietly in a room
by himself."*

— Blaise Pascal

*"Sunshine is delicious,
rain is refreshing, wind
braces us up, snow is
exhilarating. There is no
bad weather, only different
kinds of good weather."*

— John Ruskin