

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2020

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

INTERVIEW SPECIAL

GORDANA BIERNAT

HOW TO CREATE
THE LIFE YOU WANT

PLUS

SEAL-TURNED-ACTOR

DAVID MEADOWS

COMEDIAN

MAZ JOBIRANI

ALL-NEW
PARTY
RECIPES!



ROBERT IRVINE MAGAZINE

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE

FOUNDER AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Robert Irvine

GENERAL MANAGER

Matt Tuthill

CREATIVE CONSULTANT

Sean Otto

SENIOR WRITERS

Gail Kim-Irvine, SJ McShane, Heather Quinlan, Michael Schutz, MD

CULINARY EDITORS

Shane Cash, Brian Goodman, Darryl Moiles

CONTRIBUTORS

Jay Cardiello, Ryan Coyne, Amber Day, Mike Geremia,
Leah Jantzen, David Jester, Andy McDermott, Mike Simone, Vanessa Tib

For advertising inquiries, contact Matt Tuthill, matt@chefirvine.com

For general comments, contact him on Twitter, [@MCTuthill](https://twitter.com/MCTuthill)

Download Robert Irvine Magazine exclusively at RobertIrvineMagazine.com and stream it on issuu.com. Read it on mobile devices through Apple News, Flipboard, and the Google Play Newsstand.

Copyright 2019 by Irvine Products, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Contact the publisher at media@chefirvine.com.

The information herein is not intended to replace the services of trained health professionals. You are advised to consult with your healthcare professional with regard to matters relating to your health, and in particular regarding matters that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

BUSINESS and MARKETING

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Justin Leonard

VP, FINANCE & MARKETING

Joshua Lingenfelter

Cover photo by: Charlotte T Strömwall

Robert's editor's portrait appears courtesy of Ian Spanier. Gear and product photos appear courtesy of their respective manufacturers. Subject photos appear courtesy of the respective subjects unless otherwise noted. All other photos herein appear courtesy of Shutterstock.com.

INSIDE THE ISSUE

ROBERT IRVINE

MAGAZINE

WINTER 2020 /// Vol. 5, No. 1

GETTING STARTED

4 ROBERT'S LETTER

A look at our biggest issue ever.

6 IN THE GYM

New year, new muscle workout; an update on Cheryl Del Rosario's incredible progress.

12 IN THE KITCHEN

A few holiday classics.

FEATURES

16 GORDANA BIERNAT

The thought leader dishes on the questions that seem to be keeping Twitter up all night.

25 WINTER WARMER RECIPES

Feeding your body—and your soul.

30 MAZ JOBRANI

The Iranian-born comedian has to toe a delicate line in these divided times—and he does so masterfully.

37 GIFT GUIDE

Find a little something for everyone on your list.

46 DAVID MEADOWS

The former Navy SEAL-turned actor lives life at 100 mph. Here's what you can learn from him.

52 PARTING WORDS

We answer a question from a self-conscious reader; columnist Heather Quinlan tells the story of the incredible power of Bikram Yoga; SJ McShane shares her bone broth gravy recipe; plus our Words to Live By.



Gordana's interview begins on Pg. 16. Gordana's photos appear courtesy of Charlotte T Strömwall.

START WHERE YOU ARE

With whatever you have.

Waiting for the right moment is a slow death. Whatever it is you want to accomplish this year: whether it's losing weight, starting up a new business, getting a promotion, or just getting out of a bad relationship, you need to remember one vital fact: You're never going to feel ready.

This has been the message of so many great people that Robert Irvine Magazine has interviewed and featured over its four-year history, from Mel Robbins to Deepak Chopra to the subject of this month's cover: Gordana Biernat.

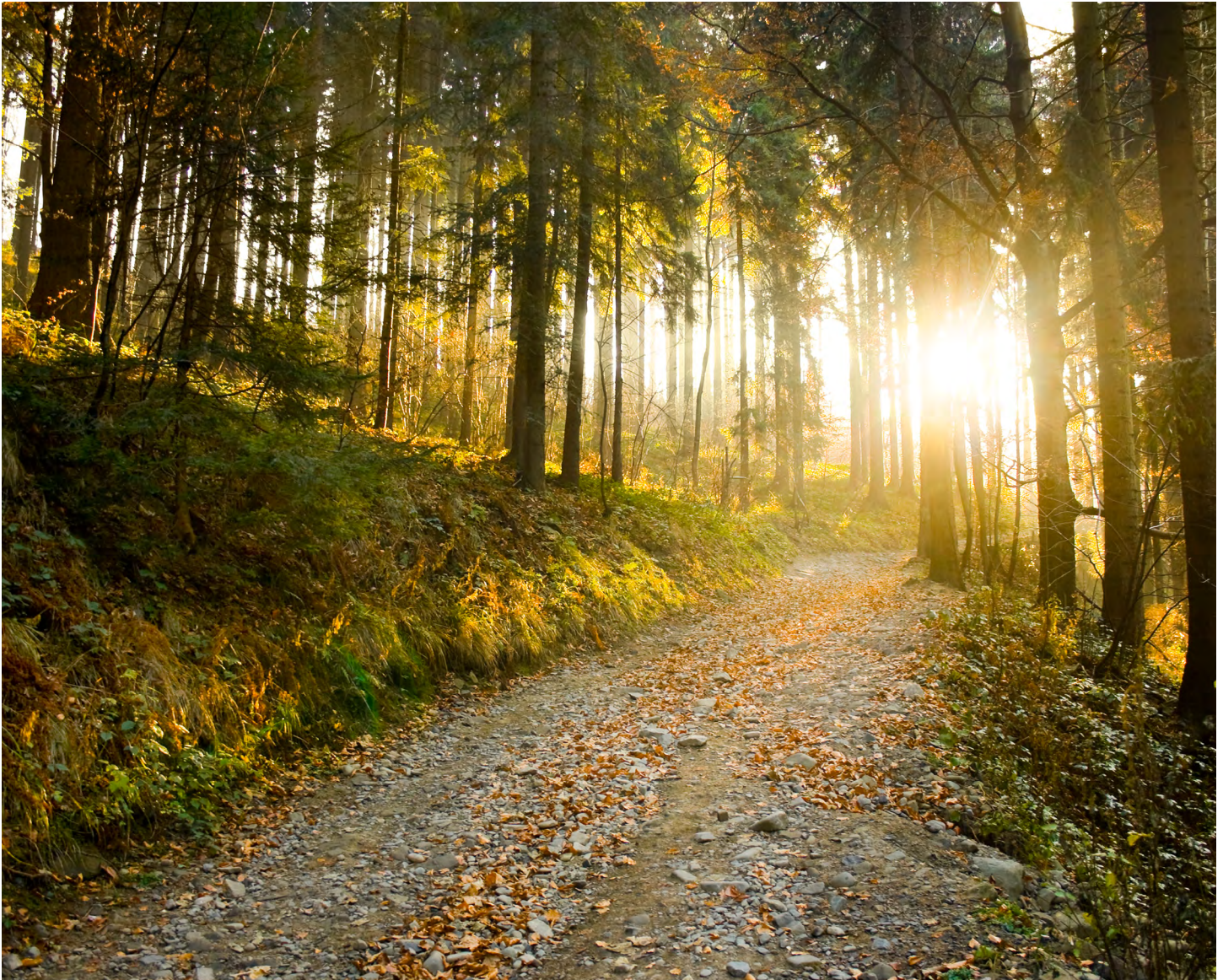
I've been following Gordana on Twitter for years and absolutely love the fact that when I tap the Twitter icon on my phone that I'm going to see some inspirational words from her that help me center myself and allow me to focus on the task at hand. Robert Irvine Magazine readers first met Gordana back in May 2017, and since that time, she became the author of a terrific book called *#KnowTheTruth*, which I can't recommend highly enough.

In her interview, beginning on Pg. 16, we asked Gordana to



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

ROBERT'S LETTER



This month's interview subjects all agree that the road ahead will be filled with whatever you imagine it to be. Will 2020 be filled with problems? Or solutions? Abundance? Or lack? You get to decide.

answer many of the burning questions of the moment surrounding freedom of speech, cancel culture, and much more. I think her answers will surprise and inspire you.

Elsewhere in the issue we have interviews with Iranian-born comedian Maz Jobrani—who talks about toeing the line onstage at a very difficult cultural moment to actually bring people together (Pg. 30)—and former Navy SEAL-

turned-actor David Meadows, who is a font of wisdom on many things, most notably how to get unstuck and pursue the things that you love. (See his interview on Pg. 46.)

And be sure not to miss the RI Mag Gift Guide, plus a whole lot of recipes, workouts, and motivation! We think this issue is the perfect way to wrap up 2019 and springboard into these new Roaring 20s – and we hope you feel the

same way, too!

Be well and always remember...

Nothing is impossible.

IN THE GYM: INSPIRATION

BEACON OF LIGHT

How Cheryl Del Rosario's incredible fitness journey is on track to become an inspiration to others—and what Robert did to help her get going.

The tipping point came courtesy of her daughter.

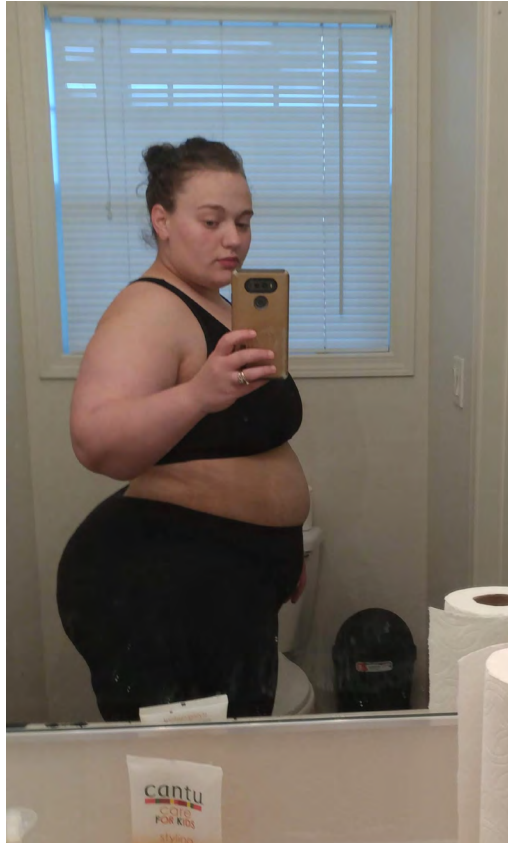
Last summer, Cheryl Del Rosario was hiking with her children on vacation when they came to a suspension bridge. At that point, her six-year-old daughter Miaya became terrified, begging her mother not to walk across: "I don't want you to die, mommy."

Stunned, Cheryl turned to her daughter and asked, "Why do you think that would happen?"

Miaya replied, "You'll break the bridge."

Her daughter, of course, wasn't teasing, but expressing genuine concern. At that point, the 5'3" mother of five tipped the scales at 320 pounds. And in that moment, Del Rosario learned that the honest, unfiltered thoughts of a child have a way of cutting straight to the bone that can make you reexamine your whole life in an instant. Unlike the cold, clinical concerns of a doctor or the supportive and sanitized language of friends and family, Miaya's words created a real sense of urgency.

"I knew something had to change," Del Rosario says. "I was having a hard time keeping up with my kids. And when you step on the scale and



The process is progress. Left: Cheryl at the beginning of her fitness journey. At right, down 61 pounds and wearing jeans that hadn't fit in years.

see a number like that? When your kids start to notice and say things to you? Your heart sinks."

Since that moment at the bridge, Del Rosario's life is on a different track. She's lost 61 pounds and aims to lose 100 more to reach her target weight of 160.

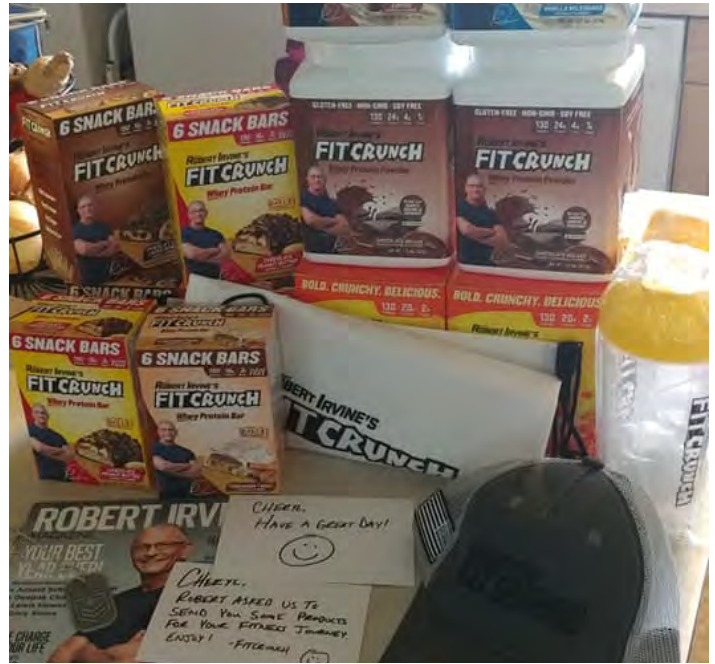
Del Rosario started the weight loss journey on her own, researching the keto diet to kick start progress. Then she took part in the Defense



Commissary Agency's Military Fit Family contest. Her winning essay, which outlined the struggles of military spouses and how little time they can find for themselves, won the heart of one Robert Irvine, who met with her and offered to pay for a year of her gym membership, a personal trainer, and year's worth of FitCrunch protein bars and powders.

"But I can't do it," Robert told

IN THE GYM: INSPIRATION



In these photos, which Cheryl shared on social media, she's pictured at with her children, husband Rustin, and Robert Irvine on the day they met in June. At right, the first FitCrunch care package arriving at Cheryl's door.

her. "It's gotta be you. And at the end of all this, you're going to be a beacon of light to so many people out there. There are so many people out there in your shoes and they're ashamed of themselves. They don't have to be. They can change their circumstances and you're going to show them that."

Since meeting with Robert, Del Rosario has begun training under Hannah Hartman, a professional bodybuilder and personal trainer who also advises her on nutrition. Del Rosario has kicked the keto diet to the curb and adopted a more balanced approach to nutrition that fuels her considerable progress in the gym.

"At this point I would definitely say weight lifting is my forte," Del Rosario said with a chuckle, pointing out that her deadlifting max at the beginning of the journey was less than 100 pounds. Today it's 215.

On days when she's not lifting weights, she does HIIT (or High Intensity Interval Training) cardio, going as fast as she can for a short period of time on a bike or treadmill, hitting a steady pace for a slightly longer period of time, and repeating the process at intervals for the duration of her workout.

Del Rosario said it's hard to imagine making all the progress she's made without Robert's intervention.

"I feel like if I hadn't met Robert and had this opportunity, I might've gone back to my old ways," says Del Rosario, who has battled with yo-yo dieting for a long time, losing 20 or 30 pounds only to get comfortable and gain it back. "Having Robert help out like this with the trainer and the supplements is huge... I couldn't afford those things with five kids.

"And there are days when I want

to quit. I don't want to go anymore, but I know that I can't. There are so many people counting on me. Not just my trainer. Not just Robert. It's my family. My kids."

Robert said he's incredibly proud of the progress Del Rosario has made, and that his vision for her as a beacon of light to others is well on track.

"Her story to me was so powerful because of who she represents," Robert says. "She's not just a mother of five hustling to keep up. She's a military spouse. And that's what her story is really about—the fact that the whole family serves and we forget that. When her husband is away, she's serving her country, too, in a way that's just as important and just as valid, bringing up the next generation. Our country relies on women like her just as much as we rely on men like her husband Rustin."

ATTACK FROM ALL ANGLES

There's much more to ab work than crunches and situps. Here's how to get a rock-solid midsection—and a head start on beach season.



The muscles of the core are responsible for much more than just flexion of the spine. When you do situps or crunches, spinal flexion is the only thing you're training your core muscles to do. But since your core muscles are also responsible for stabilization and rotation of the torso, it stands to reason they should be trained for this as well. Here are five types of exercises you should be doing in every abs workout.

1) Rotation Exercises: These

include Russian Twists (Robert recommends these and demonstrates them in his book, *Fit Fuel*) as well as cable rotations. When doing cable rotations, stand next to a cable station with the weight stack to one side and hold a D handle straight out in front of you. You should stand far enough away from the weight stack so that there is tension in the cable. Keeping your spine straight and your elbows locked out in front of you, turn away from the

cable station to lift the weight, then slowly return to the starting position, keeping tension on your core muscles. Do an equal number of reps on each side.

2) Anti-Rotation Exercises: A simple anti-rotation exercise is to set up in the same way as the aforementioned cable rotation exercise and use the pin to select a heavy weight on the weight stack. Step away from the machine so that you have to use core tension to keep from turning

IN THE GYM: PRO TIPS



toward the weight stack. Hold this position for a period of 30 to 60 seconds (or more). Repeat for equal time on the opposite side. This same exercise can be done with a resistance band; simply loop the band around a stable anchor point and set up in the same way, stepping away from the anchor point until there is significant tension on the band.

3) Planks: The standard plank—both feet and both elbows on the ground—is a staple of exercise routines presented in this magazine, but there is a lot more to the amazing plank than just this one variation. Try these: Reaching one arm out in front of you for 10 seconds, then switching arms every 10 seconds; switching one foot off the ground every 10 seconds; side planks with your top foot raised so that your legs form a V. You can also do planks holding onto a resistance band anchored a few feet away, or with a weight plate on your back.

4) Hyperextension Exercises: Your spinal erectors, or the muscles of your lower back, also constitute the muscles of your core. Make sure you give them equal time. The more you strengthen your lower back now, the fewer problems you are likely to have later in life. Simple hyperextensions include those done on a 45-degree hyperextension bench or on a glute-ham bench. In both variations, you can place your hands behind your head or cross your arms in front of your chest. Keep your head up, your shoulders back, and your upper back flat. Bend at the waist and return to the start by engaging the muscles of your lower back. Squeeze in the top position and slowly return to the start. You can also do the “Superman” exercise: Lie face-down on the floor and raise both arms and both legs off the ground at the same time. You will feel tension in your lower back. Squeeze the muscles in

this position and then slowly return to the start. Repeat for 3-4 sets of 10-15 reps.

5) Spinal Flexion Exercises: Situps and crunches you know, so try one of these:

A) Kneeling weighted crunches: Kneel in front of a weight stack with the pulley in the top position and the rope attachment attached. Hold the ends of the rope at either side of your head and bend at the waist, keeping your back flat, to lift the weight.

B) Spread-eagle situps: Lie on the ground and spread your feet as wide as you can, anchoring your feet under a weight bench or a pair of heavy dumbbells. Put your hands behind your head and keeping your back flat, sit up until your body forms a 90-degree angle. This move does a much better job of targeting the lower portion of your abdominals—near your hip flexors—than the standard variation.

THE CORE POWER WORKOUT

Whether you want strength or just a good-looking midsection, this workout will help get you there.



Side plank

As discussed in this month's Pro Tips section, one of the main functions of your core muscles is to stabilize the spine. This can be done with some of the exercises mentioned in that section; it can also be done with heavy overhead lifts, loaded carries, and squats. The heavier the weight you use on any of these lifts, the harder your core muscles have to work to stabilize your spine.

This month's Workout of the Month is going to give you two great options: One is a total-body workout

that incorporates several moves that will test your core muscles as a secondary measure. The second option is an all-angles core workout that you can add to the end of any workout. Incorporate both to start building power and developing the musculature of your core. Do these regularly from now until next spring, and, with the right diet, you'll be ready to show off at the beach. You'll also be taking the best preventative action there is against a host of potential lower back problems.

IN THE GYM: WORKOUT



When using the ab roller, form is way more important than speed. Go slow on the way down and the way up.

DIRECTIONS: Do the Core Power Workout once per week. Do the Ab Workout 3-4 times per week.

CORE POWER WORKOUT

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Barbell Squat	5	8-10
Overhead Walking Lunge	4	20
Farmer's Walk	4	50 yards
Cable Rotation*	4	10 per side
Spread-eagle Situp*	4	10
Weighted Plank*	3	60 sec.

AB WORKOUT

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
Russian Twist	4	50
Hyperextension*	4	10
Side Plank*	2	60 sec. per side
Superman*	4	10
Cable Rotation*	4	15
Ab Roller	2	10
Plank*	2	60 sec.

*Described in this month's Pro Tips section

BARBELL SQUAT: Load a barbell with a weight that will be challenging for 8-10 reps. Keep your spine straight and your head up. Brace your core before unracking the weight and keep it braced throughout

the move, breathing behind the brace. Squat low to the ground and drive through your heels to stand back up.

OVERHEAD WALKING LUNGE: Hold a dumbbell or kettlebell in one hand and press it overhead. Keep your elbow locked out and your core braced as you perform walking lunges. Walk 10 steps, then change hands and walk 10 more steps.

FARMER'S WALK: Grab a pair of the heaviest dumbbells you can manage and hold them at your sides. Walk briskly, keeping your core engaged and your torso upright with good posture.

RUSSIAN TWIST: Holding a medicine ball or small weight plate, sit on the floor with your knees bent and your feet hovering just above the floor. Keeping your back flat, twist the weight from side to side, reaching for your hip as you do so.

AB ROLLER: Set an ab roller on the floor and kneel down, grasping the handle. Keeping your back flat and your core engaged, press the roller along the floor out in front of you; go as far as you can manage, extending your arms. Squeeze your abs tight as you return to the starting position.



CHESTNUT SOUP

Creamy, flavorful, and perfectly satisfying.

SERVES 8

YOU'LL NEED

2 yellow onions, caramelized
1 stalk celery
½ lb bacon
1 qt toasted Chestnuts
2 sprigs sage
1 gallon pork stock
1 qt heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
3 tbsp unsalted butter (browned)

MAKE IT

- 1) Small dice celery and onion.
- 2) In a medium soup pot, over medium heat, melt butter, add onion and celery.
- 3) Cook bacon strips in a separate pan and reserve.
- 4) Cook until butter begins to brown (about 10 minutes) then add chopped chestnuts.
- 5) Once you can smell the toasted walnut, add sage and pork stock.
- 6) Let Simmer for 20-30 minutes, stirring every few minutes to ensure the walnuts do not stick to the bottom.
- 7) Add cream in the last 5 minutes of cooking.
- 8) Crumble bacon strips over top when you serve.

IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE



RIB ROAST

The classic holiday crowd-pleaser done right.

SERVES 5

YOU'LL NEED FOR THE ENTREE

3 lb rib roast
2 tbsp kosher salt
2 tbsp black pepper
2 sprigs rosemary
3 garlic cloves
2 tbsp red wine

FOR THE HORSERADISH SAUCE

½ cup sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
2 tbsp horse radish
Salt and white pepper

MAKE IT ENTREE

- 1) Pull rib from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature.
- 2) In a food processor add salt, rosemary, garlic, black pepper, and red wine.
- 3) Take salt and rosemary mixture spread all over rib roast.
- 4) Pre-heat oven to 500 degrees.
- 5) Cook at 500 degrees for 45 minutes.
- 6) Lower the oven to 325 degrees and cook for another 25 minutes.
- 7) Finish the rib roast and 400 degrees for 15 to 30 minutes.

8) Internal temperature should be 125 degrees allow to rest for approximately 20 minutes.

HORSERADISH SAUCE

- 1) In a large mixing bowl add sour cream, mayonnaise, horse radish mix with a whisk.
- 2) Season with salt and pepper .

IN THE KITCHEN: RECIPE

BOURBON-SPIKED HOT CHOCOLATE

Take the edge off AND feel like a kid again.

SERVES 2

YOU'LL NEED

3 cups whole milk
3 cinnamon sticks
10 oz semi sweet chocolate finely chopped
3 tbsp granulated sugar
1 pinch kosher salt
2 oz bourbon
Marshmallows

MAKE IT

1) In a small sauce pot, add milk, sugar, and cinnamon bring to a simmer.
2) Using a whisk add chocolate.
3) Strain, add 2 ounces bourbon, serve in mugs and top with marshmallows. Drizzle melted chocolate over top if desired.



LET'S HELP OUR HEROES

Text GIVE to 813-536-5006



The Robert Irvine Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of our military personnel, first responders, and their families. 100% of all funds raised go directly to those who need it most. To learn more about Robert's commitment to our military and first responders, please visit RobertIrvineFoundation.org



RI MAG COVER INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT



Robert Irvine Magazine readers first met Gordana Biernat in the May 2017 issue in [THIS](#) piece where the woman named to Oprah Winfrey's Super Soul 100 list and author of *#KnowTheTruth* laid out her life philosophy. For her cover interview, Gordana tackles the burning questions of the moment: from the rise of anxiety and depression to cancel culture, dealing with criticism, and how to stay focused to build the life you want. Her answers were anything but predictable and will give you plenty to think about. Read on and be inspired.

INTERVIEW BY Matt Tuthill /// PHOTOS BY Charlotte T Strömwall

INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

RI Magazine: I point a lot of people in your direction, but I struggle to describe exactly what you do. I see a lot of people calling themselves thought leaders these days. I laugh when I see it, but in your case it's probably accurate. How would you describe yourself?

Gordana Biernat:
Thought leader is really close to what I do because I am always thinking. There's no time when I'm not thinking. I've done that since I was a child, so a thinker, thought leader would be appropriate. At the same time, I don't lead people. I kind of throw my light somewhere, and I show them, "Look here," and they find themselves. I don't see myself as a leader. More of a guide, but that's also not the right way to describe me. So when I describe myself, I say that I'm an author and I'm a thinker, but thought leader is very close.

RI: There's a tremendous amount of media attention around the rise of depression and anxiety and what they're saying they've found is a correlation between that and with the amount of screen time and social media use that they have. And I feel like there's a really kind of

lazy through line that is always thrown in there: "Well, people get FOMO, or fear of missing out. They see all these idealized images on Instagram and on Facebook and they see and they think, 'Oh, everyone else's life is so perfect.'

And then they internalize that and compare their lives to what they're seeing, and then they get upset." And I just feel like that could be part of it, but it feels a little too simple, a little too easy. I feel like it has more to do



INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

maybe with the number of voices we're exposing ourselves to that we're not spending any time alone in thought. We're just crushing our brains the second we wake up by logging on and seeing just thousands of things. I don't feel like we're really designed to handle all of it at once, especially not all day long. What do you think?

GB: I think that it's about understanding who you are and understanding that you always have the power to choose. We are not using that power. We're not using our free will. We have become habitual beings. We do it because we've always done it. It's not that we can't live without our phone, and yet we have it on the bedside. And

the first thing we do in the morning, we pick it up. We're not even thinking. It's a habitual motion to pick up the phone and start scrolling the phone. So it's about the habit.

I don't want people to become habitual beings. I want them to be present in the now moment. So if you are in habit all the time, then you are not present in the now moment. And if you're not present in the now moment, then what are you doing here? You're not even connected to who you truly are. And if you don't know who you truly are, well then every action in this reality is, per definition, an unconscious action. So I would either describe us as a society where we are all asleep or we're unconscious.

Also, the information that is out there. I don't think that it's too much information because it doesn't matter... When you're out in the woods, there's a lot of information going on there, but you choose what you want to look at. And again, it's the choice. Acknowledging that you have the choice to say, "I like that. I do not like that." And then you don't go where you don't like to go. It's very simple because when you go into the details, when you start to look at the details, the devil lives in the details. You will lose yourself in that. It is a very simple principle. It's about acknowledging your own power to choose.

RI: You're on every social media platform and you post a lot. But I take it that you don't just scroll through social media. You're using it to say what you need to say and then you're doing something else. You're not just looking at a feed for extended periods of time.

GB: Absolutely. I do not sit and scroll for the scrolling. I have an intention with what I do on social media. I do interact with people, a lot of people. I do interact with them, but I do not allow myself to become distracted



INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

by things that I know are going to lead me down a path, which is not where I want to be. I always have an intention with what am I doing on social media. And I think that it's important to have an intention. Why are you picking up the phone and scrolling? Because if you do not know how to answer the question, then there are subconscious reasons why you're doing it and you're not conscious of why you're doing it.

So for me, it's very, very much about being highly conscious of why am I on Twitter right now? Why am I on Facebook right now? What am I doing here? And then picking the things that truly interest me. Nothing else. Not being distracted by everything because you can't. It's impossible to keep all these things in your head. It scatters your mind and disconnects you from your heart, and then you don't function as a human being.

RI: So does it make sense to you then that depression and anxiety could be correlated to social media use? Does it make sense to you that people are freaking out because they've been detached from what it is they want to do? Whatever intentions they had at the start of the day are instantly crushed because they get sucked into some argument online or whatever the news of the day may be.

GB: Absolutely. Of course they

feel an emptiness... If I'm distracted into something that actually isn't of my frequency, then I will feel empty when I've gone that path and it ends abruptly somewhere and I feel like I didn't gain anything, I didn't learn anything. I was just a part of emotion, and that is not a good place to be because it drains you of energy, which means that you will feel empty.

So of course there is a correlation between the two, but I think it's not about the media. It's about not acknowledging the choice,

"If you try to control others, you will lose yourself in that process. Always."

not knowing that you can choose. I think that people who are born into this era where everything is available, all the information you will ever need is out there, it's hard to know that you can actually say no to it. Because it's always been there and you're supposed to interact everywhere because that's how life is. But that isn't how life is. Because when you don't have a phone, then life becomes something different.

RI: As I was thinking about it, I got stuck on a metaphor, a fitness

metaphor: if someone becomes morbidly obese, you would say that that person has an energy imbalance. They're taking in more energy than they're expending. So there's two ways to deal with that, right? You can exercise more, and you can eat less. This is what any doctor would tell you. These disorders, I feel, are an imbalance of the mind that can be dealt with in two ways. One is what you just said, which is cut yourself off to some degree. You can say no. You don't have to eat everything. Right?

And the other way is to have more output. Exercise, use your brain, do something creative. Your brain was created to solve problems, to write things, to create art, to do something constructive. The brain wants to do something, you're not letting it.

GB: Well, the way I see this reality, we are here as souls. We have this body and we are exploring this reality, and the exploration is about turning thoughts into things, turning energy into matter. And if you're always consuming something and not releasing it out of you, then you're missing the point with being here from the start. So of course that will create emotional pain to you because you're not fulfilling your purpose here. Your purpose is to transform thoughts into something creative. That is the purpose here.

INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT



"I think that people who are born into this era where everything is available, all the information you will ever need is out there, it's hard to know that you can actually say no to it. Because it's always been there and you're supposed to interact everywhere because that's how life is. But that isn't how life is. Because when you don't have a phone, then life becomes something different."

Then you can choose what thoughts you want to play around with. I mean, you can be a gardener, you can be a painter, you can be whatever you wish, but it's about transforming a desire, an idea, into something that others can see or you can see in the physical world. And if you're not doing that, if you're only absorbing information, having arguments with people, doing things that are not leading you anywhere because you're doing it habitually, then of course you will feel empty.

They say that kingdom of heaven is within you, but it feels empty because we are not present in ourselves. We are not inside of ourselves. We're not present here. We're not doing what we're sup-

posed to do here. You're here to create. We are not here to just absorb information. It's a very good analogy that you made. If you're only eating and not exercising, of course it leads to death in one way or the other, and this is an emotional death.

RI: I want to play devil's advocate for a second because you have such certainty about things, and if I'm reading this and don't know you, I'd say, "Okay, but how do you know that?" You say with such certainty that the purpose of life is to turn thoughts into matter and we're here to explore our passions, explore our desires. How can you say that with such certainty?

GB: Because I feel within me what is the truth for me and not. It's a logical way of thinking for me. I was in a car accident when I was 17 years old, and I knew that I was going to die in that car accident because I saw the truck coming towards us and I knew that, "Oh my God, this is the two seconds, the last two seconds of my life." I breathe it in, and I thought, "It's okay. If I die, I die. It's okay." And in that moment I knew that it didn't matter if my body was totally squashed by that truck. I would still be around. I knew that with 100% certainty. I knew that. And I cannot explain to you how you know such a thing. You just know. And at the same time I said, "It's okay. It's okay if I die" because

INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

I come from a very dysfunctional family, and I had played around with the thought that it might be good if I didn't live. It might be easier for me not to be alive.

So in that moment it almost felt like a relief if I would die. And then there was a little piece of glass that kind of flew through the air and stopped. And there we were, me and the piece of glass hanging in the air, no gravity, nothing. Time stopped. And I looked at the piece of glass and the beam of sunlight, white sunlight came through it and exploded into all the colors of the rainbow. And I was thinking, "Oh my God, I am the piece of glass. I am the light, the white light, and I am creating this reality through me with all the colors of the rainbow." And then I said to myself, "I want to live. I don't want to die. This life is beautiful." And in that moment, the car stopped. I did survive. I even could walk out of the car. I stood on the grass, looked down on my feet, and I asked myself, "Has the grass always been this green?" Because it felt like it was much greener. I looked up and the sky was blue and I was thinking, "Oh my God, intensely blue sky."

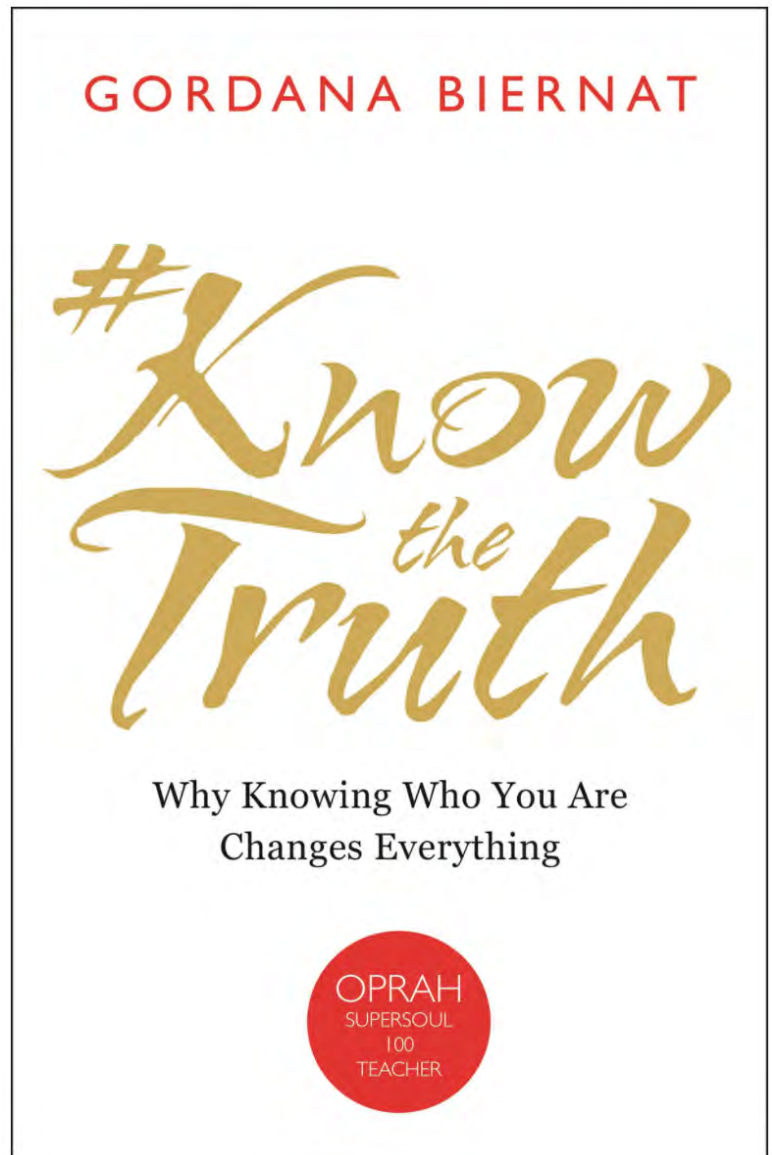
And then my father came towards me, and I have always been afraid of him because he was always dominating and much bigger than I was. And he came towards me and I looked at him and I thought, "What's wrong with him? Has he shrunk? What's wrong with him? He's so slow." I didn't perceive him as big as I did before. And in that moment I realized that some-

thing in my life had changed, I was not the same person anymore. And I knew more things than I knew before the car accident.

So I do know that what you see here is not all you get. I am receiving some kind of information from another source, which you are, too. It is your soul source giving you that information. And I say it with certainty because I do not doubt. I have seen it, so I know it. And I've

been thinking about this my entire life.

RI: That's a beautiful story... I thought that's why you'd be perfect to answer these kinds of questions. You're so great at seeing big picture. So if I can go back to the small picture of a second... there's a specific thing happening on social media, this phenomenon of cancel culture, where if you're a comedian and



INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

you tell a joke that's insensitive, the people who are offended will start a whole campaign to try to make sure you lose your platform.

This extreme wokeness is well-intentioned. It's about trying to make the world a fair place. On the other side, it's fascinating because there a huge number of people saying, "He ran afoul of my values, therefore he shouldn't be allowed to say anything. He shouldn't have a job. And to me, that's insane.

GB: Well, here's the thing, and this is one of the truths that I know for certain: you cannot change anyone else. When you try to control others, you'll lose yourself in that process. Always. So again, it has to be brought back to you, your responsibility for your own feelings, your responsibility for what you are allowing into this reality. Because we are creating this reality with the frequency that we have. So every emotion that I have, I am the portal of these emotions into this reality. That's how we are co-creating a reality because we find people of the same frequency, and then we co-create the reality we want through the emotions that are coming through us in this reality. So I know for certain that you can't change others because you lose yourself in that process. So it's fruitless. There is no use in it.

RI: So no matter what side of that you fall on, it's all useless. If I get mad at the people trying to silence others... same thing applies.

GB: Well, here's the thing: If you hate the haters, they have already won. When I say, "I hate war," I am standing in the frequency of hate. The quantum field, universe, God, source, the force, whatever you want to call it, is going to give you more opportunities to hate war. If I say, "I love peace," I'm standing in the frequency of love, and the universe, God, source, whatever you want to call it, is going to give you more opportunities to explore what it feels like to love peace.

And it's a huge difference between the two. It's not about words. It's about the frequency and where the words come from. Do they come from your heart? Do they come from your brain? Do they come from your soul or your ego? And again, it's always you. You're the portal of this. So you have to figure out where does this come from.

Anything I post on Twitter, I do not allow it through me into this reality if it hasn't passed my love filter. I ask myself, "Where's the love in this?" And if there's no love in it, I will not post it. Because I feel like it is my responsibility. What am I allowing through me into this world? And every thought, every feeling, it's like a break in this world. It creates a reality.

So taking responsibility for that, the best thing you can do is take responsibility for your own reactions. I think Wayne Dyer said that how people treat you is their karma. How you react is your karma, which means that it doesn't matter what others say about you. It is a

reflection of them, not of you. How you react is a reflection of who you are.

RI: Right. What people think about me is none of my business.

GB: None of your business.

RI: You're over in Sweden. Here in the United States there is a daily obsession over every move the president makes and everything that's going on politically. And for anybody, either side, it would be really great for them to hear what you have to say there, that the people that you vehemently disagree with, stop feeding it. Stop giving it so much attention. Stop responding. Stop feeling this need, this compulsion to respond to every single thing because you're actually just giving more power to the discord.

GB: Yeah, because it's all about inner peace does not mean no reaction. Inner peace means to know when and how to react, to pick your wars, so to speak, to be more aware of where you're spending your energy. What does it give to the situation? It's about asking yourself, "What am I adding to the situation? Am I adding love or guilt? Am I adding calmness or anger? Am I adding clarity or confusion?" And being brutally honest to yourself when you ask the question. Ask, "Is it feeding my ego, or is it feeding my true self? Is it nourishing me, or is it draining me?" Ask yourself these questions, and if it's a negative answer, then don't go there. You have free will. Do not go there. As simple as that.

INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

RI: How hard is it for you to pass the love test sometimes? Things must frustrate you.

GB: Of course they do.

RI: So how much of what you are saying is learned behavior versus the way you naturally are?

GB: It's definitely learned behavior because I mean, I do all these things. I'm in the self-help business. I help people find themselves, and yet sometimes I wake up in the morning and I'm in the middle of a sentence in my mind, which means that my mind is going on and on and on. I'm thinking, so I have to wake up and I have to say to myself, "Gordana, jump out of your head and into your heart." I have to order myself to do this. So it's more than human to be dragged into all of this, to focus on other people's drama.

But also you have to be able to stop yourself because no one else can do that. It comes from within. It all starts with you. So I have to tell myself not to do this. Sometimes it pulls me away and then I have to go back and find my center and continue my day the way I wanted because I want to acknowledge my presence in the now moment always. That's why I do what I do. But it is a learned behavior. I had to learn this. I had to condition myself to do so.

Also, for instance, when I wake up in the morning, I set an intention for the day and the intention can be a simple thing as I am going to look for beauty everywhere today because beauty is there always,

and what I seek, I find. If I wake up in the morning and I'm in the middle of a drama, trust me, drama is what I will find during the day because what you seek, you will find always.

RI: Your son Hubert is a famous YouTuber, [Gehab](#). He plays games, comments on them, and he edits them in this really creative way. And for the uninitiated: you can make a great living doing this through ad revenue. But I'm imagining that it was probably difficult for you to deal with that as a parent. Almost like a parent whose kid wanted to be in a rock and roll band in the early 1960s. It was very much a situation where, "What are you doing? You can't play a guitar for a living. This is crazy." So how did you feel about it at first? How do you feel about it now?

GB: I think that we are very open-minded parents. We have always trusted that Hubert knows what he wants, even when he was a small child. And he was so responsible ever since he could speak. I mean, we could go to a toy store, and he would walk through it, not find a toy, and then come out of it. And I remember mothers going, "How come? Why didn't he pick a toy?" Their children pick ten toys. Even if they didn't need them, they pick toys. Hubert never did that because he said, "I didn't find anything that I liked." So I knew ever since he was very small that he knew exactly what he liked and didn't like. He never pushed himself to buy anything that he didn't need. He had such a respon-

sibility for his own feelings and what he knew about himself. So I trusted him always to know what he wanted in his life. And when he came up with this idea that he was not going to study anymore, he was going to become a YouTuber, we weren't shocked at all. Even though, I mean, I'm an academic. I'm an art historian, and my husband is also an academic. So it was a shock, and at the same time, not. Because we knew that he was going to pick another path.

RI: But here's a young guy, early 20s, with a very public profile and with that comes criticism. Did you advise him in that regard? And if not, what advice do you have for folks dealing with criticism out there?

GB: As I said, what they say about you is not your business. To understand that it is a reflection of them not of you. And it is hard. I know it's hard because we are wired, one, to belong somewhere. We're wired to mirror each other. We want to share a love with other people. So when someone breaks that rule, of course it will be painful.

But they can only see what their frequency allows them to see. So if they're in hate, if they're in a bad place, they cannot see who you truly are. They can only see the parts that their frequency allows them to see. So whatever they're saying, it cannot be the truth about you because they do not know the entire truth.

And this is the way we have been speaking to Hubert since he was

INTERVIEW: GORDANA BIERNAT

small. So he has incorporated that way of thinking without even knowing that he's doing it. He simply sees it that way. Also, he has this really, really strong feeling of helping others to keep their integrity. He doesn't want to cross that. So he's always kind to people. Even if they're not kind to him, he's kind back. And I think in the long run it's a win situation for him to be that way.

RI: So many people write in to Robert to say they feel stuck. What advice do you have for the person who just feels like they cannot get out of their own way and they feel stuck in a lousy job, relationship, etc?

GB: I would tell them that the first question they need to answer to themselves is, "Who am I?" Because if they don't know who they are, then as I said before, every action becomes an unconscious action, and that's where you get stuck because it becomes unconscious. Asking yourself, "Who am I?" Is the most important question there is. It's not an easy answer, but when you start asking the question, the answers come.

If you look at the reality around you as your garden and every single thought and emotion you have as a seed, every single thought you have will become a plant in your garden. And if you feel like you're stuck in a jungle with a machete trying to find your way out, then you're not connected to who you truly are. You need to connect to the one carrying the seeds, the

one having the thoughts, the one having the feelings. Most people who are stuck in life are in their feelings. They think that they are the feelings. They think that they are the thoughts. They are not. The thoughts and the feelings are just tools in this reality. You are

the one thinking. So detaching from the feeling and the thought, becoming aware of the stillness, doing all of this, is a way to get unstuck because you realize that everything in your reality is there for you to use as a tool in order to explore this reality.



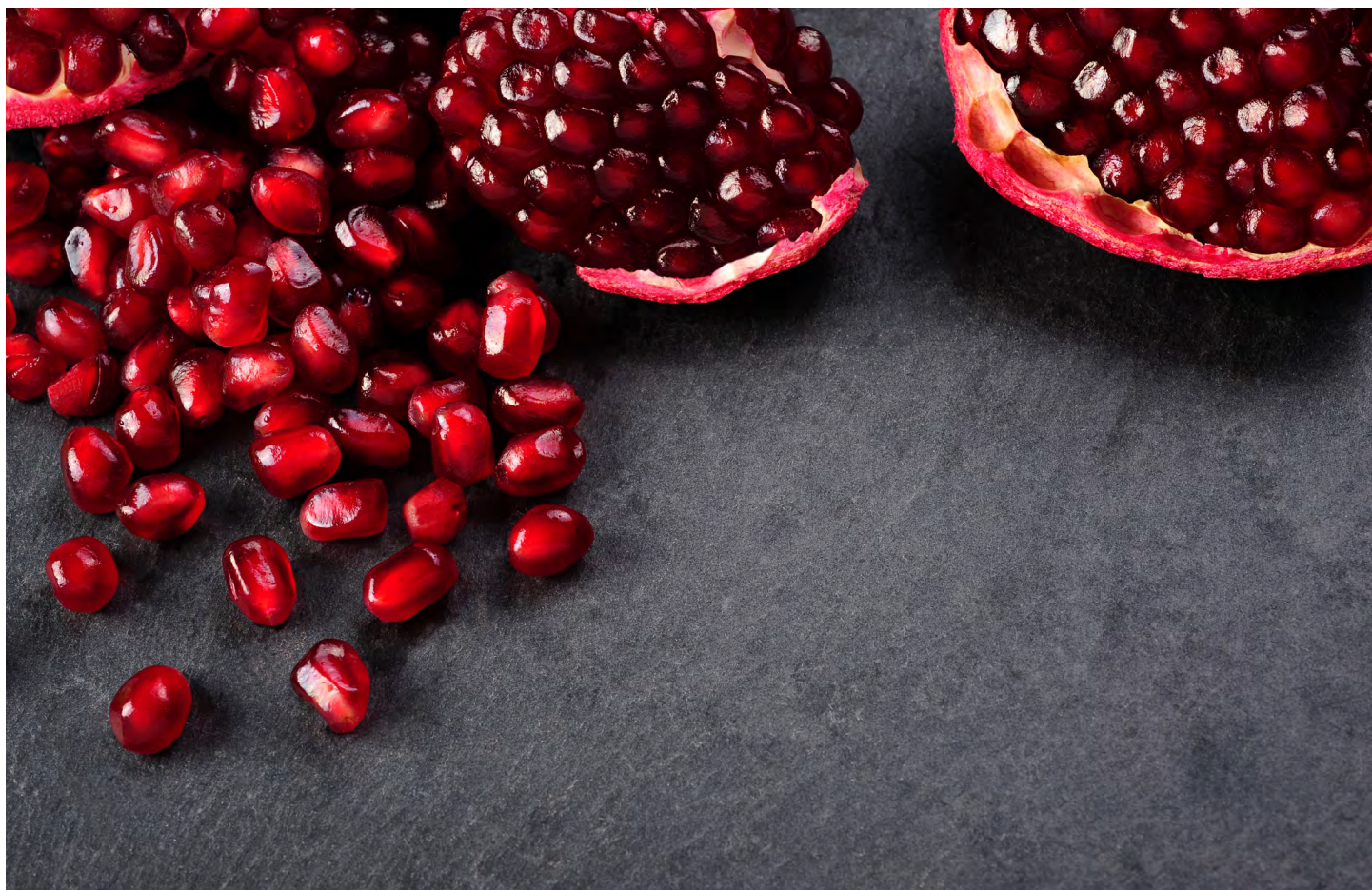
Follow Gordana on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) or write to here [HERE](#) to schedule a one-on-one coaching session.

WINTER WARMERS

COLD DAYS,
COMFORTING
MEALS



WINTER WARMERS



POMEGRANATE-SQUASH SALAD

SERVES 4

YOU'LL NEED FOR THE SALAD

1 head Boston bibb lettuce (ripped into bite-sized-pieces)
1 cup pomegranate seeds
1 cup butternut squash (medium diced, and roasted)
1 apple, peeled and diced
1 tbsp shredded gruyere cheese

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE

1 Shallot
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
3 cups Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Salt and pepper

MAKE IT

1) Combine shallots, red wine vinegar, and mustard. Slowly incorporate olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.
2) Roast butternut squash in a 350-degree oven for about 10 minutes or until cooked through.
3) In a mixing bowl, add lettuce, pomegranate seeds, butternut squash, apples and vinaigrette. Season with salt and pepper.
4) Finish salad with shredded gruyere cheese.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 363
PROTEIN: 3 g
FAT: 26 g
CARBS: 23 g



BAKED ARTICHOKE DIP

SERVES 6-8

YOU'LL NEED

14 oz canned artichokes
1 cup mayonnaise
½ cup cream cheese
2 tbsp smoked paprika
1 cup shredded parmesan cheese
1 tbsp chives
1 tbsp chopped thyme

MAKE IT

1) In a large mixing bowl add mayonnaise, cream cheese, and smoked paprika and mix together.
2) Next add artichokes and thyme.
3) Place in a 9 x 13 inch baking pan and bake at 400° for approximately 15 minutes.
4) Finish with chopped chives.

THE MACROS

CALORIES: 242
PROTEIN: 17 g
FAT: 14 g
CARBS: 17 g

WINTER WARMERS

LAMB LOIN & LENTILS

SERVES 8

YOU'LL NEED

1 lamb loin (about 2 lbs)
1 tsp Kosher salt
2 tsp brown sugar
1 tsp rosemary (chopped)
1 tbsp grape seed oil
1 cup black lentils
1 tbsp dried cherries
1 carrot (small diced)
1 rib celery (small diced)
½ onion (small diced)
1 tbsp bacon (cut into lardons and rendered)
1 cup red wine
2 cups chicken stock
1 tbsp butter
2 cups arugula

MAKE IT

1) In a large mixing bowl, blend brown sugar, salt, and rosemary to make a rosemary rub.
2) Lightly season lamb loin with salt and pepper.
3) Sear lamb loin over high heat on both sides. Pull from pan and coat in salt and rosemary rub.
4) In a sauce pot over medium to high heat add bacon, dried cherries, lentils, chicken stock and red wine.
5) Bring to a boil. Allow to boil for 5 minutes and then lower to a simmer.
6) Cook at low simmer for 25 minutes or until lentils are thoroughly cooked.
7) Finish lamb in 350-degree oven

for about 5 minutes or until you've reached desired doneness.

8) Next finish lentils with butter, diced carrots, celery, and onions.

9) Slice lamb loin and serve over lentils. Top with arugula to finish.

THE MACROS (Per 4 oz serving)

CALORIES: 383

PROTEIN: 43 g

FAT: 13 g

CARBS: 20 g





DEEP FRIED TURKEY

SERVES 12-16

YOU'LL NEED

6 qts hot water
9 oz Kosher salt
1 lb dark brown sugar
1 tsp coriander (whole)
2 lemons, cut in half
5 lbs ice
15 lb turkey
5 gallons frying oil

MAKE IT

- 1) Place water, salt, brown sugar, coriander and lemon into a 5 gallon container (a cooler will work).
- 2) Place turkey in the liquid.
- 3) Brine for 24 hours.
- 4) Remove turkey from brine and allow to air dry 1 to 2 hours prior to cooking.
- 5) Preheat fryer so the oil reaches 250°. Place turkey into fryer.
- 6) Bring temperature of the oil up to 350° and cook for approximately 30 minutes.

- 7) Once the turkey has reached an internal temperature of 145° remove the turkey from the fryer.
- 8) Allow the turkey to rest for approximately 20 to 30 minutes before slicing.
- 9) The turkey should reach an internal temperature of 160° before serving.

THE MACROS (Per 4 oz serving)

CALORIES: 253
PROTEIN: 32 g
FAT: 13 g
CARBS: 0 g

RI MAG INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI



Politically-minded comedians working in the Trump era have found the job fraught with more scrutiny than at any other time in memory. Iranian-born comic Maz Jobrani has found a way to toe the line brilliantly, never resorting to anger or insults and fighting for his point of view with joy. It's a tact that's bringing together both sides.

INTERVIEW BY MATT TUTHILL

INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI

Robert Irvine Magazine: Anti-immigrant sentiment in the US is high right now. You were born in Iran and day in and day out, you get to hear how your homeland, not just its government but its people, are our enemies. Obviously, the travel ban affected Iran, and you have chosen to address this with humor. There's power in that, but as the situation worsens, do you ever think, "Hey, this power of laughter stuff isn't so powerful."?

Maz Jobrani: Well, I didn't get into comedy to necessarily solve the world's problems. I think with comedians, our number one goal is just to be funny and get laughs, and we get into it because we love it. So I think that's why anybody gets into anything that they do, hopefully. If you're lucky enough to find something you love, then you do it.

When I first started doing this about 21 years ago, there weren't that many people from a Middle Eastern background doing stand-up comedy. And so just by doing what we're doing, I think we show a different side of how we've been depicted. Looking at African-Americans or Latinos or Asians, they weren't well-represented in comedy for a while and for the longest time they were the villains of every movie. And then eventually, when you see a comedian from that background, whether it's Cheech and Chong or Margaret Cho or Richard Pryor or whoever, you go, "Oh, they



I think that they might have just connected with me, my energy. And that's a little bit of hope, that's a little bit of like, "Oh, we can be different in opinions and yet get along."

actually are funny too. They like to laugh."

The first tour I did was called the *Axis of Evil Comedy Tour*, and it was me and a few other Middle Eastern-American comedians, and it came out on Comedy Central, but I always say it's not just about us performing onstage,

it's also about the audience. In the special, when they do a cut-away to the audience, you see people from all these different backgrounds laughing. I think it helps change people's minds about us in general. And as a matter of fact, I remember being in some chat room online, and when that spe-

INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI

cial did come out, somebody had written someone else saying, “I never knew these people laughed,” and that’s the truth. If you look at the depiction of Middle Easterners or Arabs or Muslims throughout American cinematic history, for the longest time, they were always the villains and always terrorists. And so, to show us on TV laughing, I think, was something new.

I think what we do chisels away at something. It’s not the only solution. And unfortunately, I think we live in a world right now that’s just super polarized, and there’s a lot of fear mongering, and there’s a lot of blaming immigrants for all of our problems when, if you look at the statistics,

we see that that’s not the case. I was telling somebody the other day that the biggest threat to Americans are Americans.

We just keep doing our thing. We do our part. The truth is, when you come to my live shows, you see a pretty diverse audience and we’re all laughing together.

The only time there might be some divisions nowadays is when I do any of my Trump jokes. Some Trump supporters really take it personally, which to me is pretty mind boggling because the whole point of living in America is that we can make fun of our leaders, whether it’s Republican or Democrat, it doesn’t matter. And our late-night comedy show hosts are making fun of our leaders all

the time. So it always throws me a little bit what somebody gets offended at any Trump jokes, but that’s the only time I find any kind of slight division within my audiences. So again, the good news is I think that we’re laughing together, and I don’t know what the statistics are in terms of the increasing divisions or the increasing hatred towards immigrants or not, but I’m just trying to do my part over here.

RI: Your tone is almost joyful. You might make a Trump joke, and with any heavy material, you’re able to keep things on this tonal level that’s civil for lack of a better word. Maybe you’re angry or frustrated, but those

things are not coming through. Other comedians dealing with the same material, it’s easy to confuse them as activists first and comedians second. Was it a conscious decision to present this way?

MJ: Every comedian can live and die by the way they choose to present themselves. Some comics, their personalities are just a little more aggressive and they go with it. And I’ve always been somebody who, even in high school, my



“When you come to my shows, you see a pretty diverse audience and we’re all laughing together.”

INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI

friends were all different; I was friends with the athletes, I was friends with the drama club kids, I was friends with the stoners, I've always been friends with everybody. I also will say that I, as a kid, when I first came to America and the hostage crisis happened, back then they would call us effing Iranians and they would bully you, and so from a young age, I've always been someone who has always tried to stand up for the underdog and always tried to see the hypocrisy in anything coming from people in power.

So, I do get pretty passionate about the stuff that I see. I can very specifically point to the travel ban that happened and the way that it was implemented and the way that it affected people from all the countries that were on that travel ban. I was getting emails from people saying, "Hey, my parents flew in from the Middle East. They landed, they had their Visa and they were coaxed into signing away their rights and put back on a plane and sent back to the Middle East." I had people telling me that they had dying relatives that they had planned to come to see and they had the Visas and they were revoked. So it was this big mess. I saw firsthand what was happening. Something like that really gets me passionate. It gets me upset. And so maybe I'll take to social media and get angry a little bit. I always ultimately try to be funny, but at times you're passionate and you just express

yourself that way.

All of that led to me trying to go a little deeper onstage. I wouldn't call it anger, but I was just trying to analyze a little bit as to why I'm so upset by Trump and his policies, and I was digging deeper about Trump and trying to discover my problem with him. I will say that that led to a couple of times getting into arguments with some of the audience mem-

"There was a time where at least we could agree on the facts. Now we live in a very strange time..."

bers who were hardcore Trump supporters. And that's when I stepped back and realized, "Okay, you know what? I can't lose myself to this." And that's one of the reasons I called the tour The Peaceful Warrior tour.

Recently at Flappers in Burbank there was this drunk lady who started yelling at me when I did my Trump jokes. And I just handled it with a smile. I said, "Hey, it's okay. You know, you have your opinion, and I have mine so you don't have to stay here. It's okay."

(You can see the full clip [HERE](#).)

One of my pet peeves is when people would say, "You're a comedian, you shouldn't be talking about politics." And I go, "That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard." You know, you're an accountant, so you shouldn't talk about politics either, only politicians should talk about politics? No, I have an opinion. I'm expressing my opinion and my job is to hopefully do it with laughs.

RI: Is there anything funny to you about the fact that we're so sharply divided and no one listens to each other? Forget policy: He's a monster to one side and the second coming to the other, and there's no in between. The absurdity of the time we live in: is that in itself funny to you?

Maz: I mean, it's absurd. It's unfortunate because I was talking to a friend of mine about this, about how there was a time where at least we could agree on the facts, and we could go from there. Now we live in a very strange time because, I keep referring to this one, which was with the whole Pizzagate thing where it came out that Hillary Clinton and Jonathan Podesta were running a child sex ring in a pizza restaurant in Washington DC. Now, just hearing that it's the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard in my entire life. It's so outlandish and yet there was a group of the population that believed it. So when you hear that, you're just

INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI

kind of shaking your head going, “Oh my God, how am I going to get through to anybody if this is where we’re at?”

I always just feel the best way to have hope in any of this stuff is to just continue to express myself the best way I can in the hopes that I encounter people that might have opposing opinions and even if they necessarily don’t have to see it my way, they’re at least open minded to what I’m saying.

Recently I was in West Palm Beach doing stand up, and my wife said, “I have an old high school friend who wants to come.” And she came with her husband and they were hardcore Trump supporters and they saw my show and after they were hugging me and high fiving me and saying, “We had a great time!” And I was a little bit like taken aback like, “Wait a minute, did they hear the show? Did they hear the jokes I did about Trump?” So I think that they might have just connected with me, my energy and just my, like you said, smiling on stage. And that’s a little bit of hope, that’s a little bit of like, “Oh, we can be different in opinions and yet get along.”

RI: You’re on Twitter. I feel like the platform used to be a whole lot more fun. Now I’m wincing as I open the app because I’m wondering, what’s the torch and pitchfork moment going to be today? Who are we trying to get rid of? Cancel culture is the term that’s being used for that. Have you ever self-censored



because you didn’t want to deal with the grief that might come with a joke?

Maz: Oh, absolutely. We live in a very hypersensitive time. And look, there’s been times when I’ve been texting a friend of mine back and forth and decided to stop texting and call them because of the misinterpretation that happens with the written word, right? So there have been many times I’ve sat there and been like, “Nah, I’m not going to put that out there.” Because part of it is like, “Why am I even putting it out there?”

I did my podcast yesterday and I had this guy who was an expert on the internet and the usage of

our data that these companies get from us. And one of the things we were talking about was the feeling you get when you post something or you check your phone and the endorphins that you get in your brain and how it feels good. And so you have to ask, “Is it worth that? Is it worth my putting this joke out there just to kind of get a little kick of positivity for myself, knowing that it’s definitely going to be causing some kind of havoc online?”

RI: That’s certainly wise on Twitter, but has it ever affected your routine?

Maz: Well with my routine, part of it is knowing yourself and

INTERVIEW: MAZ JOBRANI



Click the image to watch Maz's Netflix special, *Immigrant*.

knowing your audience. So my audiences tend to not be raunchy and they're not super conservative. So there've been times when I've come up with a joke and I've said, "Eh, this ain't quite going to work, this is a little too either edgy or is a little too esoteric for my audience." You know what I'm saying?

So I kind of know what my audience is and I know where I can go with it. So that's when I will say, "Eh, not going to do it." Or if I have a friend of mine who it might fit better, I might go, "Hey, here's a joke I came up with. I don't think I can do it, but you can do it." But it hasn't necessarily been a PC type thing.

You hear a lot of comedians nowadays complaining going, "Yeah people are so sensitive and you can't say this, can't say that." I'm like, "You should maybe check what you're saying and see if some of the stuff that you're saying might be offensive. And if it is, then maybe you need to evolve with the times and change your

language."

That said, yes there are still people that are going to get upset with you about things that might not be offensive, but they're going to take a word you said totally out of context and just say, "Oh, you said that word. How dare you say the word handicap?" When they don't listen to the whole joke where the guy says, "Well, you know, my, whatever, growing up my brother was handicapped and we had to do X, Y and Z."

There's middle ground there, so yeah, I self-censor but not that much. I probably self-censored stuff in the past 21 years, like three or four jokes.

RI: You tell your audiences right up front, "I was born in Iran and this was my upbringing. And so this is how I see things." And for the purposes of the show you do, I see the utility of that. Your audience is now aware of the angle from which you'll be approaching this material. But identity politics

can go hand in hand with some of the stuff we were just talking about. Do you see a point at which some of that can get out of hand? Because I'm on Twitter and I see some profiles and everyone feels a need to put their sexual orientation, gender identity, and pronouns out there. Fair enough, but I wonder

at what point we've moved past celebrating one another's differences and we start to emphasize them. Because identity is now used as a cudgel where, "Well, you can't speak on this because you're white. You can't speak on this because you're male. You can't talk about this because you're cisgendered." And you sit back and say, "But wait, I thought I was a citizen and I still have an opinion."

Maz: I agree with you. I mean, growing up I had friends with different backgrounds; I had straight friends, gay friends, you know, all that stuff. And you talk to them in a way that you talk to anybody and you give your opinion. And I agree.

Again, I always feel like it's up to that individual to do a little bit of self-assessment about intentions. I've heard actual comedians say this, "why is it that black communities can make fun of white people and white people can't make fun of black people?" And I

go, “First of all, there are white comedians that make jokes about black people, but in a way that it comes from a place of love.” If you watch Bill Burr, Bill Burr’s wife is black, so he’s talking about his relationship with her and some of the stuff that they run into.

But when you have a guy complaining about, “Why can’t I make fun of black people?” I can hear the subtext of his voice and this dude has some probably racist idea that he wants to put out in the world. And he’s upset about it. And I’m like, “Dude, you look in the mirror and check yourself. Or, as a comedian, go for it, go on stage, try it, see how it comes out.

You have to ask, “What’s the intention behind the joke?” So I feel that if I’m of Middle Eastern descent, I should be able to talk about any ethnicity or race or sexuality or whatever that I want to, as long as I’m coming from a place that’s well-intentioned. I mean some comedians might come at it from more of a derogatory place. But I’m all about making inclusive places.

So it’s like if you’re at my show, I talk about the LGBTQ community in my special and how from my background it’s a little bit taboo. But what’s my point of view? Let people be who they want to be. My point of view is supporting that community. But I know what

you’re saying. Especially because I think the younger generations are more and more sensitive to anything that is on the border. It used to be there was a time when you would do the accent of somebody that you were talking about and people would be there with you. Now when you do it, I think a younger generation is some-

times like, “Why is he doing that accent?” And it’s like, “Well that’s because that’s how my mother talks or that’s how my friend talks.” I’m just trying to do the best I can to sound like that person.

There is a heightened hypersensitivity at times. It’s a little bit of a tightrope walk nowadays. It’s not as loose.



Follow Maz Jobrani on [Twitter](#) and subscribe to his weekly podcast, [Back To School with Maz Jobrani](#). Look for his untitled animation project and his new special, “Peaceful Warrior” coming in 2020.

The RI Mag Gift Guide

A little something
for everyone.



GIFT GUIDE

For The Home Theater



RCA 70" 4K TV

TV buying has long been a delicate science—a hunt for the most bang-for-your-buck as you balance picture quality, size, and price. This 4K HDR 70-inch from RCA makes that case that you can indeed have it all—including every app under the sun—for a price tag that won't break the bank.

\$530, [Walmart](#)

SONOS BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS

Use a single speaker to add crisp, high-quality SONOS sound to any room in your house. Better yet, grab two of these affordable, compact speakers to pack an unbelievably powerful wallop. (Seriously, you won't believe how big these can get until you hook them up yourself.) Not only do you not need to spend thousands to have a great home stereo, it turns out you can spend about 200 bucks to get the job done right. As an added bonus, these “bookshelf” speakers are ultra-functional thanks to a partnership between IKEA and Symfonisk, and can either sit on a bookshelf or be mounted to a wall to become a display shelf. For a killer home theater on the cheap, pair these with the SONOS Beam soundbar.

\$99, [Ikea](#)



For The Kitchen



HI-TIME WINE CELLARS

There are a lot of online wine and liquor retailers, but none with the kind of variety or competition-shaming low prices as Hi-Time Wine Cellars. Get your favorite hooch or try something different and exciting like the Hofgut Falkenstein Riesling 2017, described as having, “a stunning nose of flowers, white peach, a hint of passion fruit and herbs. The wine develops a beautifully elegant feel of herbs, salty elements and spices, with a little bit of power in the finish. The balance and finesse is simply superb and full of potential.” Plenty of gift baskets (pictured) are also available.

Shop at HiTimeWine.net

SUNDAY PROVISIONS PECAN BUTTER

Gavan Murphy, a chef better known to the readers of *Muscle & Fitness* magazine as “The Healthy Irishman” for his years of sharing healthy recipes in those pages, is now in the healthy gourmet food business. And the first products being offered from his new company, Sunday Provisions, are four shockingly delicious varieties of high end pecan butter. Pecan Smash is the base flavor; Pecan Spice is flavored with cinnamon; Pecan Choco is rich and chocolatey thanks to addition of pure cacao; and Pecan Joe derives its distinct coffee notes

from decaffeinated coffee beans. We taste-tested all varieties at the *RI Mag* offices and were astonished not just at the depth of flavor in the base product Smash, but at how perfectly balanced the flavors in the other three varieties were. Give

any of these a try and you won’t be disappointed. A Sunday Provisions pecan butter and jelly sandwich eats like a proper meal, not a weak replacement for the real thing.

Shop at SundayProvisions.com



For Something Completely Different



THOR'S HAMMER TOOL SET

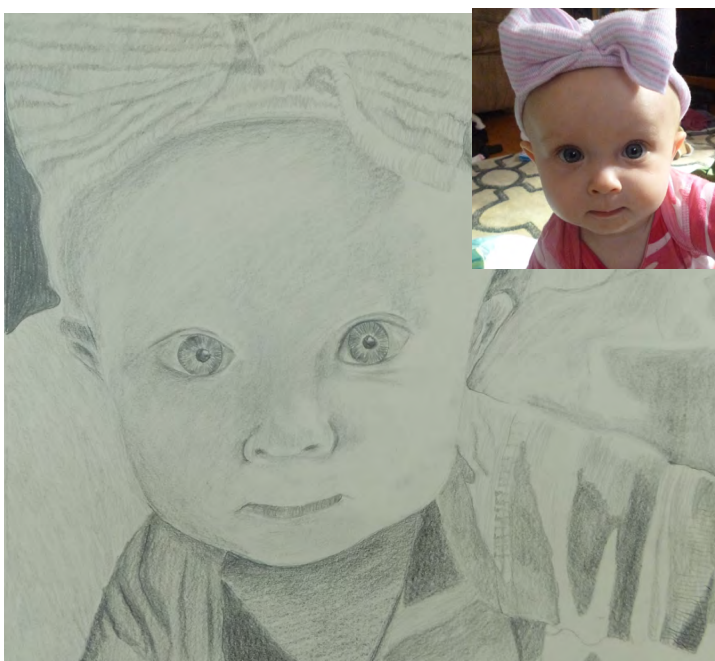
Wield the power of Mjolnir! Thor's mighty hammer opens up to reveal a 28-piece tool kit perfect for all manner of simple jobs around the house. Includes hammer, pliers, Allen key set, measuring tape, screwdriver with changeable bits, and more. Of course, when the God of Thunder needs to hammer a nail, he probably doesn't even bother picking up his magic hammer and just mashes it in with the palm of his hand.

\$69, [Amazon](#)

CUSTOM BABY PORTRAITS

The Time Stand Still shop on Etsy will beautifully render an original piece of photorealistic artwork and ship it to you. Just send any baby photo to shop owner and artist Kristine, and she'll get to work with an ebony pencil "to provide a dramatic contrast of light and dark." The finished product will arrive on acid-free paper to make the ultimate keepsake to pass down through generations. On the shop page she writes, "Children grow up right before our eyes. How we wish to have time stand still. A beautiful, one of a kind, portrait drawing will be yours to enjoy for a lifetime. It is the perfect gift for you or a loved one." We couldn't agree more. Any parent would be lucky to have one of these professionally-commissioned pieces. The fact that you can get one at such an affordable price? That's just icing on the cake.

See pricing and ordering info on [ETSY](#)



Main: The finished product. Inset: The photo from which the artist worked.

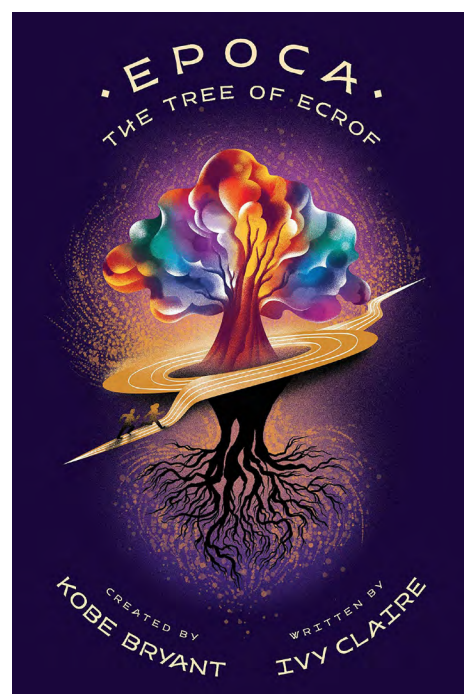
Just For Fun



BOX OF LIES TABLETOP GAME

Convince your opponent that you're telling the truth when you're lying and vice versa in this hilarious tabletop game ripped from the set of *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*.

\$15, [Target](#)



EPOCA: THE TREE OF ECROF

From author Ivy Claire, working from a concept provided by NBA legend Kobe Bryant, comes a magical world dominated by sports. If you didn't have "Create a new Harry Potter but with sports" on your Kobe Bryant retirement BINGO card, we'll forgive you. Nevertheless, the young readers in your life will find it delightful.

\$17, [Amazon](#)

BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO VINTAGE POSTER PUZZLES

Piece together iconic movie posters of yesteryear like *Jaws* and *The Breakfast Club* with these "Blockbuster Video" posters, complete with VHS-style clamshell case emblazoned with the Blockbuster logo.

\$9, [Target](#)



GIFT GUIDE

For Film & TV Fans



TWIN PEAKS: FROM Z TO A

This Blu-ray box set doesn't just include the original series and the recent limited series run, but also *Fire Walk With Me*, and *The Missing Pieces*, a collection of deleted scenes. Includes a bevy of extras and featurettes, including a "Red Room" diorama.

\$114, [Amazon](#)

STAR TREK DISCOVERY SEASON 2

The CBS All-Access show is a critical hit and reason enough for most Star Trek fans to subscribe to the streamer. But you don't have to do all that to enjoy the new season, available now for considerably less cost and hassle than subscribing to another service.

\$34, [Amazon](#)



GIFT GUIDE

For Film & TV Fans



COBRA KAI SEASONS 1&2

You didn't watch this when it came out on YouTube Red? Oh, I guess you didn't. You know, cuz it's on YouTube RED. Fret not. You don't need a tenth streaming service to see the critically-acclaimed followup to the 80s touchstone *The Karate Kid*. Both seasons (so far) of this hilarious and thoughtful series is collected in this DVD box set, which also includes a high-quality two-sided silk headband.

\$42, [Amazon](#)



ONCE UPON A TIME... COLLECTOR'S EDITION

The fuss surrounding Quentin Tarantino's ninth feature film is more than well-deserved. The meticulous sets alone would make it worthy of the Best Picture nom it's sure to get; the story, acting, and soundtrack combine to put it over the top and launch it into classic territory. And classics? We don't stream them. We collect them. This Collector's Edition contains 4K, standard Blu-ray, and digital versions of the film, plus mock movie posters, and 45 RPM record with two songs from its very groovy soundtrack.

\$76, [Amazon](#)



GAME OF THRONES COMPLETE SERIES

If you didn't come into the show with a working knowledge of all things Westeros, then you likely missed a thing or two. And the limits of streaming and cable tech made sure you missed other things—like the overly dark “Battle of Winterfell” episode. The lossless presentation of all eight seasons on Blu-ray ensures that your second time through is going to be your best time through.

\$170, [Amazon](#)



GIFT GUIDE

For Comic Book Nuts



BLACK & WHITE 7-PACK

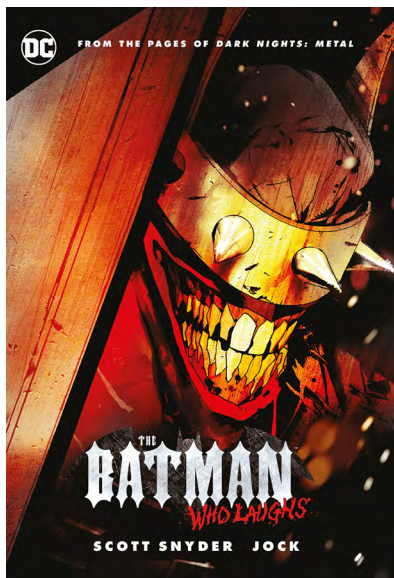
Batman has been depicted in hundreds of different art styles through the years; this set brings some of the most unforgettable styles to life for the collector who wants to sprinkle a little bit of Batman throughout the house or the one who wants to assemble a small army for his or her bookshelf. Lightweight but surprisingly well-made, a variety of different seven-packs are available, with 100 to collect in all.

\$40, [Amazon](#)

THE BATMAN WHO LAUGHS

Todd Philips' R-rated *Joker* captured audiences' imaginations to the tune of over \$1 billion in global box office receipts. Of course, the comics have been treating Batman fans to mature Joker stories for years, and Scott Snyder's *Batman Who Laughs* joins a proud history to sit alongside the likes of *The Killing Joke*, *Arkham Asylum*, and *A Death in the Family*. This new creation is a hybrid from another dimension, with all the Joker's evil chaotic nature, combined with Batman's relentless determination and strength. It's everything that makes comics great—a bizarre tale with gorgeous art (courtesy of Jock) that's hard to imagine existing in any other medium.

\$23, [Amazon](#)



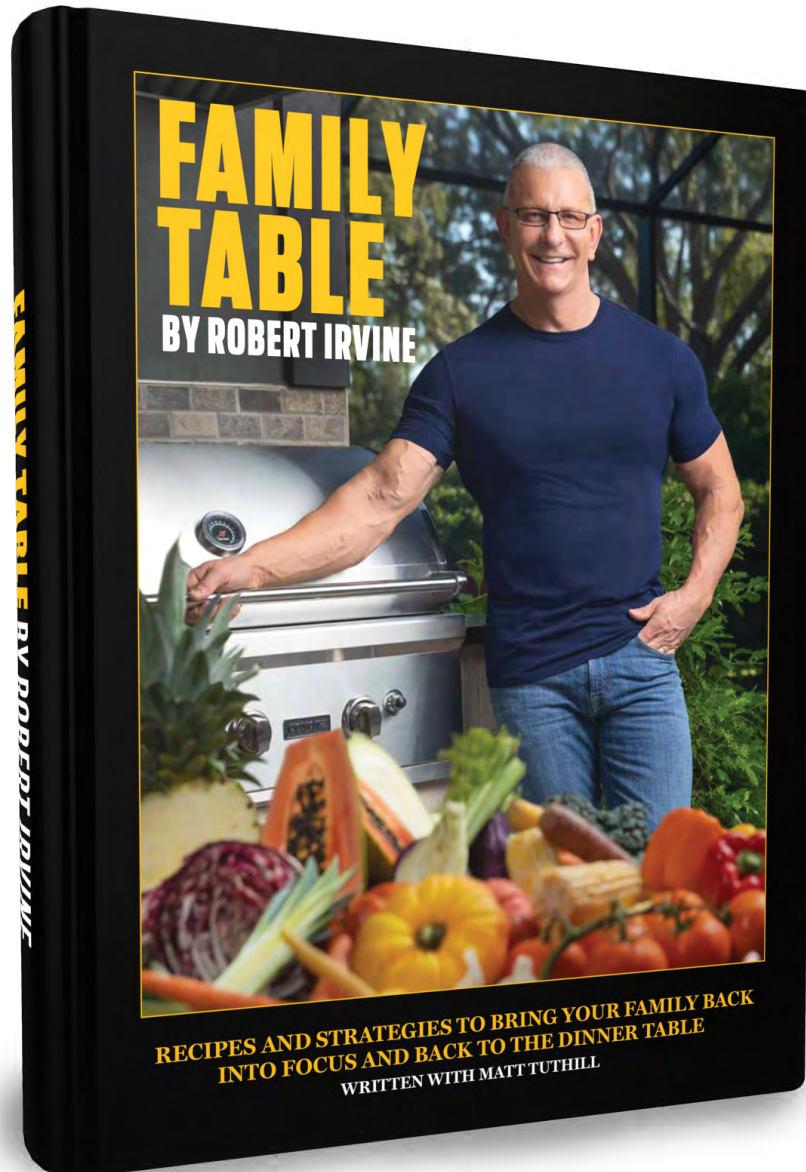
MARY SHAZAM STATUE

Billy Batson/Shazam's younger sister Mary gets her due in this playful heavy polyresin statue from DC Collectibles. The details here are staggering, from the texture on her band hat, to the thin bolt of lightning revolving around her scepter, to her hair waving in the breeze. There are a lot of third-party studios making similar quality pieces, but not for this kind of value.

\$125, [DCComics.com](#)

FAMILY TABLE

THE NEW COOKBOOK BY ROBERT IRVINE



72 EASY-TO-MAKE FAMILY-STYLE RECIPES
20 ESSAYS OUTLINING ROBERT'S STRATEGIES FOR A HEALTHY FAMILY
HARDCOVER WITH BEAUTIFUL FULL COLOR PHOTOS THROUGHOUT

GET YOUR COPY AT FAMILYTABLEBOOK.COM

ALSO AVAILABLE AT AMAZON.COM

RI MAG INTERVIEW:

DAVID MEADOWS



The former Navy SEAL-turned-actor's life has been anything but typical. Here, he talks about what inspires him to lead an extraordinary life, where he finds daily inspiration, and what you can do to create the life you've always wanted.

INTERVIEW BY MATT TUTHILL

INTERVIEW: DAVID MEADOWS

Robert Irvine Magazine:
What made you want to join the military?

DM: I went in straight out of high school. Originally, I wanted to be an architect, then changed my mind about that. I decided instead I wanted to go to medical school, which my parents were pushing me to do. But by the time I got to the end of high school, I just knew I hated school, specifically things I didn't want to study in any way. So I said why do I want to pound my head on this?

I'm all or nothing. If I have a topic I'm interested in, I'm ravenous and will go non-stop, and if I'm not, it's pulling teeth. So I knew I wasn't feeling eight years of school. I wanted to get out there in the world and start doing stuff.

Then on Discovery Channel, I saw a documentary about the history of the SEAL teams. I said that's what I want. I'm gonna make that happen. So I started training and researching. Everyone said, "Yeah, everyone tries, but no one makes it in, so don't even try." I said "somebody does, and that's gonna be me."

I found a mentor, Frank Hoagland, retired out of Seal Team Six and took me under his wing and tutored me on everything I would



Meadows gets to have pretend gunfights these days, but for many years as a Navy SEAL, his life was filled with the real thing. On his last 100-day deployment to the Middle East, he faced enemy fire in 56 live combat missions.

need to know. I joined the Navy at 18, went into BUD/s [Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL School] and failed a test so I was out. Then I was stationed in Greece for 18 months, went to BUD/s

again, made it through the first two phases, suffered in a diving injury, and got rolled back. But I made it through and graduated: Class 245.

By that time, the war was hot and heavy. The teams were getting

INTERVIEW: DAVID MEADOWS

in more combat altercations in a month in a half of a deployment than SEALs before them had done in an entire career. On last deployment, which was 100 days, I was in 56 live combat missions with gunfights.

RI: You were taken in by a documentary. What drew the other guys to that kind of life?

DM: I think it's a whole hell of a lot of ego about being the complete alpha guy with a lot of stuff to prove. It's because anyone who is drawn to that kind of life, they have many qualities in common. They are adaptive, flexible, multi-talented, seeking self-development and challenge. All the SEALs I knew, that was one part of their lives;

when they leave they go on to become entrepreneurs. They don't become docile. They demand a lot out of themselves.

I took a screenwriter friend of mine to meet the teams and she couldn't get over how smart, quick they all were. She thought they would all be Neanderthals. If I were to write a book, it would be about the multi-faceted talents. Astronauts, doctors, actors, come out of the teams.

Taylor Canfield, an old teammate of mine, drives NASCAR now. Another buddy does test driving for Aston Martin. Stunt parachuting... these are the kinds of things guys go and do afterward.

Anyone who sought being in the teams, they never wanted a normal

life. I wanted my life to be something you would write books about. I wanted to experience all of life. I never felt the draw of a safe or normal life. I never wanted a 9-5 job or to just get married and have kids... I want a family but I don't want the safe rendition of it. I want a wife who is a complete badass partner in crime and we'll adventure around the world together. The kids will see Europe and do rock climbing, and shoot guns, and learn multiple languages, and take theater classes, and be well-rounded adaptive human beings.

RI: Acting wasn't your first gig when you left the teams.

DM: No. I worked for a Fortune 500 defense contractor. I hated it.

I was an expert in all the technology that the company sold but didn't understand. I basically helped sales reps. They sold night vision and radio systems and other tactical gear. I'd come in to help close the deal when that was needed. The sales rep would try to sell it but they couldn't explain it fully, so they had an advisor like me.

But it sucked. It was working in corporate America. It was everything I didn't want. It was a bunch of people with big egos, small-minded-



Meadows, right, works behind the scenes with a producing partner. He's now involved in all facets of bringing projects to life, from writing to directing.

INTERVIEW: DAVID MEADOWS

ness, massive insecurities, trying to act like that just because they made a lot of money that that made them relevant. They were insecure and scared, with the mindset that having money made you a good person. Money to me... I've always made money and found it easy to do so. Because I never focused on making money. It was a byproduct.

That's when I felt my call to acting. I had this epiphany that I wanted to do it with the same tenacity and dedication that I pursued the SEAL teams with. I want to be classically trained in Shakespeare. I didn't want to be a fraud or just make it because I had a certain look. I wanted people to say, "Oh, he's really good."

RI: And since that epiphany, you've been in movies like *Captain Phillips*, and shows like *House of Cards*, *Turn*, *Banshee*...

DM: And the more and more I do it, the more I fall in love with it. I've been very fortunate in my career. I was never an extra. Even when I was Guard Number 1, I had lines. I was never just in the background. And I love it even more now that I'm learning the production side of the game—writing, developing, producing.

RI: And what are you working on right now?

DM: A drama-thriller called *Badlander* that takes place in a small desert town. I'm leading that for Lionsgate. Then there's a horror film in a Rob Zombie-esque style development, called

Love.

Angel was a short film I made with my producing partner; we have a 17-minute version that was well-received and they're working on a feature-length film.

RI: What were the movies you loved as a kid? Or the ones that made you want to pursue this?

DB: I loved anything that touched me, made me think. One of my favorite movies of all time is *Terminator 2*. It was an action movie with so much heart, soul, and message to it.

Somehow through the interaction with the terminator, mom, and child, they tell this apocalyptic cautionary tale, but they talk about this very human thing and very human message. "I look forward to the first time with a sense of hope, that if a machine, a terminator, can learn the value of human life, then maybe we can too." That was the point of the whole movie and it was beautiful. It's a legacy classic like *Jaws*.

I think we're in the golden age of TV. There are more risky, character-driven stories being created now than ever before in history. A lot of that is because of the number of outlets. Cable, streaming, networks, etc. There are more pathways to so many unique visions. And because there is so much content, your shit has to be good. It has to be tight because people have options. They're not just gonna watch it just because it's on. Back in the day, some of the shows that became incredibly popular wouldn't even survive now.

I gravitate towards shows that are intelligently done, character driven projects that make me think and challenge ideas. *Penny Dreadful* was such a unique spin on that genre. I love *Black Mirror*, *True Blood*, especially the first four seasons. I really love *Mercy Street* and *Banshee*, and not just because I was on both of those. *Banshee* had some of the best hand-to-hand combat scenes in TV history.

RI: So many people write in to say they're stuck. You're someone who not only doesn't have that problem, you've achieved at an extremely high level. If someone comes to you and says they're stuck, what advice do you have?

DM:: The very first step is you've got to be honest and say, "I'm not happy." The second thing: understand that if you're not happy, then most of the time the reason people are not happy is because they're not being honest about what makes them happy. They're living their life for someone else and looking for external points of guidance. It's a psychological phenomenon known as the mass effect—a social construct that has made us enamored of looking externally for how we should behave.

"Someone tell me what I should want. Someone tell me what to do, if I'm right or wrong." And they don't listen to the one voice that really matters: their own. That's why everyone is so depressed. They look externally, they look on social media, they're looking to a standard that is not their own. It should all be from you. I shouldn't

INTERVIEW: DAVID MEADOWS



look to my friends. I should choose my friends based on what I want to do with my life.

I always had an innate sense of this, but at times second-guessed it and went the other way. I often marched to the beat of my own drum, but made choices based on what other people told me would be better. I was told not to torment myself trying to be in the SEALs. If I would have listened to those people and let them steer me away from what I had in my heart, I wouldn't have been the man I am today.

I've been miserable, and f*%ed up, but I've been brave enough to admit it. The more you f*% up and you're honest and admit it and grow from it, then you're going to

be much better off. F*%ing up is a part of learning and growing. That's how we learn and grow.

So often, people look at things the opposite way. They think, unfortunately, that saying something like, "I was wrong. I made a mistake," is a bad thing. It's not! It's the base of something great because you're admitting that you did it. Not, "somebody else screwed me over" I did it. Now I'm going to fix it. It takes you out of the victim mentality, that nonsense of, "Oh they did it! Woe is me!"

Own your choices and now you can do something about it. Anybody can do that! It is not about talent, genetics. It is a conscious choice. It doesn't matter how

many mistakes I have made in my lifetime. What matters is I take ownership of them and by owning them, I empower myself.

By looking towards others, you are literally giving your power away. So the way I see it, there are three keys to being happy:

- 1) Accept that you are not happy.
- 2) Accept that it's your fault.
- 3) Accept that you have the power to change it.

If you accept those three things, your life will be on the track you want it to be.

RI: How can the average person get to the point where rejection doesn't bother them? You chose to join an elite fighting group

INTERVIEW: DAVID MEADOWS

and it didn't work out and everyone told you to stop trying. Eventually you make it. Then in civilian life, you choose to act, and 90 percent of that career is rejection that you have no control over. No matter where your career goes, there will always be moments where you're not tall enough, not this, not that... and you don't get jobs for that reason.

DM: That came from my mother. My mom is the strongest woman I have ever known. Everyone says that about their mom and they should.

But she raised me as a single mom. My dad died when I was about two years old. They were divorced when I was six months. My grandparents stepped into help, but my mother raised me alone, until I was 13. She got her bachelor's degree and her master's. We grew up poor as f*\$% in West Virginia. We couldn't afford milk! Nothing! No money whatsoever.

My mom, no matter how bad life sucked and things hurt and no matter how bad life f*\$%ed us, she never made an excuse. She'd say, yeah, that's how it is. She understood, you're never going to be trouble-free and smooth



Meadows takes the stage at Skyball to auction off parts in his upcoming production, *Manson Brothers Vampire Syndicate*. "It's a dark comedy with an *Evil Dead* vibe," Meadows explains. He plays the lead villain. The three roles auctioned for \$5,000 each, with all money going to the Airpower Foundation to support military veterans.

sailing. There will always be pain, heartache, issues... The key to being happy is accepting that. She understood life is not about not having problems, it's about how you respond to them. What you can control is how you respond to those problems.

I would highly recommend the book, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*. It can teach you a lot. People think they're unhappy because their marriage is falling apart. They're really upset by a choice they made, which means you can fix it. You're never going to be in a relationship that doesn't have problems. There will always be

challenges and problems. But if it's someone you want to be with, then those troubles are worth it. When things fall apart, they've decided those troubles aren't worth it. The key to happiness is being in love with the problem, not the solution.

When I get this much money, when I win this award, when I get a great girlfriend... no. None of those markers work. You have to create your own.

None of these things aren't easy. They're hard. But anyone can do them.

Follow David Meadows on [Instagram](#) and learn more at DavidBMEadows.com

IT'S YOU vs YOU

If you feel self-conscious in the gym, remember that everyone is there to focus on themselves, not you. Here's sage advice for rookies and veterans.

Q: I'm getting a head start on my New Year's fitness goals and just joined a gym. I've been eating healthy and feel motivated, but can't shake the feeling that literally EVERYONE in the gym is staring at me and silently mocking me for how heavy I am. It makes me absolutely DREAD going to the gym. Any advice?

- Self-Conscious in the Gym

**ANSWER BY
ROBERT IRIVNE:**

I remember that feeling perfectly because I felt a version of that when I first started lifting. In my case I felt scrawny and weak and didn't know how to do the more complicated lifts that the more experienced lifters were doing. Everyone, and I don't care who you are, feels this way when they're starting out.

But here's another truth which I can speak just as confidently because I've now been the veteran in the gym for so many years: No one is looking at you and no one is judging you. Everyone in that gym has two things in common. 1) They're pressed for time. 2) From the first-timer to the pregnant mom, from the guy who's there because his

cardiologist ordered him to do so to the professional bodybuilder, everyone is there because they're trying to get better.

If you insist there's a third item and that they're rolling their eyes at what you're doing, then I refer you to the quote above. You're going to the gym for your own health, happiness, and personal betterment, yes? So if everything I'm saying is wrong and in fact, everyone is judging you, well... would you let that stop you? Would you really quit?

Or would you unleash the champion hiding inside you and say to them all, "Oh yeah? Watch this."

To summarize: No one's watching you. If they are it doesn't matter at all (and they're jerks). Nothing can stop you but you. You've got nothing to prove to anyone except yourself. Now go make yourself proud and get to work!

And always remember the motto of this magazine, the motto that I live by...

Nothing is impossible.



THE CURE ALL

How Bikram Yoga can alleviate pain, increase range of motion, foster weight loss, and even ease depression. Sound too good to be true? Just wait til you give it a try. /// BY HEATHER QUINLAN

It was a typical week in Maya's life, one week before Christmas in 2010. She was super busy with work. She was running herself ragged trying to keep up with the holiday parties and shopping. And her knee pain that acted up now and then was now a constant. She could no longer run, which she had done for years to relieve stress. On top of that, her lower back pain—a by-product of sitting all day at work—was making her miserable and she was gaining weight as a result.

Her usual cures of popping a couple of Advil or taking the edge off with a glass of wine just wasn't doing the trick anymore. Maya was 46, overscheduled, overweight, in pain, barely keeping all the balls in the air, and feeling overall depressed.

One night when Maya left her office and headed towards the parking garage to head home, she noticed a sign in a yoga studio window she had always passed and never paid much attention to. It read "Live a pain free life. Try Bikram Yoga, \$30 for your



first 2 weeks"

At first she shrugged it off, thinking yoga wasn't for her and the idea of a "pain free life" seemed like a lofty promise. Then she remembered the words of a few colleagues and friends who had sworn by Bikram Yoga for years and decided to give it a try. Besides, it was forecast to be 30 degrees that weekend. A hot yoga studio sounded like a good retreat.

Saturday morning Maya woke up bright and early to get to the yoga studio on time. Bundled up in her winter jacket, she walked

through the front door and into the lobby. The staff greeted her at the front desk, took her payment and gave her a mat and towel for the class. Maya put her belongings in the changing room and headed to the yoga room in her sweat pants and t-shirt. When she opened the yoga room door it was HOT. She momentarily thought "What have I gotten myself into?" but reluctantly walked in the room.

Moments later, the instructor walked in and began leading the class. For 90 minutes, she bent forward, backward, up and

KEEP IT SIMPLE

down. She stretched parts of her body that she didn't know needed stretching. Her heart raced at times, which she couldn't understand because she was standing in one spot. It crossed her mind to run out of the room but she fought the urge and tried her best to fit in with what was going on.

When the class ended, Maya laid there in the final savasana, feeling completely wiped out and almost euphoric at the same time. She slept like a rock that night and woke up the next morning with her body craving another class. Over the next couple of months, Maya took class five times a week. Before she knew it, she was back to running without any knee pain. She got back to downhill skiing

feeling more conditioned for the sport than ever before in her life and overall, felt full of vitality. A decade later, Maya continues to practice Bikram Yoga and knows it will be a part of her lifestyle forever.

How could this be so? And what makes Bikram Yoga so special? In a nutshell, Bikram Yoga is a type of Hatha yoga, consisting of 26 yoga postures and 2 breathing exercises done in a yoga room heated to 105 degrees and 40% humidity. It is a very specific and highly therapeutic sequence of poses designed to work through every muscle, joint, organ and major gland in your body. It's a yoga designed for everybody regardless of shape, size, age, injury

or physical limitation.

And for folks suffering from depression, Bikram might be especially useful. According to Dr. Maren Nyer, the Director of Yoga Studies and the Associate Director of the Research Coordinator Program at the Depression Clinical and Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital, one uncontrolled pilot study—the first to explore Bikram yoga in a group of people with clinical levels of depression—found promising results.

“In 28 individuals who were asked to attend at least two Bikram yoga classes per week for 8 weeks, significant reductions in depression were found,” said Dr. Nyer, who is an Assistant Pro-



A recent study on Bikram Yoga found good news for people suffering from depression.

KEEP IT SIMPLE



fessor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. “The study noted that on average, [members of the group] only attended 8.7 classes per week over the 8-week period, meaning that these results were found with a lower dose than recommended overall. The practice is challenging, so it makes sense that it is difficult to attend a challenging class especially when struggling with symptoms of depression. However, the study found that more frequent attendance was associated with greater reductions in symptoms.”

Bikram Yoga was introduced in

the US almost 50 years ago, and since then there have been many imposters, mixing up or changing the sequence of postures completely, shortening the class, changing the name. Don’t be fooled. There is only one Bikram Yoga. It has stood the test of time and fads, because it works.

Unlike a generic “Hot” yoga studio, you know that every time you go to a Bikram yoga class anywhere in the world, it will always be the same sequence of postures. On a physical level, the repetition of the postures allows the body to really work on building strength,

increasing range of motion, and building stamina.

On a mental level, you are able to meditate and quiet your mind because know what’s coming next. Those moments of total concentration on one action gives the mind time to disconnect and unplug from your life outside of the yoga room and be stress free even for a moment.

But that’s the key. All the little moments add up to be big changes in the yoga room. It’s that cumulative effect of Bikram Yoga that quickly improves the quality of life outside of the yoga room.

If you’re one of the millions of Ameri-

cans who are overweight or suffering from an old sports injury or losing your range of motion, then you owe it to yourself to give Bikram Yoga a try in 2020. Maya’s story seems extraordinary, but it’s actually quite typical for most people who commit. I was one of those people. Will you be one of them?

“Keep it Simple” columnist [Heather Quinlan](#) is Robert Irvine Magazine Senior Writer, a certified Bikram Yoga instructor, and owner of [Bikram Yoga Burlington](#) in Burlington, MA.

GUEST RECIPE



BONE BROTH GRAVY

Broth? Or gravy? How about a little from Column B and a little from Column A on a cold winter's day? /// BY [SJM McSHANE](#)

YOU'LL NEED

5 oz organic unsalted butter
5 oz all-purpose flour
Turkey drippings
½ yellow onion (chopped)
4 celery sprigs (chopped)
24 oz organic Turkey or Chicken Bone Broth
½ bunch Italian parsley
½ organic fresh thyme
Salt and pepper to taste

MAKE IT

1) Make a roux: Melt butter in a heavy-bottom saucepan, stir in flour and cook, stirring occasionally. Make

sure to scrape the sides and bottom with whisk to avoid burning. Cook for 6-8 minutes until “peanut butter” brown and bubbly. Set aside,

2) In a saucepan, sauté onion in turkey drippings over medium low heat until caramelized, add celery.

3) Once celery is tender, add roux, turkey drippings, stock and herb sprigs, bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer.

4) Over low heat, simmer gravy about 10 minutes or until it has reached medium nappe and there is no flour flavor. Pour the gravy over a colander into your serving vessel.

5) Season with salt and pepper.

ROBERT IN THE MEDIA

Cue the Johnny Cash: he's been everywhere, man.



Click the image above to watch Robert dine with premiere NASCAR drivers.

Robert and the Coca-Cola NASCAR Family

2020 will be a season of major change in NASCAR thanks to the recent announcement that it is transitioning from a single title sponsor (in the past, Winston, Nextel, Sprint, and Monster) to four cornerstone sponsors: Busch Beer, Coca-Cola, Geico, and Xfinity. It was especially exciting news for Coca-Cola, which will assume naming rights to the NASCAR regular season trophy, and for Robert, who has enjoyed a close partnership with Coca-Cola for some time.

To celebrate Coca-Cola's renewed focus on NASCAR, Robert cooked

up a dinner for drivers Austin Dillon, Denny Hamlin, Joey Logano, Ryan Newman, Daniel Suárez, Bubba Wallace, and legends Kyle Petty and Dale Jarrett. The steak and sweet potato bread pudding look wonderful, but so were the conversations about food and family. Click on the image above to catch the whole thing.

Robert in the Palm Beach Post

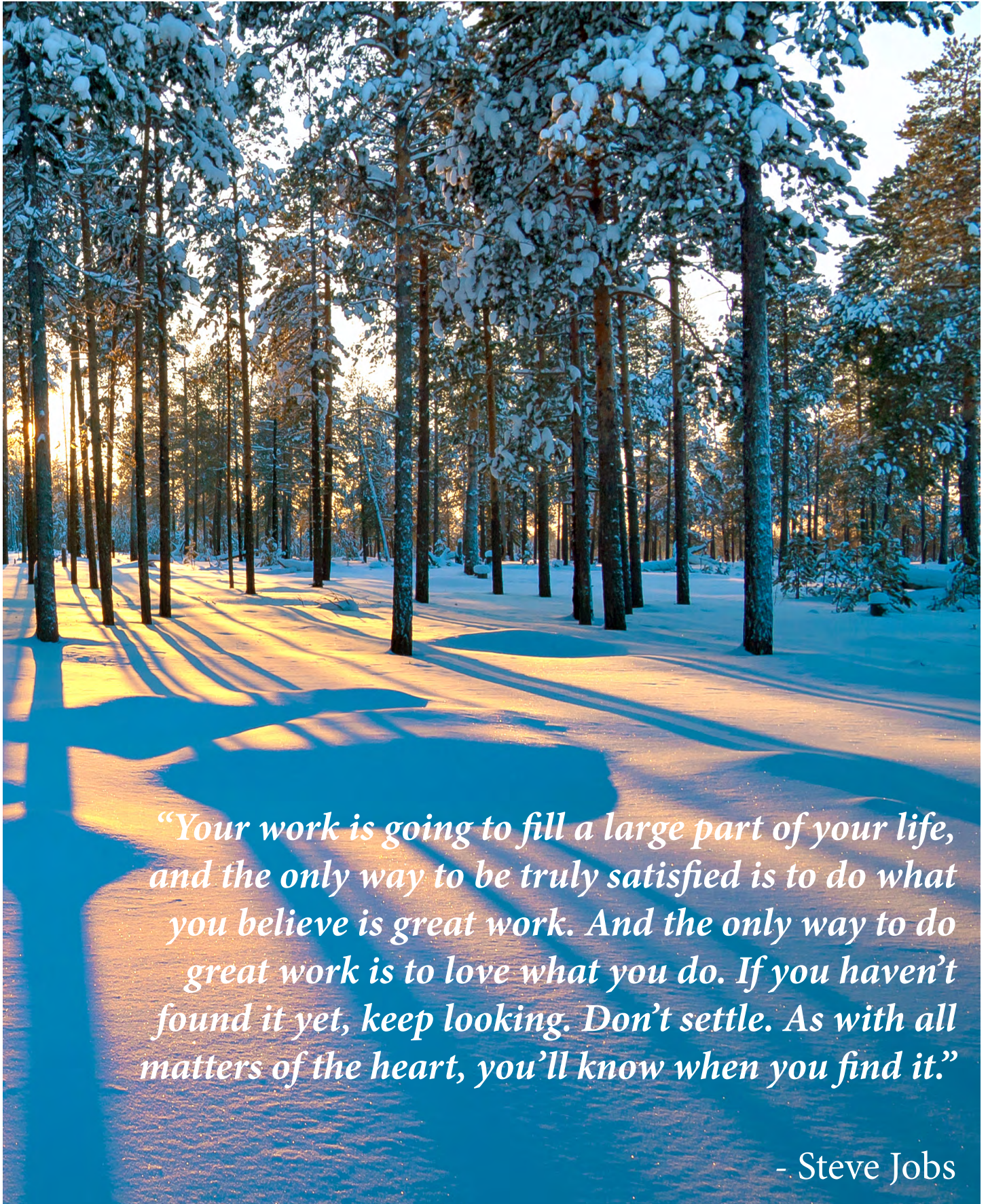
Robert is a huge fan of the Palm Beach Food and Wine Festival, which this year ran from Dec. 14-15. *Palm Beach Post* columnist Leslie Streeter caught up with him to talk about why the festival is his favorite, how to get

kids interested in exotic foods, and much more. Check it out [HERE](#).

Robert in Sphera Spark Magazine

Sphera, leaders in risk-management software, produce a digital magazine called *Sphera Spark*, which focuses primarily on safety issues. In a wide-ranging interview, Sphera Spark editor-in-chief James Tehrani interviewed Robert about the myriad safety issues he regularly confronts on *Restaurant: Impossible* and how he gets the most out of his workforce. You can read the entire magazine [HERE](#) and check out Robert's interview in its own link [HERE](#).

WORDS TO LIVE BY



“Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle. As with all matters of the heart, you’ll know when you find it.”

- Steve Jobs