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## Our Mission

Your Bliss Magazine explores the power of overall wellness. We look to push past the boundaries of physical health and explore the aspects of mental health, financial health, and health of the spirit. Our goal is to bring you information that you can use to live a happy, healthy, and spirited life. We find tips for the short term as well as more expansive information for the long term.

With the ever-expanding technology, knowledge, and evolution of the health field, there is a growing supply of data to take from. With Your Bliss, we find the information for you and put it all in one place. Every month we bring you new articles on a wide range of topics so you can live a more fulfilled and whole life.

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# Immerse Yourself in Gratitude

By: Lana Shapiro



November has known to become the month when many people focus more on gratitude and all the areas in their lives where they feel thankful. Focusing on gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

As the cold weather sets in, sun light decreases and one can experience an increase in seasonal depression; focusing on gratitude and thankfulness can help to distract from a negative mindset. One of the best ways to ensure consistency with feeling gratitude is by developing a daily practice.

Here are some examples of a practice you can develop and adapt to your personal needs:

## 1. Morning Gratitude Journaling:

Take 5-10 minutes every morning when you first wake up and before you start any other habitual activities, such as scrolling through your phone, to write down 3-5 things you are grateful for from the day before. Try to think of different things to write every day, this practice will ensure that you are focusing on the little things and it will also help you stop and notice them more throughout your days.



## 2. Evening Gratitude Journaling:

Similar to the morning practice, this simply takes place in the evening as you are settled into bed and before you do to sleep. This practice will help you reflect on your day and ensure that you go to sleep with a grateful heart.

## 3. Evening Intention Setting:

Before you go to sleep, set an intention for how you want to feel when you wake up in the morning. We often tend to focus on all the things we need to get done and our never ending to-do list, which can add stress and overwhelm, resulting in trouble sleeping and inability to wake up feeling restful. Remember that your subconscious mind does not go to sleep, it is always active, so if the last thoughts you have before going to sleep are stress focused, that is the energy you will carry throughout the night and wake up with in the morning.

## 4. Focus on Positive Thoughts When You Awake:

As soon as you wake up in the morning, consciously tell yourself "Today is going to be a great day". You can say this statement in your head or out loud. Say it even if you don't fully believe it yet. It is even more powerful if you repeat it three times.

## 5. Say Thank You:

Every time something good or positive happens to you or around you throughout your day, stop and say "Thank you". This is a powerful practice that will help you be more mindful throughout your day to notice all the goodness around you.

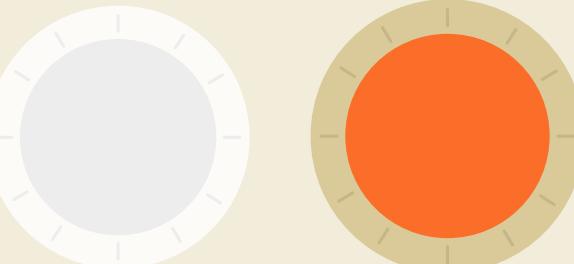
There are many ways we can turn our mood around and focusing on gratitude is one of the best ways to do that. Our brains go through a literal re-wiring process when we keep consistent focus on heartfelt gratitude. My challenge to you is to start this now and keep it going, don't stop when November ends, allow this to become a part of your daily practice and before you know it, this will change your mindset and your life for the better.

# Pumpkin Pie Craft

Slices of what I am Thankful for!

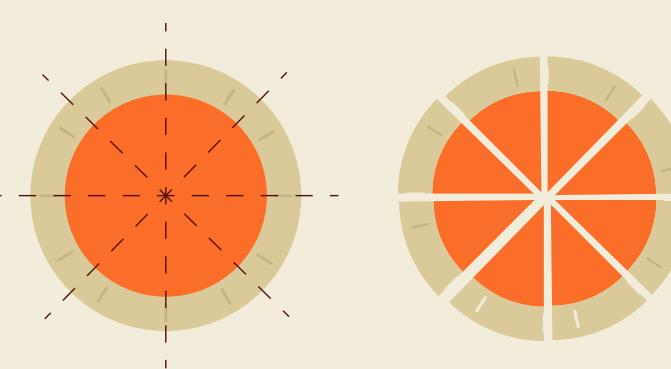
## Step 1:

Take your paper plate and paint. Paint the inner flat circle orange and the outer rim as tan.



## Step 2:

Now once your paint is dry, cut your plate into 6 slices as shown below :



## Step 3:

Time to add some whipped cream! Take your elmers glue and cottonballs. Now place a dollop of glue on a slice



then press your cotton ball onto the glue and let it dry.



## What You Will Need:

- Elmers Glue
- Paper Plate
- Orange craft paint
- tan craft paint
- black marker
- scissors
- cotton balls



## Step 4:

Lastly, it's time to add what you are thankful for to each slice of pie with your marker.



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## Effective Holiday Exercise & Workout Plans

By: Sue Perbody



With Halloween ending and the holidays approaching, now is the time to focus on keeping a strong physical health. You trying to avoid that big pile of candy, and you're worrying about finances for the upcoming holiday season. The approaching time of festivities is typically a stressful time, so what can you do to stay physically fit and active during this chaotic time of the year? Follow these tips for a healthy holiday season.

### Plan Ahead

Most people travel for the holiday season, and planning ahead can make a world of difference. Do some research on the area in which you are traveling to. Pack some warm clothes, and look for some walking trails nearby. Are you staying with family members? Ask them if they carry any fitness equipment. Ask nearby gyms if they allow guests to use their facilities. Talk to your family ahead of time and suggest doing something physically active together to make it more fun and interactive. The key point is, plan ahead! Things are bound to change while traveling, but you have already made your commitment to exercise, so stick to it no matter what.

### Use Every Opportunity

Planning and preparing ahead of time is nice, but plans can get messed up during the holidays. If it seems impossible to get some kind of work-out in, think outside the box. Walk as much as possible. Take a few extra laps at the mall. Use stairs instead of the elevator or escalator. Play a game of football or hide and seek with the kids. Watching a game of football? Get on the floor and start doing some sit-ups or push-ups. If you lack lifting equipment, pick up some full water bottles or soup cans for a quick lateral or overhead exercise.

### Make It Official

Are you afraid of staying dedicated to a workout routine? Sign up for a race, competition, or awareness walk. Not only are they for a good cause, but they're also good for your body! A simple walk or run goes a long way. Plan a hiking or biking trip, if the weather is accommodating in your area. Start a tradition with your family that you have to stick to. Invite family and friends to your gym for their latest exercise class, or to do a simple cardio workout. Most gyms offer deals and specials during the holidays, so this is the best time to put yourself out there!

### Treat Yourself

No, we do not mean treat yourself to that last piece of pumpkin pie! If within a reasonable budget, invest in some new workout clothes or fitness equipment before Thanksgiving to boost that motivation needed to stay active during the holiday season. Don't forget to get your friends and family involved! Plan workout routines with your best friend, parent, sibling, or cousin. You'll be more motivated to work out if you have some motivation by your side. Take a bike ride or walk together. Do some research on group activities that are both fun and stress-relieving.

**“Are you afraid of staying dedicated to a workout routine? Sign up for a race, competition, or awareness walk.”**

Don't let the stress of the holidays ruin your potential at staying fit and active. Use the tips and suggestions listed above to keep a positive outlook during a tense time of the year. Remember, the holidays are meant to be full of fun and cheer! So, put down that Halloween candy, and get out there and make yourself proud!

# Your Guide to Black Friday and Cyber Monday Deals

By: Gabrielle Guzinski

As the leaves change and the air turns crisp, anticipation for the biggest shopping events of the year begins to build. Black Friday and Cyber Monday, two renowned shopping extravaganzas, are right around the corner, and shoppers are eagerly awaiting what this year's sales have in store. These twin retail holidays have evolved into much more than just days of frenzied consumerism; they signify an annual spectacle that ushers in the holiday season and sets the stage for a year-end shopping spree. Here is what to expect from Black Friday and Cyber Monday in the upcoming season, delving into the trends, deals, and strategies that will define these shopping bonanzas in 2023. So, fasten your seatbelts and get ready to learn what is up and coming in the world of Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping.

Black Friday will be taking place on Friday, November 24th, 2023. While major retailers such as Amazon, Best Buy, and Walmart offer convenience, they may not always offer the most competitive prices for your desired items. Although the specifics of this year's Black Friday are under lock and key as of right now, there will be substantial discounts on a wide range of items, including smart TVs, household appliances, mattresses, kitchen essentials, gaming devices, and Apple products. So far, Walmart has kicked off the holiday season by unveiling its '2023 Top Toy List'. This curated selection includes 55 of this year's most highly-rated toys, with several exclusive options available only at Walmart. If you're a fan of LEGO

sets, get ready for some exciting Black Friday deals in 2023. The sale event promises significant discounts on a variety of LEGO sets, including some of the brand's most beloved offerings. You will have a plethora of LEGO Black Friday deals to explore during this shopping extravaganza. Keep an eye out for these remarkable bargains: Enjoy discounts of up to 40% off at LEGO and Target, popular fandom sets priced at just \$40 at Walmart and discover small, seasonal kits available for under \$10 at Amazon. Get ready to seize incredible discounts during this year's Black Friday sales. You can look forward to up to 50% off various Nike product lines, astonishing discounts of up to 70% at Adidas, and even rare markdowns on Hoka footwear as well. You can already explore and purchase these featured toys conveniently online. It is recommended that you do your research beforehand, so you can be sure to get your hands on the best Black Friday deals.

**Cyber Monday discounts typically kick off as early as the weekend following Black Friday, starting on Saturday and Sunday.**

It's essential to explore price options across various online platforms before making a purchase to ensure you're getting the best value for your money.

After the excitement of Black Friday, the shopping frenzy continues with Cyber Monday, scheduled for November 27 this year. However, you won't have to wait until Monday to snag fantastic deals. In fact, Cyber Monday discounts typically kick off as early as the weekend following Black Friday, starting on Saturday and Sunday. With the increasing use of smartphones for shopping, expect mobile apps to play a significant role in Cyber Monday sales. Typically, Cyber Monday is a strictly 24-hour shopping window but, much like Black Friday, some retailers' discounts continue into the next few days leading it to be dubbed "Cyber Week". Retailers may offer exclusive discounts

through their apps. Some deals right now are at Amazon which include nearly 30 percent off the viral Adidas Samba sneakers, 20 percent off the Dyson Corrale Straightener, and 13 percent off Apple AirPod Max Headphones. The products that were popular on Cyber Monday of 2022 include, Apple iPhone 13: The latest iPhone model saw significant discounts and became a top-selling tech product. Nintendo Switch: Nintendo's gaming console, along with popular game bundles, attracted gamers.

Instant Pot: The versatile multi cooker was a hit for those looking to simplify meal preparation. Some predictions that would be popular for 2023 are the Echo Dot, Fire TV Stick, Fitbit watches and much more. As Cyber Monday 2023 approaches, keep these

insights and trends in mind to make the most of this exciting online shopping extravaganza and discover incredible deals that could transform your holiday season into a shopping celebration!

Black Friday and Cyber Monday have become iconic shopping events that mark the start of the holiday season. These days of incredible discounts, both in stores and online, offer shoppers the chance to fulfill their wish lists and find perfect gifts for loved ones. As we approach this year's sales, remember to plan ahead, set your budget, and keep an eye out for the best deals. Whether you're braving the crowds on Black Friday or hunting for online treasures on Cyber Monday, these shopping holidays are an excellent opportunity to snag amazing bargains and make your holiday season a little brighter. Happy shopping!

# Me vs. My Diabetes

By: Sara Loft



I wasn't always diabetic but I am now. There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is where the pancreas (a body organ for the digestive system and the endocrine system) does not produce any insulin (a hormone that regulates the sugars in your blood). Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes – it is when the body doesn't regulate the sugars as a fuel whereas you may be insulin resistant or your body doesn't produce that much insulin as needed.

Since March of last year, I was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes but I have been managing it well. I was feeling exhausted often. I have excessive thirst (but I have no shame in it because I mostly drink spring water). I occasionally have numb joint pain. And, I could go on. I was completely overwhelmed in the first 10 days after being diagnosed. I didn't take my prescribed medicine or do my blood sugar readings. I changed my mindset because I didn't want this disease to lead into worse situations. I value life but I mostly wanted to be healthier for my family and closest friends.

People assume diabetics are individuals that just crave sugar often. It may be true but that's not the only case! On November 14th, World Diabetes Day exists. Why should a disease be recognized? Well, diabetes can lead to several chronic and acute complications affecting your entire body. Diabetes could be hereditary. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness. Diabetes is an autoimmune disease so too much stress can elevate your glucose levels and affect other mental health areas. Poor eating habits and being overweight could be a developing factor for having diabetes. Staying active is crucial because diabetes could lead to possible lower limb amputations. Smoking and heavy alcohol consumption increases the complications, too.

Without my realization, I was in the pre-diabetic stage before the new shocking blood test results appeared.

**"Without my realization, I was in the pre-diabetic stage before the new shocking blood test results appeared."**

I am admittedly overweight. I occasionally snacked on the wrong food. Luckily, I was seeking a registered dietitian around the same time frame with my new health discovery. I am currently on a prescription drug that regulates my glucose levels. I was originally on two prescription drugs but I have made personal changes to manage this lifelong disease. I'm more conscientious in my eating habits including switching to sugar free beverages. I try to maintain an active lifestyle, walk at least for a half hour or more regularly. I still don't need to do insulin injections. However, every day, I have to test my glucose levels. My primary physician ordered a fasting blood work to check my metabolism and A1C levels (an average of blood sugar levels over the last three months).

If you are pregnant, yes – you could be gestational diabetic because your placental hormones are raging and increasing your blood sugar levels. Gestational diabetes can put you and your baby at risk. Whether you are pregnant or not, your appointments are a must visit.

Medical professionals advise diabetics to plan ahead if you are travelling. Diabetics should be able to have accessibility for emergency help because it is a life threatening disease. With other consideration, diabetics need to plan ahead for sick days and prepare for it because it takes us longer to heal internally. Ask your physician and/or specialists that can help and provide proper care.

Unfortunately, diabetes is the 8th leading cause of death in the United States. There is no set cure, yet. Medical costs are twice as high for those who struggle with the disease. I refuse to let this disease control my mind and body. Put your well being as a priority because you never know – you might be able to manage this disease successfully.

# Global Entrepreneur Week: Papercraft Miracles

By: Gabrielle Guzinski



In the heart of Buffalo, New York, nestled among the city's vibrant local businesses, is a hidden treasure that captivates hearts and sparks creativity. Papercraft Miracles, a local business, is a true testament to the power of artistry, imagination, and community. With its enchanting handcrafted paper creations and dedication to sustainability, this charming establishment has become a must-visit for locals and tourists alike.

At Papercraft Miracles, every creation is a masterpiece, and each visit is a journey into a world where paper transforms into an enchanting piece of art. From handmade paper greeting cards to whimsical paper sculptures, this local gem is a testament to the limitless possibilities of paper artistry.

## The Artistry of Papercraft Miracles

Papercraft Miracles is the brainchild of artist and Buffalo native, Janna Willoughby-Lohr. Her passion for paper artistry began as a childhood hobby and later evolved into a thriving local business. Today, her studio is a sparkly wonderland of paper, colors, and creativity.

One step inside Papercraft Miracles, and you're transported to a world where paper comes to life. Delicate flowers bloom from sheets of paper, intricate pop-up books tell stories, and magical sculptures defy the boundaries of the medium. Janna's team and their artistry and attention to detail are evident in every piece, making each creation a unique work of art.

## Sustainability as a Core Value

What sets Papercraft Miracles apart is not just its exquisite craftsmanship but also its commitment to sustainability. In an age where environmental consciousness is paramount, this local business leads by example. Janna sources eco-friendly materials, prioritizes recycled paper, and uses non-toxic inks in her creations. Their studio is also powered by the solar panels on the roof of their historic 1890s building on Niagara St. in Black Rock.

Papercraft Miracles is a testament to the idea that art can be both beautiful and environmentally responsible. By choosing their products, customers not only support local art but also contribute to a greener, more sustainable world.

## A Hub for Creativity and Community

Papercraft Miracles is not merely a store; it's a hub for creativity and community engagement. Janna and her team regularly host workshops, classes, and events for people of all ages. These gatherings provide an opportunity for participants to explore the world of papercraft, learn new skills, and connect with fellow art enthusiasts.

Whether you're a seasoned artist or a novice looking to unleash your creative spirit, Papercraft Miracles offers a welcoming space where you can dive into the world of paper artistry. It's a place where imagination knows

no bounds, and everyone is encouraged to explore their artistic potential.

## Why You Should Visit Papercraft Miracles

### 1. Unique, Handcrafted Treasures:

Papercraft Miracles offers a range of handcrafted products that make for memorable gifts and keepsakes. Whether you're looking for a special card, a piece of wall art, or a personalized creation, you'll find it here.

### 2. Local Artistry:

Supporting local businesses like Papercraft Miracles means supporting the creative talents and passions of Buffalo's residents. It's a way to invest in the uniqueness and authenticity of your community.

### 3. Eco-Friendly Choices:

By choosing Papercraft Miracles, you're making an eco-conscious choice. The use of sustainable materials and practices is at the core of this business, making it a responsible choice for environmentally conscious consumers.

### 4. Creativity Unleashed:

Papercraft Miracles is not just a store; it's a space that encourages you to explore your own creativity. Attend a workshop or simply browse the shop, and you'll be inspired to see the world through the lens of paper art.

### 5. Community Connection:

Whether you're attending an event or striking up a conversation with the friendly staff, a visit to Papercraft Miracles is an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals who share your appreciation for art and sustainability.

**“**  
**What sets Papercraft Miracles apart is not just its exquisite craftsmanship but also its commitment to sustainability. In an age where environmental consciousness is paramount, this local business leads by example.**  
**”**

In a world where mass-produced goods dominate the market, Papercraft Miracles stands as a shining example of the magic that can happen when artistry, sustainability, and community converge. So, the next time you're in Buffalo, make sure to pay a visit to this local gem, and let the wonders of papercraft enchant you. Your journey into the world of Papercraft Miracles awaits, promising an experience that is both unique and meaningful.



# An Overview of Bullying: Facts & Statistics

By: Cooper Drummond



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines “bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance, and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.”

Victims of bullying can experience “physical injury, social and emotional distress, self-harm, and even death. It also increases the risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school.”

The CDC found in September that “nearly 14% of public schools report that bullying is a discipline problem occurring daily or at least once a week.”

**Teacher/DASA coordinator comment on issue**

Bullying affects certain populations more than others. Reports of bullying are highest in middle schools (28%) followed by high schools (16%), combined schools (12%), and primary schools (9%). In addition, nearly 40% of high school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and about 33% of those who were not sure of their sexual identity experienced bullying at school or electronically in the last year, compared to 22% of heterosexual high school students. About 30% of female high school students experienced bullying at school or electronically in the last year, compared to about 19% of males. Nearly 29% of White high school students experienced bullying at school or electronically in the last year compared to about 19% of Hispanic and 18% of Black high school students. “With technology, the bad behavior we see keeps changing and evolving with the world, sometimes it is

**“Online bullying is terrible for students, it provides a level of detachment for the bully and it can follow the students everywhere they go.”**

hard for schools to effectively stop the bullying,” said Kim Switalski, a fifth-grade science and social studies teacher at City Honors School in Buffalo.

She has taught for over 20 years, but rarely sees bullying herself. “Kids are very slick about being mean to others in school. Bullying cases are usually sent to the administration because it does not happen in front of the teacher. It happens on the bus, gym locker room, the lunchroom and online.”

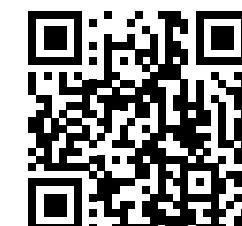
However, she has witnessed various approaches to bullying from others surrounded by the issue.

“Parents often reach out to the school for help after they have tried to settle the situation themselves. Online bullying is terrible for students, it provides a level of detachment for the bully and it can follow the students everywhere they go.”

She also said there are “class assemblies and discussions at my school in order to try and prevent bullying from happening and letting students know they should go to an adult for help. I think assemblies are helpful for the victims, in that they give them guidelines for what to do when they feel they are bullied. I do not think they stop bullying altogether.”

Overall, she feels that schools are doing everything they can to stop bullying.”

For more resources on how to prevent bullying, you may scan the QR code seen here.



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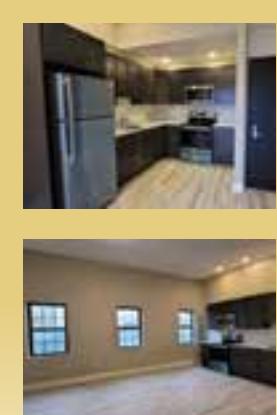
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# Midterms: A Quest for New Leadership

By: Richard Polley

As the 2024 Presidential Election looms on the horizon, Election Day is a pivotal moment that allows us to shape the future of our society. While local-level officials may not always bask in the same limelight as their high-profile counterparts, the often-overlooked midterm elections hold a profound significance. These elections offer a unique opportunity to inject fresh perspectives and innovative ideas into the political landscape, as seasoned officials depart the stage.

In the ever-evolving landscape of American politics, change is not just desirable; it is essential. Midterm elections serve as a catalyst, providing a platform for emerging leaders committed to improving the lives of their constituents and bridging the societal divides that have persisted for too long. These elections present a moment for us to ask the tough questions and elevate dynamic ideas.

As a significant portion of our aging political elite prepares for retirement, the call for new voices and ideas becomes increasingly urgent. Vibrant democracy thrives on its ability to adapt and incorporate the views and aspirations of all its citizens. Local-level officials, are more deeply connected to the concerns of their constituents, as they are often grappling with the same issues themselves.

**"We have the opportunity to elect leaders who are not beholden to the past but are committed to forging a brighter, more inclusive future."**

In a world more interconnected and complex than ever before, political and societal divisions have deepened. We need leaders who recognize these divisions and are determined to heal them. We must look beyond the familiar national figures and focus on those who inspire us to do better.

On the national stage midterms serve as a vital checkpoint in the democratic process, providing citizens with an opportunity to hold their representatives accountable.

These checks and balances are fundamental to the foundation of our nation and ensures elected officials remain responsive to the people they serve or face being ousted. If you dislike the actions of your representative make your voice heard and get involved. If you see a fresh face in the field that speaks to you, no matter how small, reach out to them and see how you can support them further.

As we approach the 2023 midterms, it is crucial for voters to pay attention and actively engage in the process. These elections hold the potential to usher in a renaissance of new ideas, a revitalization of our political landscape, and a future that prioritizes unity over division. We have the opportunity to elect leaders who are not beholden to the past but are committed to forging a brighter, more inclusive future.



# Veteran Mindset in Business

By: Faizan Haq, Editor-in-Chief & Publisher, Your Bliss Magazine

A true veteran has a wealth of experience and knowledge, based on real life events that has shaped not only his personality, but his psyche and his approach towards life. Veterans are known for applying war time training and battle-ready attitude to their professional and daily lives. It is true that those lessons learned may not be fully applicable in everyday life, but the skillsets acquired in a combat situation at times become second nature. It is hard to just let it go or turn that switch off in you, when you are facing stress in life or business.

Just as veterans are to the peace time, so are the serial entrepreneurs to day-to-day business management. The energy, the focus and the all-in attitude does wonders when you are driving a project of entrepreneurial nature. However, the same drive and uncontrolled vigor undermines day-to-day management, alienates team members and disintegrates the organization one person at a time. One must find the balance between the two mindsets or world views. One guarantees the pull to a certain goal and the other manages the day-to-day push to get there.

Of course there are some overlapping skills and attitudes, if implemented, can do wonders for any business venture. First of all, is believing in yourself that you can do it. It is a common factor between a visionary entrepreneur and a battle experienced veteran. The self-confidence beams energy into your team members that they can accomplish anything, if they set their mind to it. Second, day-to-day discipline helps the whole organization to continuously march towards success and avoid big gaps or shocks on the way. Keeping the whole organization and specifically its upper leadership to a certain conduct of behavior and professional standards, elevates the whole organization. Third, practically evaluating outcomes of collective actions. This determines not only the consistency of performance, but also points out flaws or gaps in business operations.

In conclusion, veteran's skillsets, if applied smartly, can be the greatest asset for businesses and their leadership mind-set, can unlock the true potential of any organization. On the other hand, the entrepreneurial veterans must also learn that all situations may not require singular entrepreneurial decision making, often simple team-oriented problem solving does it all. Let's take this opportunity to salute our great veterans for their service and dedication to this country.



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# A Review of Starfield

By: Alex Tilton

I find it helpful to have a word limit on these reviews because it forces me to do a better job with less space. It's something Bethesda Softworks should have embraced because their unlimited budget and development time yielded an occasionally fun, but badly bloated game with frustrating mechanics and a crappy plot. All of this sucked, but the nail in the coffin was the nihilistic, lazy, and insulting main story.

So, what is the story? You are an explorer for an organization called Constellation looking for fragments of an alien artifact that grants superpowers and causes strange visions. The Bad Guy is some faceless dude in an advanced spacesuit with a fancy ship who also wants the fragments and is willing to kill to get them. That's the plot. Now for the problems.

::sigh:: Where to begin?

Right from the start you find yourself desperately searching for how to bring up an area map that you can't find. I eventually Googled it and discovered that it doesn't exist. It bears mentioning at this point that Starfield was in development for eight years. So just finding your way around on foot is an enormous pain in the ##\$. Cool. Good start.

Next you learn to fly your starship. The controls are the same as always, but you have to manually distribute the power from the reactor to different systems like engines, weapons and shields. But in practice this doesn't end up mattering very much, and eventually you get a better ship with power to spare,



so why bother? But it doesn't really matter because in this game (called 'Starfield') most space travel consists entirely of loading screens and is done entirely by accessing a map menu...whether you're on your ship or not. And all the planets you go to are mostly void. They have a few points of interest scattered around an immense empty landscape that takes a long time to run across, which you have to do because you can't fast travel anywhere that you haven't already been. A dune buggy would have fixed this, but there isn't one.

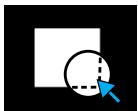
There is some good stuff to report: the space combat was a lot of fun and they did a good job with it. Missing area map aside I enjoyed a lot of the ground missions and generally I thought they were worth the time. Some of the longer side quests were excellent and deserve high praise.

There's also a ship building feature (with no tutorial whatsoever) and an outpost building tool (with a bare-bones tutorial that barely helps). A lot of people are having a lot of fun with these, but they're 100% optional. And since nothing in the game's story ever forces you to use either one, I didn't.

But the real problem is with the core story. Spoilers ahead but read it anyway because this game doesn't deserve your time.

Returning to the plot; you travel around the galaxy collecting identical alien artifacts, and getting superpowers from identical rooms in almost identical

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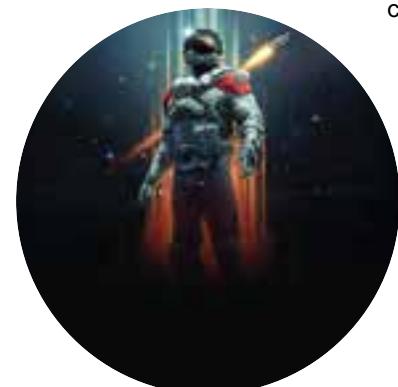
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The Emissary) all running around doing the same thing. I don't know about you but that sure made me feel special.

But I do have to congratulate Bethesda for generating a wonderful opportunity to study cognitive dissonance; The psychological phenomenon where people try to convince themselves that something that sucked was actually great, so they don't have to feel like fools for buying it. Starfield defenders often respond to criticisms of the game with two statements: 1) "Your expectations were too high" or 2) "Was this your first Bethesda game?"



temples located on otherwise empty planets, getting the same identical cut scene every time. Eventually the bad guy (imaginatively named 'The Hunter') who also wants the artifacts, attacks you. You fend him off and this impresses him so you sit down to talk to him and his rival ('the equally imaginatively named 'Emissary'). The Emissary actually is introduced earlier but, it isn't made clear that at that point that this is a separate person, which turns out to be highly appropriate.

At this meeting they reveal that there's more to the artifacts than granting superpowers. If you collect em' all, they form a machine that gives you the ability to leave this universe and go to another universe... where you can collect em' all again, gain more superpowers and ultimately leave that universe... and then do it all again ad infinitum, with no ultimate goal. So, the artifacts are basically components in a Groundhog Day device. The Villain says he's been doing this for many years and flat out admits that he's not sure why he still bothers.

Then the game gives you three choices; you can 1) Side with The Hunter and join a nihilistic death loop that goes on forever for no reason, or you can 2) Side with The Emissary and join a nihilistic death loop that goes on forever for no reason, or you can 3) Tell them both to shove it, collect the artifacts yourself...and join a nihilistic death loop that goes on forever for no reason. The Hunter also points out that there are also infinite other versions of you (and him, and

Statement 1 is funny because it basically admits that high expectations were unwarranted. Never mind that those high expectations came from Bethesda's excellent previous games like Fallout: New Vegas and Skyrim and years of Starfield hype from Bethesda itself. Statement 2 is meant to imply that you're an outsider, and therefore you probably just 'don't get it.' It's the old fallacy of attacking the critic

rather than responding to the criticism. The game is fine, the deficiency is in you. But even if it were true playing another Bethesda game first would make this one enjoyable, that is still an unacceptable flaw in any game. And in any case, it's not true. I put an embarrassing number of hours into Skyrim...and I still thought Starfield sucked.

Image Sources: IGN.com, Bethesda.net, Theverge.com

## Coloring Corner

# Homemade Apple Cider Beef Stew



### Ingredients

- 2 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 3 cups apple cider or juice
- 1 can (14-1/2 ounces) reduced-sodium beef broth
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 4 medium carrots, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 3 celery ribs, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 2 medium onions, cut into wedges
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup water
- Fresh thyme sprigs, optional

8 servings

### Nutrition Facts

- 1 cup: 330 calories,  
12g fat (3g saturated fat),  
72mg cholesterol,  
628mg sodium,  
31g carbohydrate  
(14g sugars, 2g fiber),  
24g protein.

- Diabetic Exchanges:  
3 lean meat,  
1-1/2 starch,  
1 vegetable

### Directions

1. In a Dutch oven, brown beef on all sides in oil over medium-high heat; drain.
2. Add the cider, broth, vinegar, salt, thyme and pepper; bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 1-1/4 hours.
4. Add the potatoes, carrots, celery and onions; return to a boil.
5. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 30-35 minutes or until beef and vegetables are tender.
6. Combine flour and water until smooth; stir into stew.
7. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. If desired, serve with fresh thyme.

Total Time/ Prep: 30 min.  
Cook: 1-3/4 hours

Recipe Source: Taste of Home



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