

# What You've Learned

Esquire

Our collection of wit, wisdom, and weirdness from our readers' lives



**If a waiter** in France looks at you and tells you that you won't like what you just ordered, trust him. Ditto Spain.

—Todd Lowe, 45, Hong Kong

**A little eye contact** goes a long, long way. Just be careful of where it is you want to go.

—Mike Dooly, 35, Long Island City, New York

**Never slap a man** who's chewing tobacco.

—Bill McCrea, 58, Austin

**If we push closer:** more and harder. If we pull back: less and lighter. The simplest formula too often forgotten.

—Christy Weathers, 24, Austin

**If you accuse** a drunk, busty woman of having implants, she'll lift her top to show you you're wrong.

—Kevin Downey Jr., 41, New York

**If you are going** to break someone's heart, do it quickly and painfully. This will pretty much ensure that they never bother you again.

—Tom Chiesa, 29, Dublin, California

**Never buy** illegal drugs from someone who seems extremely happy.

—Dennis McCarthy, 54, Auburn, New York

THE  
AMERICAN  
PAPERBOY  
HAS BEEN  
KILLED BY  
CORPORATE  
GREED AND  
SHADY MEN  
IN HONDA  
CIVICS  
WITH LOUD  
MUFFLERS.

—Christopher Marino, 36, North Caldwell, New Jersey

**If you look like Paul Giamatti but carry yourself like you're Brad Pitt, most people will see you as Brad Pitt.**

—Robert Jackson Jr., 46, Davenport, Iowa

**When you're feeling** your worst, your most insecure, write it down. I assure you that no matter how depressed you feel at the time, you won't believe how stupid you'll sound later when you read it back.

—Hugh Vandivier, 38, Indianapolis

**I was always** too comfortable with my failure-to-success ratio.

—Luciano Noble II, 29, Los Angeles

**Shortly after** I got my driver's license, I defied my strict Catholic parents and drove to the Baskin-Robbins across town instead of Sunday-evening services. While I haven't been back to church since, I had my doubts back then and was worried about the sudden possibility of getting struck by lightning or falling down dead of unknown causes. To ease my

fears, I came up with this rationalization about heaven while sitting on the hood of my brother's '78 Camaro and eating a hot-fudge sundae: I like who I am, and while I'll make mistakes, if I don't get into heaven because of what I believe, then that's not the place I want to be. I still believe that.

—Chris Head, 35, Seattle

**The best jokes** involve old Jews, witty bartenders, or talking animals who have either been wronged or just had sex.

—Barry Friedman, 49, Tulsa

**There is** an inverse relationship between the attractiveness of a couple and the amount of affection they show each other in public.

—John Schlaefli, 35, Clackamas, Oregon

**Running for a bus isn't worth it. Eighty-seven percent of the time you won't make it, and you'll end up standing there looking like an idiot while everyone on the bus stares at you as it drives off. Just walk. If you make it, fine. If not, there's another one coming.**

—Ken Green, 44, Chicago

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The closer you get to thirty, the more you wish you were twenty and the more you act like you are forty.

—Mike Spezialetti, 29, Pittsburgh

A real midlife crisis isn't as amusing as the ones you see in the movies.

—Terry Welch, 35, Pensacola, Florida

The pretty girl you just held the door open for? Go back and introduce yourself. That's how I met my wife. Best thing I ever did.

—Steve Schnier, 47, Toronto

Anonymous sex isn't as much fun when you are older.

—Stephen Mauzy, 43, Aurora, Colorado

Homemade soup needs homemade bread.

—Marc Barringer, 39, St. Clair Shores, Michigan

On Sunday night, you should have enough food in the fridge, gas in the car, and dry-cleaned clothes in the closet to last you until Friday.

—Java Coleman, 35, Minneapolis

Send your mother-in-law a note on your wife's birthday telling her what a lucky guy you are.

—John Ramirez, 56, Oxnard, California

The last wagon of the Mexico City subway is reserved for gay encounters.

—John Morris, 26, Mexico City, Mexico

When a kid says, "Smell my hand," it almost never smells like cinnamon.

—Brian P. Cleary, 47, Cleveland



If you know what you want, somehow you get there.

—Keith Bradshaw, 56, Garland, Texas

Beating out electricity, antibiotics, and the wheel for the single greatest creation of all time is the USC cheerleading uniform.

—John Spiggle, 21, Rochester, New York

I spent four months in jail a few years ago. I know that I'll never go back, but it amazed me when I talked to some of the other guys and realized that all they wanted to do was be in jail. They all knew one another from past bits and were pretty close, but all they really had in common was being in jail. They would do their time and get out and be back a few months or even weeks later. Some would even talk about what they were going to do to end up back inside. I guess that all the speculation about institutionalization was right.

—Robert O'Connor, 38, Gaithersburg, Maryland

Don't ever say, "Hold my beer while I do this." It won't go the way you planned.

—Mike Scharnell, 38, Costa Mesa, California

Get the one with the sunroof.

—Eric Gabriel, 36, Durham, North Carolina

It's possible (and wonderful) to fall in love with more than one woman at once. But you can only tell one of them at a time. Choose wisely.

—Wayne Wenzel, 40, Minneapolis

Play your music loud. It drowns out the kids arguing in the backseat.

—Phil Voelker, 39, Aurora, Colorado

Submitting things to national magazines is futile.

—Michael Dare, 55, Whitewater, California

If you only have time to clean one room before she comes over, clean the bathroom. If you only have time to clean one part of the bathroom before she comes over, clean the toilet.

—Doug Smith, 37, Indianapolis

There is no bad place to sleep when you're drunk.

—Dino Tripodis, 47, Columbus, Ohio

You should be jealous when you see your partner holding another man's cock. Other than that, get over it.

—Erik Bogh, 23, North Hollywood, California

If you're going to quote anyone, quote Warren Zevon: "You're supposed to sit on your ass and nod at stupid things. Man, that's hard to do." Or Lyle Lovett: "Fat babies have no pride." Or Nick Cave: "Where do we go now but nowhere?"

—Terence Shine, 47, Lantana, Florida



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**There is nothing wrong** with a barbecue in the park that a piñata can't fix.

—Luciano Noble, 27, Los Angeles

**You can't live** off of yesterday's orgasms.

—Miggs Burroughs, 58, Westport, Connecticut

**If you must** keep a journal for purposes of sanity, adopt an illegible hand.

—Bryan Love, 38, Santa Cruz, California

**Being young sucks.** But not as much as being young and Republican.

—Michael A. Knipp, 23, Glen Burnie, Maryland

**Re: spam**—I'm comfortable with the size of my penis, I don't care that young girls want me, I've got more than enough insurance, and I can't help you escape from a jail in Ghana. So, please, go jam somebody's else's in-box.

—Mark T. Gould, 49, North Haven, Connecticut

**THE BEST LOVERS  
ARE POETS IN  
THE SACK.**

—Charlene Redick, 57, Montgomery, Alabama

**Our system of government** may be the greatest in the world, but it doesn't work very well. Politics makes it impossible. In

1994, I was in Senator Joe Biden's office and saw an enormous portrait of him. That sums it up. It should have been a wall-sized portrait of the citizens of Delaware.

—Andrew Glover, 43, Oskaloosa, Iowa

**There is a very fine line** between a William Shatner impression and a Christopher Walken impression.

—Andy Ross, 19, Greeneville, Tennessee

**The best part of tying your own bow tie? At the end of the night, you undo it and look like Tony Bennett.**

—Russin Royal, 26, Chicago

**Never buy drugs** from a woman.

—Anthony Williams, 42, Bloomington, Illinois

**NEVER DRIVE BEHIND AN  
OLD MAN WEARING A HAT.**

—Dave Rodgeron, 48, Hamilton, Ontario

**Wild-salmon marinade:** 1 cup soy sauce, 1 cup maple syrup, a little ginger, a little garlic.

—Jeff Topham, 33, Vancouver

**Most Greeks** have never visited the Parthenon. Most French people rarely look at the Eiffel Tower. How many New Yorkers have actually visited the Statue of Liberty? Everyone wants to enter someone else's monument. That's why men will never stop cheating on their wives.

—Kostas Farmakis, 32, Athens, Greece

**DON'T BORE  
PEOPLE WITH  
SKYDIVING  
STORIES.  
THEY KNOW  
THE ENDING.**

—Patrick Rynell, 33, Chicago



**I don't disbelieve** in God, just in the likelihood that anything we've come up with is even close.

—Daniel Mickelsen, 35, Newport Coast, California

**My idea** of a balanced diet is a cheeseburger in each hand.

—Randy Tedford, 53, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

**ROBIN WILLIAMS HAS NOT  
BEEN FUNNY SINCE 1987.**

—Bob Sassone, 39, Gloucester, Massachusetts

**Nobody hates war** more than a soldier.

—Louis Netherland, 30, Fort Knox, Kentucky

**Some of the best** eulogies I have ever heard have been about the most miserable people I have ever known.

—John Gaccione, 59, Dix Hills, New York

**One of the things** women claim is most important in a man is a sense of humor. In my years as a comedian, I've learned that they're usually referring to the humor of guys like Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, and Russell Crowe. Apparently, those guys are hilarious.

—Jimi McFarland, 43, Denver

**I'm a realist.** Whether the glass is half empty or half full, it will eventually need to be washed.

—Spencer Chan, 26, Seattle

**Cuban cigars are overrated.**

—Dan Hernandez, 41, Wenonah, New Jersey

**Cut clear through** a thumb tendon while smashing a bottle of cheap Yugoslavian hooch on your countertop in a rage and you begin to truly appreciate the meaning of actions having consequences.

—Tom Stevens, 41, Detroit

**There is no dishonor** in being on time.

—Bob Nowak, 40, Houston

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**Last year** I found the exact type of woman I was looking for: an Italian fashion model living in rural New Jersey with a brass pair that would put a union boss to shame. Sadly, she moved back to Italy a few months after we met. You say there's more fish in the sea? Bullshit. No corn-fed cashier at Wal-Mart will ever fill that void.

—William Waggoner, 36, Lebanon, New Jersey

**Utah is** the least fun state.

—Elliot Edmunds, 25, Houston

**Anybody can** be turned on by a skillfully administered spanking—unless their personal history is getting in the way.

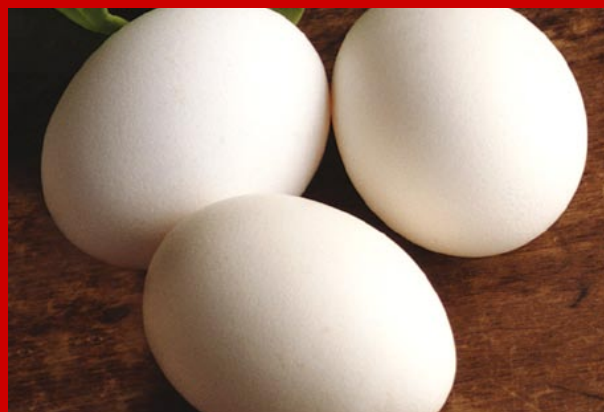
—Janet W. Hardy, 49, Oakland

**Naps**, naps, naps, naps.

—Mike Legeros, 39, Raleigh

There are two types of people in the world, and one of them puts ketchup on eggs.

—Dave Kamilkow, 30, Chicago



**You can tell** a lot about a place by how well its Wal-Mart is run.

—Thomas Root, 23, Enterprise, Alabama

**Chew.** It's fast food, but it's not going anywhere.

—Dan Chodrow, 32, Chicago

**Some people want** to do great and interesting things. Others want to have already done them.

—Steve Davey, 35, Portland, Maine

**CONFLICT CAUSES CLARITY.**

—Scott Messer, 49, St. Petersburg, Florida

**Never party** with people wearing rented clothes.

—Dave Kessler, 66, Richmond, Indiana

**Men who buy** women flowers are just making up for something.

—Mason Sophia Beltsis, 34, Toronto

**Clothes make the man?** Only if there's nothing inside them. What makes a man is the stories he has to tell in heaven (or hell).

—Ted Morse, 45, Virginia Beach

**All lists are arbitrary.**

—Russ Plyler, 49, Atlanta

**Smokers always have something to do.**

—Robert Landau, 34, Atlanta

**I regret the times** I resisted telling someone, "Go fuck yourself" a lot more than the times I didn't.

—Bob Drake, 58, Loveladies, New Jersey

**"No" means no**, "Maybe next Saturday night when the kids are sleeping out" means no, and "That's disgusting" means never, at least not without a major credit card.

—Robert Channick, 47, Deerfield, Illinois

**You meet the most interesting people on the edges of the room.**

—Wes Middleton, 50, Wichita Falls, Texas

**Keith Richards** has been my Dead-Guy Pool pick since 1974. I've lost more money on that son of a bitch than any stock I've ever owned.

—John Carr, 46, Washington, D. C.

**If a woman says** her friend is pretty, she's fat. If a woman says her friend is hot, she's hot.

—Paul Ridley, 50, Minneapolis

**It's impossible to** understand why someone would pay \$250,000 for a car until you've driven a \$250,000 car.

—Amanda Gobler, 24, Royal Oak, Michigan

**Honesty is** the best policy, but the payments can be quite high.

—Michael C. Westlund, 54, Garden Grove, California

**French is** the language of love. English is the language of commerce. Mandarin and Cantonese are the languages of the future.

—Dan Leduc, 39, Ottawa, Ontario

**WE'RE ALL ON DEATH ROW; IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIMING.**

—William Van Poyck, 50, Sussex I State Prison, Waverly, Virginia

**An essential part** of growing up is learning to dislike the feeling of getting away with something.

—Warren Gamache, 33, Edmonton, Alberta

**Creativity isn't** the conclusions you have drawn but how you pry them back open.

—David Crismon, 40, Oklahoma City

**IF YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW SOMEONE, LOAN HIM SOME MONEY.**

—Rick Franks, 41, Tallmadge, Ohio

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**There is no more** pithy way to put it than the way Mose Allison put it: When push comes to shove, thank God for self-love.

—Peter Hay, 56, Brooklyn

**Everything before** the but is bullshit.

—Jordan Wallens, 32, Los Feliz, California

**Traveling alone rocks.** You can eat when you're hungry, nap whenever you're tired, see whatever you want to see when you want to see it, and meet whoever you want simply by asking them to take your picture.

—Mike W. Miller, 35, Chicago

**THE ONLY  
THING I EVER  
GOT FROM  
DOING FREE  
WORK WAS AN  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO DO MORE  
FREE WORK.**

—Barry Friedman, 47, Tulsa

**People who are vociferous** about their ability to multitask are usually just good at being a jackass and a moron at the same time.

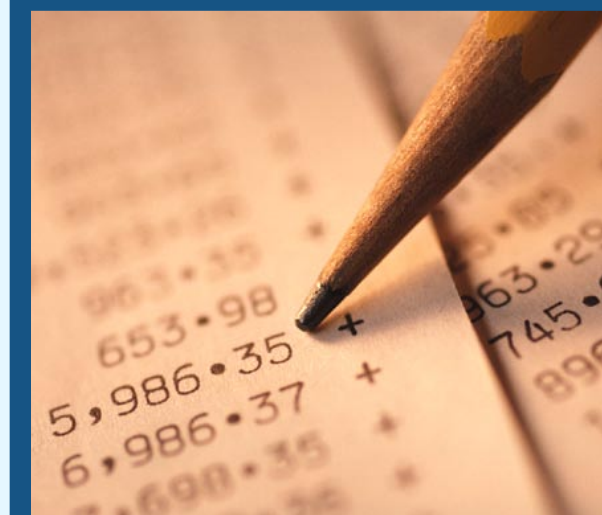
—Mike Shinnars, 37, Torri di Quartesolo, Italy

**Michelob Ultra** tastes pretty good after 26.2 miles.

—Jim Hoelzle, 24, Toledo

**Twenty-four-year-olds** are too sure of themselves.

—Joseph Ogden, 24, Albany, New York



**When telling** the world what you've learned, bear in mind that most people couldn't give the remotest shit about what you've learned unless it qualifies as inside information under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 or will help them get laid.

—Jeffrey S. Lisabeth, 49, Lloyd Harbor, New York

**The contingencies** outnumber the predictables.

—Eric Gabriel, 34, Durham, North Carolina

**I wish I** believed in a fifth quarter, but since I don't, I'll have to play hard and make the most out of regulation.

—Rick Fjellman, 57, Medford, Oregon

**If I open up** Esquire and see any of my words printed, my ego will rage out of control.

—John Halapchuk, 42, Sicklerville, New Jersey

**Live to be remembered** or loved. The rest is churn.

—Joe Greenberg, 54, Austin

**If a woman asks** you how many sexual partners you've had, the only answer is twelve.

—Mark Motroni, 39, Manhasset, New York

**A child's laughter** is the greatest sound in the world. A child's laughter in a cornfield is the creepiest sound in the world.

—John Buckler, 26, Lansing, Michigan

**A minivan is** the first indication that someone has given up.

—Doug Gonterman, 38, Suwanee, Georgia

**Some people will volunteer for just about any job, no matter how crappy. Try to sit next to these people in meetings.**

—Bob Sorensen, 47, Herndon, Virginia

**Raising teenagers** is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree.

—Leo Mc Carron, 52, New Hamburg, Ontario

**There's no shame** in a Honda.

—Charles Terry, 17, Warner Robins, Georgia

**Using a customer-service** rep's first name greatly increases the odds of getting your problem fixed.

—Tom Brickner, 32, Santa Barbara, California

**I DIDN'T ASK FOR  
MY 38DS, BUT I  
SURE WOULDN'T  
GIVE THEM BACK.**

—Andrea Craig, 34, Birmingham

**The most disturbing** thing about W. is that he might just be the president we deserve.

—Robert Goodwin, 63, South Windsor, Connecticut

**Independence** is an aphrodisiac.

—Noah Kodeck, 28, Baltimore

**The colder the climate,** the sadder the people.

—Rachel Healy, 27, Philadelphia

**I was walking down Madison Avenue,** complaining to a coworker about the miserable politics I faced as an art director in Manhattan, when we came up behind a couple of kids in fast-food uniforms who had just gotten off work. One was complaining to the other about the politics of the deep-fryer line. It was then that I realized it's all the same shit, just different scenery.

—Shawn Perine, 39, Sherman Oaks, California



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NEVER PASS UP  
AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO KEEP YOUR  
MOUTH SHUT.

—Ryan Lamagna, 27, Chesapeake, Virginia



I wash my sheets every  
Thursday. It's just an  
optimistic way to go into  
the weekend.

—Christopher Hebert, 24, Minneapolis



The only difference between the Vietnam War and the war in Iraq is that the body counts on all the networks during Vietnam weren't brought to you by boner pills.

—Michael Dare, 54, White Water, California

Some things are best left un-Googled.

—Greg Robicheaux, 49, Lafayette, Louisiana



Don't be a perfectionist.

—Charles Caldwell, 45, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



Billions of people throughout history have sensed a supreme force higher than themselves. Seems like there's got to be something to that.

—Ross Brown, 24, Moscow, Idaho



Religion is in many ways like a good pair of shoes. It gives support, a little bit of a lift in your days, and it separates us from the other animals. But personally, I prefer to go barefoot.

—Gordon Hatherley, 26, Lake Station, Indiana



No matter how pissed off you are, nervous, jerked around, or just plain exasperated over something, responding like an asshole does not help in any way, so you might as well be a nice guy.

—Eric Wong, 43, Berkeley, California

YOU CAN TAP, BANG,  
SHAKE, AND CARESS  
THE BOTTLE ALL YOU  
WANT; THE KETCHUP  
WILL COME OUT  
WHEN IT'S GOOD  
AND READY.

—Kate Lacroix, 31, Boulder, Colorado

Fuck subtlety.

—Daniel Wild, 38, New York City

Watching a football game with your father is equivalent to three hugs and five I love yous.

—Darrell Harris, 35, Richmond, California

Always approach the intimidatingly attractive woman. If you get turned down, who cares? You aren't having any less sex with her.

—Jon Legg, 24, Normal, Illinois



Fundamentalism is a bad thing in all areas except sports.

—Zach Mohs, 24, Minneapolis



If you're in a crowded situation that could turn into a riot (after the Red Sox have won the World Series, for example) and women aren't flashing their breasts, get out of there. I don't know if exposed breasts reflect a crowd's collective feeling or if the presence of breasts assuages a crowd's temper, but I do know this: No tits is trouble.

—Dan McAllister, 29, Wilmington, Delaware



The divorce rate is around 50 percent. I wonder what it would be if all the couples who wanted to get divorced actually did so.

—John Santello, 54, New York City

The best part of the party is where the smokers are.

—Garrett Phillips, 40, Atlanta

New England is overrated. New Jersey is underrated.

—Dan Blondell, 17, New York City



The trouble with dealing with crazy people is that they're not crazy all the time.

—Mike Gamble, 42, Gainesville, Florida



Shit, shave, shower (not shit, shower, shave).

—Greg Sexton, 36, Gilbert, Arizona



Cartagena, I'll be back.

—Paul Petrus, 32, New York City



Some people will dislike you for no reason at all. Just ignore them or sleep with their boyfriends.

—Carrie Mariani, 26, New York City

DON'T HONK AT  
OLD PEOPLE. IT  
JUST CONFUSES  
THEM FURTHER.

—Doug Miller, 52, Phoenix

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**People who claim that they're still trying to find themselves, have. They just don't like what they see.**

—Jonathon Ferris, 30, Flint, Michigan

**I'm turning into my parents, and that's okay.**

—Jason Fong, 31, Sacramento

**Eulogies say more about the eulogizer than the deceased.**

—Michael O'Neill, 37, Malverne, New York

**Ralph Lauren.** You can't go wrong.

—Mark Ogden, 49, Little Falls, New Jersey

**Listen to the quiet,** nagging doubts.

—Jason Hubbert, 32, Oklahoma City

**Never be** in awe of anyone.

—Paul Edmondson, 48, Laguna Beach, California

**AC/DC,** Springsteen, Guns N' Roses, Pixies, Jane's Addiction, Sublime, Frank Sinatra, Tom Waits, Prince, and Marvin Gaye.

—Bryan Love, 38, Santa Cruz, California

**I have cerebral palsy. That means my muscles don't work the way I want them to. My dad is helping me write this. Here's what I've learned: To make friends, smile. A dog makes you cool. The Three Stooges crack me up. And a roller-coaster ride is an amazing experience, especially if you can't move around much by yourself.**

—Jason Gackstetter, 6, San Diego

**If you don't involve yourself** in government as an individual, corporate America is happy to make the rules for you.

—Larry Fowler, 55, Pipe Creek, Texas

**Ask your female friends** what they hate about men, and then don't do those things.

—Kevin Downey Jr., 39, New York City

**The Oscars** should have an occasional category for best previously nonnominated performance. Among the first nominees would be Val Kilmer as Doc Holliday in Tombstone.

—Jim Chambliss, 45, Lewisville, Texas

**If men were the ones having babies,** there would be drive-through abortion clinics and people would be putting their heads in the car window to ask, Would you like fries with that?

—Olivia Fairweather, 47, Monticello, New York

**Ben Franklin** was right about older women: They don't tell, they don't swell, and they're grateful as hell.

—Donn Ahearn, 48, Hyattsville, Maryland

**Your grandfather's** coffin is heavier than you expect. Your father's coffin is heavier than you can bear.

—Todd Lowe, 43, Hong Kong

**At fast-food restaurants with self-service drink dispensers, why pay for more than the smallest size?**

—Edward Catalano, 42, Coconut Creek, Florida