

BluesNews

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July 2017

I think I owe everyone an explanation. It had been my hope that I could coax BluesNews back to a more balanced and regular publishing schedule. This is still my dream but the likelihood of this dream becoming reality seems just as far away today as it was back in April. Admittedly, while my klutzy health issues are not really the cause or issue this time round, they have nonetheless been a factor.

Earlier this year I purchased a mandolin vegetable slicer—a great kitchen tool. With the many times I have used this mandolin, I have come to learn something new about myself. I now know I cannot be trusted to use this tool in a safe manner. The ends of my fingers have been frequently sorely victimized. With the blood thinners I am taking because of the stent, my kitchen has seen more human blood (my own) than ever was intended. I have not missed taking the skin from a single finger. The mandolin is quick and surprisingly painless in operation: it has removed more than my fingerprints with remarkable efficiency... and it is now gone. Our youngest granddaughter is an excellent cook. She is thoughtful and careful and follows her recipes with creative deliberateness. She is now the proud owner of my mandolin menace. She clearly acquired her kitchen skills from her mother and not her grandfather. It has been a couple of months. She is not missing any fingers and I have heard no reports of excessive blood loss.



There are two far more significant factors at play that impact creating a regular publishing schedule for BluesNews. The first, like my remarks above, is personal. As long term readers of BluesNews know, my friend, the man who stood up with me when I married and with whom I stood up when he married, is quickly succumbing to his congestive heart failure. Two years ago, a fall and a broken leg, were almost terminal. He was hospitalized for six months and most of us never expected he would recover and be able to live at home; but he did!

In April, he celebrated his 70th birthday. When he was first diagnosed with congestive heart failure (30 years ago), a cardiologist had said, if he followed Doctors advice, he might live to be 70. Since his birthday, we have all noticed his decline. When I have talked with him, sometimes it seems as though he took the cardiologist’s prognostication as a kind of dare. At times, it was as if he heard the cardiologist say, “There is a chance you will see 70, but it is unlikely.” He fought very hard to get to that ‘magic’ number,

| | |
|--|---|
| A Song that Reduces Anxiety by 65% | 3 |
| What Is Attribution Theory? | 5 |
| How Did the USA Get There? | 6 |
| Professional Development / InService 2017 - 2018 | 8 |

using all of his resources to do so. Achieving 70, with nothing more to prove, it seems he quit the fight and in the past months, the disease has beaten him down. At other times when we have spoken, it would seem as if he had taken the prognostication of longevity as though it were a goal. He never seemed worried about his illness or how long he would live. The cardiologist had said 70 and he never doubted it. This was largely the attitude he had during his extended hospitalization two years ago. He never doubted he would get back home. And again, having reached 70, it is as though he has reached the end of his life. While he might fight for breath, he does not fight for life.

He often leaves me quite confused. I used to be concerned by what I thought was denial. Now, I think his tenacity may have simply been blind faith that the cardiologist was right. In any event, it has been a challenge to watch him struggle with his dying. Similar to my father's passing, being a witness to the end of life with someone to whom you have been close, I find exhausting. I never know what to say or how to pass the time. Silence doesn't seem enough, but talking about it just seems morose. Old movies (often in black and white), old Bob Dylan (anything before Blonde on Blonde), and a cold beer can be all that is needed. He still laughs; he still reaches out. But he is feeble and slipping....

And I have let BluesNews slip with him. It has been a challenge to find the energy to put BluesNews together: to do the research, to find appropriate articles to reprint, to find the humour, to bring colour, to be thoughtful of everyone who reads this guilty pleasure of mine.

The other factor at play with my inability to establish and maintain a regular publishing schedule for BluesNews is (and has been) wanting to reprint material that is relevant more for families providing care than for professionals supporting those who provide care. Of late, much of what I have been looking at just seems like the same old same old. Sometimes, it is dressed up a little different, but it still same old stuff. Fresh ideas, new information, creative insights—I don't seem to find it where I go looking. I must admit, I seem easily bored but this seeming absence has diminished my zeal. I don't want to print the same thing over and over...

I don't know that BluesNews will ever find a regular schedule. I have, of late, been given to thinking about trying to document what we know, (or I think we know), about specialized foster care and the issues of child development relevant to children in out-of-home care. I have been thinking that this is something I would write for BluesNews and therein lies the rub: finding the time and capacity to write and to maintain my focus.

"Late again!" the third-grade teacher sternly said to little Ranger.

"It ain't my fault this time, Miss Russell. You can blame this 'un on my Daddy. The reason I'm three hours late is my Daddy sleeps naked!"

Now, Miss Russell had taught grammar school for 30-some-odd years. Despite her mounting fears, she asked little Ranger what he meant by that. Full of grins and mischief, and in the flower of his youth, little Ranger and trouble were old friends,..... but he always told her the truth.

"You see, Miss Russell, out at the farm we got this here low down fox. The last few nights, he done ate six hens. Last night, when Daddy heard a noise out in the chicken pen, he grabbed his double-barreled shotgun and said to my Ma, "That fox is back again... I'm a gonna git him!"

"Stay back," Daddy whispered to all us kids!

My Daddy was naked as a jaybird -- no boots, no pants, no shirt! To the hen house he crawled, just like an Injun on the snoop. Then, he stuck that double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun through the window of the coop. As he stared into the darkness, with a fox on his mind, our old hound dog, Rip, had done gone and woke up and comes sneaking up behind Daddy. Then, as we all looked on, plumb helpless, old Rip done went and stuck his cold nose in my Daddy's crack!"

"Miss Russell, we all been pluckin' chickens since three o'clock this mornin!"

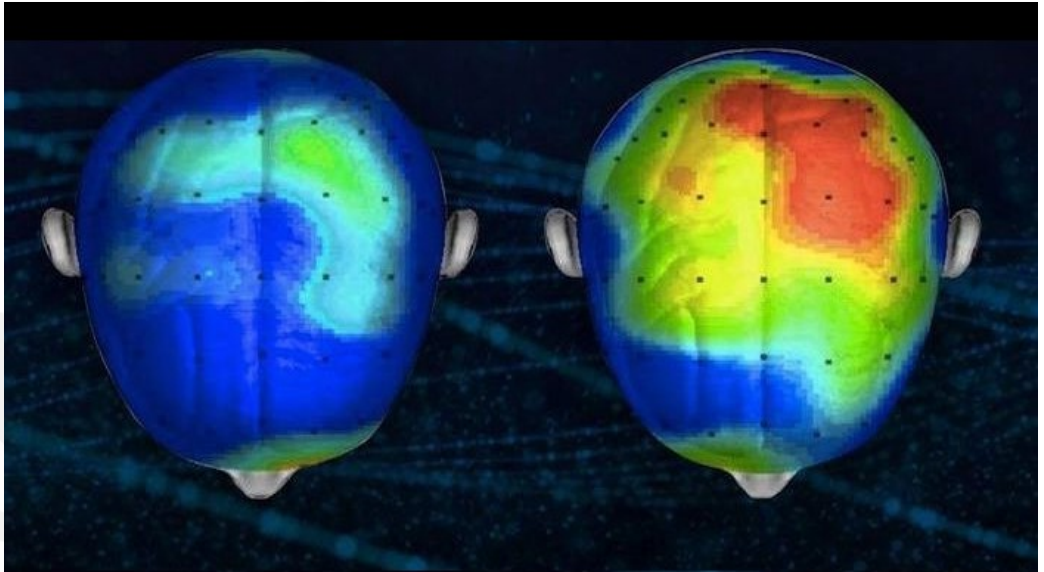


**"The world is changed by your example,
not by your opinion."**

A SONG THAT REDUCES ANXIETY BY 65%

Music therapy has been used with some success. But now neuroscientists in the United Kingdom have zeroed in on a single song that results in a dramatic 65% percent reduction in overall anxiety.

Pharmaceutical drugs tend to be the classic treatment for treating anxiety (as well as the biggest money maker). Cognitive therapy is a common approach as well. Those with a holistic bent often turn to meditation, yoga, massage and other relaxation techniques. Music therapy has also been used with some success. But now neuroscientists in the U.K. have zeroed in on a single song that results in a dramatic 65 percent reduction in overall anxiety...



Anxiety & Generation Y

A 2013 survey found that 57 percent of American female university students reported episodes of “overwhelming anxiety.” And in the United Kingdom, the charity YouthNet discovered a third of young women — and one in ten young men — suffer from panic attacks.

Marjorie Wallace, CEO of the charity Sane, believes that generation Y (those born in the 1980s and 1990s) is the age of desperation. “Growing up has always been difficult, but this sense of desperation? That’s new,” she says.

Writes Rachael Dove in *Anxiety: the epidemic sweeping through Generation Y*:

“So, what’s going on? The rise of technology, overly-protective parenting and “exam-factory” schooling are among the reasons psychologists suggest for our generational angst. Another, brought up on multiple occasions by my peers and by psychologists I spoke to, is the luxury (as ungrateful as it sounds) of too much choice.”

Anxiety — that feeling of dread, fear, worry and panic — is certainly nothing new. Hippocrates wrote about it in the fourth century BCE. As did Søren Kierkegaard in the 1860s. And Sigmund Freud addressed the disorder in 1926. However, jump to the present and we’re seeing a significant uptick — especially with youth.

Pieter Kruger, a London-based psychologist, says research indicates that people who feel they don’t have a choice are actually more resilient — mainly because they can blame life or others if they make a wrong decision. However, if you have a range of choices, you have no one to blame but yourself. “We become much more obsessive because we want to make the right decision every time,” he says.

Writer Claire Eastham, 26, agrees on her blog *We Are All Mad Here*:

“I spend a lot of time worrying about what I am going to do with my life. Previous generations had choice taken out of their hands. If you are told what to do it takes the pressure away.”

In our modern era, decision making can trigger a type of paralysis. Often, we will obsessively research the many different options for, say, a pair of shoes. Eventually, information overload will kick in and shut the whole shopping venture down, leaving us exhausted and guilty for being crippled by such a seemingly simple task.

Technology also contributes to the rise of anxiety. A good number of millennials feel exposed without their smartphones — and are rarely without them. Mobile gadgets tend to be their window to the world and foster a sense of connectedness. But there’s a dark side to feeling the need to keep on top of what everyone is doing on social media — otherwise known as Fomo, or the Fear of

Missing Out.

“Fomo is very real and can be a constant addiction that affects anxiety levels and a general sense of wellbeing,” says Kruger.

Social media allows us to compare everything — relationships, diet, figure, beauty, wealth, standard of living — not only with our friends, but with celebrities too. And, as research has shown, time on social media “can cause depression in people who compare themselves with others.”

Besides revamping our lifestyles and limiting exposure to social media — and learning to work with a sometimes overwhelming abundance of choice — neuroscientists have found listening to a specially designed song can have a profound influence over our levels of anxiety.

The Creation Of The Ultimate Anti-Stress Music

Researchers at Mindlab International in the U.K. wanted to know what kind of music induces the greatest state of relaxation. The study involved having participants try to solve difficult puzzles — which inherently triggered a certain degree of stress — while connected to sensors. At the same time, participants listened to a range of songs as researchers measured their brain activity, heart rate, blood pressure and rate of breathing.

What they found is that one song — [“Weightless”](#) — resulted in a striking 65 percent reduction in participants’ overall anxiety, and a 35 percent reduction in their usual physiological resting rates.

Interestingly, the song was specifically designed to induce this highly relaxed state. Created by Marconi Union, the musicians teamed up with sound therapists to carefully arrange harmonies, rhythms and bass lines, which in turn slow a listener’s heart rate and blood pressure, while also lowering stress hormones like cortisol.

In fact, the music is so effective, that many of the female participants became drowsy — to the point where lead researcher Dr. David Lewis-Hodgson advises against listening to it while driving.

But don’t take their word for it. Experience it for yourself: [Weightless](#)

The Darwin Awards

(Honoring the least evolved among us)

This year’s winner is:

When his .38 caliber revolver failed to fire at his intended victim during a hold-up in Long Beach, California would-be robber James Elliot did something that can only inspire wonder. He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again. This time it worked.

Honorable mentions:

- ▶ The chef at a hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat cutting machine and after a little shopping around, submitted a claim to his insurance company. The company expecting negligence sent out one of its men to have a look for himself. He tried the machine and he also lost a finger.. The chef’s claim was approved.
- ▶ An American teenager was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he received the injuries, the lad told police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get his head to a moving train before he was hit.
- ▶ A man walked into a Louisiana Circle-K, put a \$20 bill on the counter, and asked for change. When the clerk opened the cash drawer, the man pulled a gun and asked for all the cash in the register, which the clerk promptly provided. The man took the cash from the clerk and fled, leaving the \$20 bill on the counter. The total amount of cash he got from the drawer... \$15.
- ▶ Seems an Arkansas guy wanted some beer pretty badly. He decided that he’d just throw a cinder block through a liquor store window, grab some booze, and run. So, he lifted the cinder block and heaved it over his head at the window. The cinder block bounced back and hit the would-be thief on the head, knocking him unconscious. The liquor store window was made of Plexiglas. The whole event was caught on videotape.
- ▶ As a female shopper exited a New York convenience store, a man grabbed her purse and ran. The clerk called 911 immediately, and the woman was able to give them a detailed description of the snatcher. Within minutes, the police apprehended the snatcher. They put him in the car and drove back to the store. The thief was then taken out of the car and told to stand there for a positive ID. To which he replied, “Yes, officer, that’s her. That’s the lady I stole the purse from.”

WHAT IS ATTRIBUTION THEORY?

Any time we see a person behaves a certain way, or succeed or fail at a certain task, our brains automatically come up with a story about how and why it happened the way it did. We attribute the outcome to certain kinds of causal factors.

Attribution theory is the theory of why we attribute outcome X to causal factor Y – in short, who or what do we hold responsible for the outcome? Attribution theorists generally recognize two variables that influence our attribution: dispositional/situational, and stable/unstable.

A dispositional factor is one that is internal to a person: something about their personality, their motivation, their level of effort, etc. A situational factor is one that is external to a person, like social factors, natural events, or happenstance. Stable factors are those that are unlikely to change anytime soon, whereas unstable factors are the opposite.

The variable of controllability also has a role in attribution, but at a later stage than the other variables. The question of whether or not we can control an outcome (whether we attribute it to controllable factors or uncontrollable factors) has an influence more on our attitudes toward the situation than on our explanation for it. These attitudes are also shaped by our personalities: if we think that our failure is the result of a controllable factor, we may be more motivated to try to do something about it.

| | Stable | Unstable |
|---------------|---|--|
| Dispositional | Intelligence, personality, judgement, willpower "He's just not a good singer" | Moods, exertion of effort in a specific task, momentary whims "She wasn't trying hard enough" |
| Situational | Institutional factors, economics, social structures such as race, gender, class "The judges always go easier on girls" | Coincidence, weather, dumb luck "You're lucky I had a sore throat today" |

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The Fundamental Attribution Error

Attribution theorists have observed a phenomenon so pervasive and so common among humans that they refer to it as the Fundamental Attribution Error. It's a pretty simple idea. Essentially, when you succeed, you attribute your success to dispositional factors: you are talented, you worked hard, and that's why you won this award. When you fail, on the other hand, it's because of situational factors: you were sick that day, the competition was unfair, your opponent got lucky.

Furthermore, people almost always attribute exactly the opposite causes to the successes and failures of others. If your opponent wins a contest, you are inclined to believe that it is the result of luck and cheating, whereas if your opponent loses, it's because he just isn't good enough. We can observe this phenomenon all around us – almost every person has been guilty of making the fundamental attribution error at some point, and yet we are almost never aware of it.

The fundamental attribution error does not only apply to individuals attributing causes to themselves. It can also apply in cases of "in-group" or team behaviours. To see this, just observe any group of sports fans while they watch a game. If the Broncos win, it's because they've been working hard all season, and because Tim Tebow is the best quarterback since John Elway. If the Broncos lose, it's because the referee is stupid and wouldn't know pass interference if it jumped up and bit him in the face.

Even though the fans are not actually participating in the game, they make the fundamental attribution error as though they were. This phenomenon has an effect on politics as well – Democrats blame the bad economy on Reagan and Bush, while Republicans blame it on Clinton and Obama.

During a lull between the speeches at the recent presidential swearing-in ceremony, Melania Trump leaned over to chat with the Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson. "You know, I bought Donald a parrot for Christmas. That bird is so smart, Donald has already taught him to pronounce over two hundred words!" "Wow, that's pretty impressive," said Tillerson, "but, you do realize that he just speaks the words, ...he doesn't really understand what they mean." "Oh, I know," replied Melania, "....." neither does the parrot."

How Did The USA Get There?

The text below is from a July, 2017 email newsletter from the Washington Post. While I generally try to keep BluesNews free from politics, with the rally-style, partisan speech to the Boy Scout jamboree, the spectacle that has been Mr Trump's Presidency made reprinting this excerpt irresistible.

In the USA, voters sought change in five of the past six elections. Exit polls last November showed that a candidate's ability to "bring change" mattered far more to voters than whether they had the "right experience" or "good judgment."

-- How did we get here? Bruce Mehlman diagnoses seven long-term trends that are both symptomatic of and drivers of disruption:

1) **Substantial social change.** The United States is a very different place than it was 50 years ago. In 1967, the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans controlled 27 percent of the wealth. Now they have 42 percent. Fewer than one in 10 kids were born out of wedlock; now it's four in 10. Foreign-born people make up three times the share of the U.S. population (15 percent) as they did then. There are vastly more women in the workforce, vastly fewer whites with no college degree and one-third of 18- to 34-year-olds now live with their parents.

2) **Accelerating technological change.** It used to take 387,923 workers to manufacture \$1 billion in goods. Now it takes 26,785. It took 75 years for the telephone to reach 100 million homes after it was invented. It took just a few months for Candy Crush to reach that milestone.

3) **Weakened anchor institutions.** Seven in 10 adults were married in 1967. Now it's 50 percent. Three in 10 workers were members of labor unions then. Now it's 11 percent. Two-thirds of Americans trusted government. It's never been close to that since Vietnam and Watergate. The latest studies show only about 20 percent of the country trusts the feds to do the right thing.

4) **The loss of honest brokers.** Trust in media has been on a steady decline among not just Republicans but also Democrats and independents since Walter Cronkite was the most trusted man in America in 1972.

5) **Leaders over-promised and under-delivered.** Mehlman cites four examples: Barack Obama told people they could keep their doctors if they liked them under Obamacare. Dick Cheney said Americans would be "greeted as liberators" in Iraq. Bill Clinton said he did not have sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. George H.W. Bush told the country to read his lips as he promised no new taxes.

6) **Politicians deferred hard choices.** Entitlement spending has eaten up a bigger and bigger share of the federal budget, and Washington has lacked the political will to make tough choices. Mandatory spending rose from 53 percent of the budget in 1976 to 69 percent in 2016.

7) **The parties have lost their primacy.** Outside groups, which tend to be more ideological and focused on single issues, have made the Republican and Democratic Party apparatuses less relevant since the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision. This has empowered plutocrats.

-- Most insiders believe that next year's midterms will become the sixth change election in the past seven cycles. The only question is whether it will be a big enough wave to let Democrats win the House.

-- What remains remarkable about the past six months is how durable the president's support has been among Republicans. Despite objectively losing almost every news cycle since he took office, Trump's approval rating among GOP voters is still at the same level in Gallup's tracking polls as George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan at this point in their presidencies.

The number who "strongly approve" of the job Trump is doing has slipped, though, and a few recent polls have suggested that another split is starting to emerge too. Mehlman notes that the most recent NBC/Wall Street Journal poll asked people who voted for the president whether they did so because they were "for" him or "against" Hillary Clinton. Among the 60 percent who said they voted for Trump, 95 percent approve of the job he's doing. Among the 40 percent who got behind him because they were against Clinton, his approval rating slipped from 87 percent in February to 81 percent in June.

Trump has also not expanded his base. The 35 percent of independents who approve of how Trump is doing is even lower than the 38 percent who approved of Gerald Ford after he pardoned Richard Nixon. It's lower at the six-month mark than for any president since Gallup began tracking under Dwight Eisenhower.



The same goes for his approval among Democrats. At this point in Obama's presidency, 20 percent of Republicans still approved of him. Only 8 percent of Democrats approve of Trump.

Bruce Mehlman, a lifelong Republican, notes that Democrats are right to be encouraged by their strength in the generic ballot, their overperformance in recent special elections and the surge of new candidates filing to run. But he also notes that neither party enjoys the kind of polling advantages on individual issues that they did before the most recent waves in 2014 and 2006. The closest is health care: The WSJ/NBC poll gave Democrats a 17-point edge on which party is best suited to handle it. In 2006, though, Democrats had a 31-point advantage on health care.

-- So what's going to get done this year? "Congress will do what it must," said Mehlman, a partner at the bipartisan firm Mehlman, Castagnetti, Rosen & Thomas. That means passing a bunch of funding and extension bills by Sept. 30, as well as reauthorizing FISA surveillance by Dec. 31. He thinks a short-term government shutdown ("two weeks") is possible this fall. He's unsure about Congress's ability to pass a big-ticket bill on health care and forecasts tax cuts rather than a paid-for permanent overhaul of the tax code. Mehlman's somewhat pessimistic view comports with other plugged-in GOP lobbyists on K Street.

*A founding partner of his bipartisan firm, Bruce Mehlman is widely regarded as an expert in running issue campaigns, managing C-suite associations and developing strategies that achieve impactful policy outcomes. He concurrently serves as Executive Director of the Technology CEO Council and Co-Chairman of the Internet Innovation Alliance.

Mehlman previously held the post of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Technology Policy, having been nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed to the office by the United States Senate in 2001.

Before Commerce, Mehlman worked as the lead Republican lobbyist for high tech heavyweight Cisco Systems, representing the Silicon Valley company before Congressional committees, federal agencies and the executive branch.

Mehlman held the position of policy director and general counsel to the House Republican Conference under Representative J.C. Watts (R-OK) and before that served as General Counsel to the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), where he advised Republican Members and their staffs on matters of election law, ethics and political broadcast regulations. A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Virginia Law School, he lives with his family in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dorothy: 'That nice George Johnson asked me out for a date. I know you went out with him last week, and I wanted to talk with you about him before I give him my answer.'

Edna: 'Well, I'll tell you. He shows up at my apartment punctually at 7 P.M., dressed like such a gentleman in a fine suit, and he brings me such beautiful flowers! Then he takes me downstairs, and what's there but a luxury car... a limousine, uniformed chauffeur and all. Then he takes me out for dinner... a marvelous dinner... lobster, champagne, dessert, and after-dinner drinks. Then we go see a show. Let me tell you, Dorothy, I enjoyed it so much I could have just died from pleasure! So then we are coming back to my apartment and he turns into an ANIMAL. Completely crazy, he tears off my expensive new dress and has his way with me two times!'

Dorothy: 'Goodness gracious!... so you are telling me I shouldn't go out with him?'

Edna: 'No, no, no... I'm just saying, wear an old dress.'

Bob, a 70-year-old, extremely wealthy widower, shows up at the Country Club with a breathtakingly beautiful and very sexy 25 year-old blonde who knocks everyone's socks off with her youthful sex appeal and charm. She hangs onto Bob's arm and listens intently to his every word. His buddies at the club are all aghast. At the very first chance, they corner him and ask,

'Bob, how did you get the trophy girlfriend?'

Bob replies, 'Girlfriend? She's my wife!'

They're amazed, but continue to ask.

'So, how did you persuade her to marry you?'

'I lied about my age', Bob replies.

'What, did you tell her you were only 50?'

Bob smiles and says, 'No, I told her I'm 90'.

A group of Canadians were traveling by tour bus through Holland . As they stopped at a cheese farm, a young guide led them through the process of cheese making, explaining that goat's milk was used. She showed the group a lively hillside where many goat s were grazing. 'These' she explained 'are the older goats put out to pasture when they no longer produce.' She then asked, 'What do you do in Canada with your old goats?'

A spry old gentleman answered, 'They send us on bus tours.'

Professional Development / InService

Leamington
1st and 3rd Wednesday

Parkhill
2nd and 4th Wednesday

Sept 20

Sept 27

Oct 4

Oct 11

Oct 18

Oct 25

Nov 1

Nov 8

Nov 15

Nov 22

Dec 6

Dec 13

2018

Jan 17

Jan 10

Feb 7

Jan 24

Feb 14

Feb 7

March 7

Feb 21

March (March Break)

March 14

April 4

March 28

April 18

April 11

May 2

April 25

May 16

May 9

June 6

May 23

June 21

June 13

A helping hand doesn't need to be big in size. It is the helping attitude that matters the most...

