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### Thriving in America From a War-Torn Country

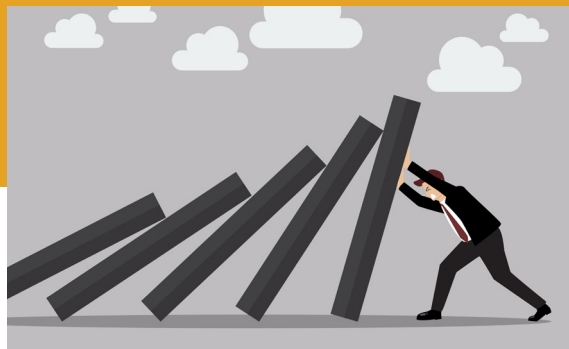
At only 30 years old, another young man we represent had been beaten and tortured in a war-torn country in Eastern Europe. He bounced from country to country during his escape, seeking for anyone to grant him asylum, until the United States finally gave him that opportunity. He moved to New York, but then he was very badly hurt in a construction accident. With rock-solid determination during his recovery journey, his peculiar resilience allowed him to rebuild his family's life as well as his own, despite the unspeakable adversity he'd lived through.

### The Diamond in the Rough

When it comes to unspeakable adversity, one more client comes to mind. This client had grown up as a victim of both physical

and sexual abuse and dropped out of school in ninth grade — yet, he got married, had kids, and worked successfully in construction. That is, until he became our client due to a terrible accident. He had several surgeries, and afterward, he needed to be evaluated on behalf of the defendants by a vocational rehabilitation specialist. I sat next to him as he performed various tests relating to math and practical problem-solving.

Despite never attending most of high school, I was stunned by how successful he was at their tests. These questions were so difficult that I'd struggle just to get one answer right! Although he lacked the opportunity in life to fulfill his potential sooner, his intelligence and resilience remain core components to his success, even after his case.



Most sane and reasonable people would never be able to withstand what these clients have had to endure — thankfully, these clients are not just sane and reasonable. They're peculiar because they're also incredibly courageous. For those of them reading this newsletter now, I want to thank you for allowing us to be part of your incredible, inspiring stories.

-Roger Simon



## CELEBRATING PECULIAR PEOPLE DAY THE RIGHT WAY

### 6 STORIES OF INCREDIBLE, INSPIRING CLIENTS

Hello, friends! I noticed an oddity on the calendar today. Apparently, Jan. 10 is Peculiar People Day, which is a day "to celebrate the leaders of the unusual and strange — the people who refuse to succumb to the world's idea of what is sane and reasonable." (At least, that's how Google defines it!)

When we think of peculiar people, we might think of Steve Jobs' obsession with walking or Elon Musk smoking a joint while on a podcast. While these figures are certainly peculiar, in many ways, we're all peculiar. The most peculiar people I know are many of our clients, and the way they carry tremendous courage through life-changing challenges would easily break most others.

That's why, this month, I wanted to share with you just a few stories of our peculiar clients. What's most unusual about them is their resilience, which, to this day, I continue to find incredibly inspiring.

*"The most peculiar people I know are many of our clients, and the way they carry tremendous courage through life-changing challenges would easily break most others."*

### Never Too Young to Achieve Her Dreams

Despite serving her local government for over 30 years and being in her late 60s, a female client of ours had always dreamed of

being a flight attendant. So, she quit her job and became one! Then, she was involved in a severe car accident that caused her bones to begin dying. It took over two years to regain her ability to walk. While this might have dissuaded most people from working, she didn't want to stay away from her dream. She's now back to being a flight attendant in her early 70s, happier than ever.

### Helping Kids, One Step at a Time

I always thought my flight-attendant client would get along with another client of mine with a similar story. Instead of working for local government, this client worked as a teacher for 30 years in a rough school district. Most of her students were from dysfunctional families and sorely needed her help. In her early 70s, she'd stay after school to tutor kids and walk home (with a bus ride in between on Long Island).

One day, she was walking home and was hit by a car. Very badly hurt with a broken hip, she required surgery and two years of recovery to walk again. You'd think she'd take this opportunity to retire — instead, now in her mid-70s, she's back to doing what she loves, which is tutoring young kids.

### A Proud, Hardworking, Deaf Father

I never knew how difficult life was for the deaf until I met a young man in his mid-30s. He's completely hearing impaired, and for years, he worked in a school for the deaf where he'd been a student himself growing up. However, with a young daughter, he wanted to supplement his income, so he became an Uber driver. Then, he was badly hurt in a car accident while working.



Our case made me realize that, while it's certainly not easy to be physically handicapped, even fewer places provide services for the deaf. It was a real challenge to find our client medical services with people who could properly communicate with him. He required serious treatment, including a few back surgeries and a spinal cord implant. Despite what he's gone through, he's getting back behind the wheel to continue providing for his family, even prouder to work hard for his daughter.

### Hardly Fazed — The Always-Smiling Client

There's another young man I've represented who is 30 years old, and right when lockdowns began in March 2020, he was in a very bad motorcycle accident. He was an accountant and lost both his left arm and right leg. Yet, every single time I speak to this guy, and I say, "Hey, how are you doing?" he replies, very upbeat, "Oh, I'm doing great, man!" Describing just how genuinely he means it here in print doesn't do it justice. His adversity didn't destroy him — in fact, he felt very blessed to still have his life. He's definitely a powerful example of gratitude.

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# Bringing Back a Lost Art

## Your Guide to Writing a Thank-You Note

A 2019 survey by Ask Your Target Market showed 80% of respondents appreciate receiving thank-you notes — but only 22% of respondents report regularly sending them. That’s a pretty big discrepancy.

During the holiday season, you probably received several gifts and may have been hosted at a family member’s house, so now is the perfect time to revive the dying art of the thank-you note. If it’s been a while since you last wrote one, fear not. Here’s everything you need to know to get started.

**Know When a Note Is Needed.** You should strongly consider sending a thank-you note any time you receive a gift, but they are particularly expected after big events like weddings or showers. It’s also good form to send a note whenever someone has done you a big favor or hosted you at their house. Professionally, thank-you notes should always be sent after job interviews. Notes should be sent as soon as possible, ideally within one month of the gift or event.

**Use Paper.** It may seem old-fashioned, but that’s exactly what makes it special. In fact, the Ask Your Target Market survey found that 72% of respondents thought handwritten notes were more meaningful than electronic ones. Even if your handwriting is messy, your recipients will appreciate the personal touch. Exceptions apply for thank-you notes sent after job interviews — due to time sensitivity, these are best sent via email.

**Be Specific.** Especially when you’ve got a large stack to get through, it’s pretty tempting to write the same note over and over again, changing only the salutation. Don’t give in! While it’s fine to have a template, recipients will recognize when the note you sent them is generic. Be sure to mention exactly what you’re thankful for (not just “the gift”) or how you plan to use the gift.

Now, you’re ready to let people know how much you appreciate them in a way that’s both simple and classic. Even though, as the saying goes, a good deed is its own reward, don’t be too surprised if the positive energy you are sending out comes back to you in unexpected ways.



## We Fought MIT Expert’s ‘Evidence’ AND WON A \$2.7M CASE

Sometimes, “experts” will recreate accidents with misleading results. That happened in a recent case.

Our 56-year-old client had rented an apartment in a building for many years. One summer morning in 2017, she was cooking food in her kitchen for her church group. There was food cooking in the oven and three large pots boiling on the stovetop.

While leaning over to check the food in the oven, she fell onto the open oven door. The stove then tipped onto our client, and the hot pans in the oven and the scalding hot pots of water on the stovetop spilled onto her.

The stove tipped because the landlord had not installed the anti-tip device that the manufacturer provided with the oven. Our client suffered burns to her abdomen and chest, through no fault of the landlord, because she fell onto the hot oven door. She suffered additional severe burns when the oven tipped over and all the hot pots and pans and their contents fell onto her.



The defendant landlord contended that due to the force of our client’s body striking the open oven door, the pans still would have fallen from the stovetop even with an anti-tip device installed. In support of that argument, the defendant hired an expert with a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from MIT.

That expert recreated the conditions of the accident, complete with an oven and pots of boiling water on the stovetop, then reenacted the accident. However, his reenactments were performed with an anti-tip device installed. In each of the reenactments, the hot cookware came flying off the stovetop. Essentially, the defendant argued that his failure to install the anti-tip device made no difference, that even if the anti-tip device had been installed, our client still would have suffered the very same level of injuries, all due to her initial fall.

After a careful analysis of the defendant’s reenactments, we detailed the numerous ways that their expert’s simulations were not performed under conditions substantially similar to the subject accident, as per the controlling law. The law also requires that an expert’s assumptions and opinions be based on principles that are generally accepted in the scientific community.

We were able to point to several ways in which the landlord’s expert failed to meet this legal requirement. Based upon the strength of our arguments, especially our showing the problems with their expert’s methods and conclusions, we were able to successfully achieve a settlement for our client.

The defendant had hoped his expert’s testimony would result in a dismissal of the case. But our counterarguments resulted in the defendant’s insurance carrier offering \$2,750,000 to settle the matter and avoid a trial. It just goes to show you that just because somebody says they are an expert, that doesn’t always give them the final say.



Neuroplasticity is the brain’s ability to change and adapt throughout your life, forming new connections that can have a direct impact on your energy, productivity, focus, creativity, motivation, and much more. Your brain can expand and grow even after an injury.

That’s why many entrepreneurs are saying the same thing: One of the smartest ways to invest in your business is to devote resources to your most important asset — your brain.

But how do you keep your brain active, healthy, and functioning at a high level? Param Dedhia, MD, says six key areas are involved: sleep, exercise, joy, nutrition, internal medicine, and inflammation. All of these factors work independently, but together, they can promote neuroplasticity, which is why they all require, and deserve, a high level of care and attention.



What do you get when you mix a cookie and a doughnut? A portzelky! This traditional Mennonite “New Year’s cookie” is perfect for sharing.

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp yeast
- 1/2 cup water, warmed
- 1/2 cup and 1 tsp sugar, divided
- 5 eggs, beaten
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 2 1/2 cups milk, warmed
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 4 cups raisins
- 7 cups flour
- 4 cups canola oil

### Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine yeast, water, and 1 tsp sugar. Wait 10 minutes.
2. Stir in remaining sugar, eggs, butter, milk, and salt.
3. Fold in the raisins and flour. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise for an hour.
4. In a high-sided pot or deep fryer, heat canola oil to 340 F. Line a plate with paper towels.
5. Drop a rounded tablespoon of dough into the oil. Fry until golden brown, then set aside on the plate. Poke the cookie with a toothpick. If the toothpick comes out clean, it’s cooked through!
6. Repeat until the batter is gone.

Everyone wants to stay engaged with the world around them, but you can’t do that without sleep. In fact, research published by the journal PLOS One discovered that getting six or fewer hours of sleep was associated with memory and executive function problems, i.e. problem-solving, planning, and execution. So, make sure you get enough sleep before tackling your day.

Exercise is crucial because, according to brain plasticity researchers at IOS Press, exercise “alters the synaptic structure and function in various brain regions,” promoting brain growth and even delaying the onset of Alzheimer’s disease. Promoting growth can also be as simple (or as difficult) as focusing our attention on thoughts that bring us joy. Gratitude promotes very different brain activity than negativity, anger, or bitterness, and studies on gratitude show that the positive effects can be lifelong.

Nutrition can’t be understated either, since it can assist your body in maintaining health and fighting inflammation. The brain uses about 20% of the body’s calories, and eating plenty of omega-3 fatty acids can strengthen brain cells, while antioxidants reduce cellular stress and inflammation, which are linked to brain aging and neurodegenerative disorders like Alzheimer’s disease.

With the right habits, you can keep your brain healthy for many decades to come. You might even grow in entirely new and unexpected ways.

