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## Your Guide to Spring-Greening

### 3 Eco-Friendly Home Swaps to Make When You Declutter

It takes a special kind of person to enjoy spring-cleaning. For most of us, the satisfaction of a clean house doesn't quite outweigh the hours of scrubbing, sorting, and slogging through heaps of unnecessary stuff. If you're struggling to find the motivation to start your spring-cleaning, try flipping the paradigm: Instead of spring-cleaning, think of what you're doing as *spring-greening*, and make some eco-friendly swaps along the way. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

#### 1. Swap your plastic spray bottles for bulk or DIY cleaning products.

According to a Statista report, in 2019, the household cleaners market was worth more than \$31 billion, and it's continuously growing. You can save money on cleaning supplies by taking the green route. When your current stock runs out, try buying bulk cleaners or making your own. Both options will save plastic because you can reuse your bottles, and they can help you avoid the harmful chemicals found in most cleaners. Visit UnderATinRoof.com and read the blog post "Zero Waste Cleaning Supplies + Recipes" to get started.

#### 2. Explore alternative laundry detergents.

If you're used to using a plastic jug of liquid laundry detergent, it's time to step out of your comfort zone. This spring, try exploring greener alternatives like plant-based bulk laundry powder (Molly's

Suds is an excellent source). Or, if you're feeling really adventurous, you can even try adding all-natural cleaners like soap nuts or English ivy to your laundry loads. For more on the former, search "soap nuts" on 1MillionWomen.com, and read up on ivy detergent at Permacrafters.com/English-Ivy-Laundry-Detergent.

#### 3. Say goodbye to paper towels.

Paper towels are a mainstay in American homes, but do we really need them when a good old-fashioned rag can do the job? According to the Ocean Conservancy, 13 billion pounds of paper towels are tossed in the U.S. each year! This spring, quit paper towels and keep a stash of dish rags under the sink to do your dirty work. When you're cleaning out your closet, you can even cut up old T-shirts and add them to your rag stash! If you're brave, try giving up tissues, too — an old-school hanky does the trick.

If you've made all three of these swaps, don't stop there! To continue your green journey, visit any of the blogs mentioned above and start browsing.



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## Listen Across America Day

The Power of the Written Word



March 2 is Read Across America Day, but if you're a fan of audiobooks like I am, you might be more inclined to celebrate *Listen Across America Day*. I have an Audible account, which I find lets me read — or more accurately, listen to — books more frequently. I don't have a lot of free time, but with audiobooks, I'm able to go through books easily while I'm in the car on my way to work or on plane trips.

At the moment, there are three books I'm working through: "The Miracle Morning: The Not-so-Obvious Secret Guaranteed to Transform Your Life Before 8AM" by Hal Elrod, "Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended on It" by Christopher Voss and Tahl Raz, and "The Three Laws of Performance: Rewriting the Future of Your Organization and Your Life" by Dave Logan and Steve Zaffron. I'm currently in the middle of all of these books because I have a habit of listening to a little of one book, then skipping over to another one and listening to a little of that. This must sound horrifying to completionists, but I swear it works for me.

While I do read a lot of audiobooks, I do have a bookshelf of "real" books in my office. It's full of books I've read as well as a number of books I want to read. One of these books is Don Miguel Ruiz's "The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom." I've never read this book, but a couple people in my office have and swear by it, so I'm looking forward to reading it eventually.

I think it's important for everyone to read or listen to books regularly, especially if you want to better yourself.



*"They say the most successful people read more books than other people."*

They say the most successful people read more books than other people. My Audible library is full of business and self-help books, most of which have a focus on mindset. As a business owner, I need to develop a sharp mindset. When you open your own law firm, it's not enough to be a good attorney.



I've seen many talented attorneys struggle because they didn't know how to also be good business owners. They made decisions because they were worried about being able to pay the next month's rent, and their clients' cases suffered for it. There's a reason our motto is "Big enough to handle serious cases, small enough to care." We want our clients to experience the care and personal relationship that come with a small firm while also getting the financial security that comes with a bigger law firm. Because bigger firms aren't worried about keeping the lights on, they can afford to hire the best experts for cases. However, these large firms often lose sight of the personal touch.

Our clients deserve the best of both worlds, and I've worked hard to make sure I'm running my business properly so we can be a financially sound firm. Today, we can still give our clients that personal care and attention while also being able to invest in the resources we need to win their cases. I've been able to achieve this by attending seminars, working with business coaches, and, of course, reading good books on business strategy. One of the most helpful books I've ever read is the classic "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill.

It's important to remember that reading is only half the battle. Once you learn new ideas, it's up to you to put them into action.

*-Marc L. Shapiro*





# Whose Picks Will Go All the Way?

March Madness Fun for the Whole Family

One of the greatest things about March Madness is that you don't have to be a huge college basketball fan to get in on the fun. Kids of all ages can fill out brackets — or have a parent fill one out for them — and watch their picks duke it out on the court. While healthy competition among family members can be fun all on its own, check out the following tips if you're looking to go the extra mile and reap as much fun from March Madness as you can.



**Turn each game into an event.**  
Not every kid may like watching basketball, but if they fill out a bracket, then they might gain at least a passing interest in who will win each game. To elevate their interest, turn each March Madness matchup into a little party. It doesn't have to be fancy; make fun snacks to eat while you watch or bet pieces of candy on who will have the most points to create great family bonding opportunities.

**Reward the winners with prizes.**  
Offer prizes to each round winner as well as the overall bracket winner to get the whole family involved. Small prize ideas for each round can include a homemade dinner of the winner's choice, a week's supply of their favorite snack, or a coupon for getting out of a chore. Whoever wins the whole tournament (or makes it the furthest with their bracket) deserves a bigger reward. Offer them the chance to see a movie of their choice in theaters or to eat a meal at their favorite restaurant.

**Create a learning opportunity.**  
Learning math or geography might not sound like your child's idea of fun, but it can be when they learn it through the lens of March Madness. See if your kids would be interested in understanding the inner workings of the ranking system or studying where some of the qualifying colleges are located on a map of the United States. They may find it so interesting that they don't even realize they're learning valuable skills.

# Digging for the Truth



## FOIA Lawsuits That Changed How Americans Participate in Democracy

The Freedom of Information Act, commonly referred to as FOIA, has been a crucial part of the democratic system for decades. It was designed to improve public access to governmental records, but unfortunately, it doesn't always work as intended. In most cases, requests are only answered if a lawsuit is filed. Nevertheless, FOIA has had a crucial role in many high-profile legal cases. Here are a couple of the most significant ones in American history.

**A Journalist's 16 Years in Court**  
California-based journalist Seth Rosenfeld has had some serious contention with the FBI. In 1985, he filed his first lawsuit against the FBI for ignoring his

requests for information about the Berkeley protests of the 1960s. The case was eventually settled in 1996, and Rosenfeld was awarded \$560,000 in fees. In their settlement agreement, the FBI agreed to be more thorough with FOIA requests.

Rosenfeld filed a second lawsuit in 2007 accusing the FBI of withholding information during former President Ronald Reagan's presidency. Five years later, he was awarded \$479,459 in attorney fees. Rosenfeld is known for having some of the longest-pending FOIA requests and has received over 300,000 pages of FBI documents since the 1980s.

**The SCOMM Scandal**  
In a landmark FOIA settlement concluded in 2013, the federal government paid \$1.2 million to settle a suit brought by several civil rights groups over the Secure Communities (SCOMM) Immigration and Customs Enforcement program. The litigation exposed a plan to create a multi-agency database focused on collecting DNA, a person's gait, and iris scans. When evidence was uncovered during the litigation, governors of New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts tried to opt their states out of the program, but the Department of Homeland Security determined SCOMM mandatory, according to the Center for Constitutional Rights. The case also changed how the government is required to identify, collect, and produce data for all FOIA requests.

Thanks to FOIA and these important cases, the people's right to government information (and honesty) will continue to progress in America's democracy.

# Menu Ratatouille

Rich with fresh, colorful ingredients, ratatouille is a French dish that has experienced a revolution of its own in recent years. Enjoy this vegan-friendly spin on an old-world classic.



- Ingredients**
- 1 eggplant, peeled and chopped
  - 1 large zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch-thick rounds
  - 2 tsp salt
  - 3/4 cup olive oil, divided
  - 5 sprigs thyme
  - 1 large onion, halved and sliced 1/2-inch thick
  - 1 red bell pepper, chopped
  - 2 garlic cloves, sliced
  - 2 pints cherry tomatoes
- Directions**
1. Heat oven to 400 F.
  2. In a colander, toss eggplant, zucchini, and salt. Let sit for 30 minutes and pat dry.
  3. In an ovenproof pot, heat 1/2 cup olive oil. Add half of eggplant mixture, stirring constantly for 5 minutes. Remove vegetables from pot.
  4. Tie thyme sprigs together with kitchen twine.
  5. In the same pot, heat remaining 1/4 cup olive oil, and cook onion, pepper, garlic, and thyme for 8–10 minutes.
  6. Add half the tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes.
  7. Stir in original eggplant and zucchini mixture and top with remaining tomatoes. Do not stir.
  8. Transfer pot to oven and bake mixture for 15–20 minutes.
  9. Remove pot from oven and remove thyme bundle before serving.

# 'Professional, Courteous, Polite'

What Are Our Clients Saying?

"Total professionalism! The quick follow-up and fast action that I received was amazing! Gerta, the paralegal, kept in touch with me all along for my mom's case, and she was always very professional, courteous, polite, and EXTREMELY helpful! I cannot say enough good about the service I received in my case. She made me feel like I was her ONLY client by giving me personalized attention in every detail. She always gave me constant updates, whether or not I understood the procedure. The whole experience was satisfying, but the outcome even more so. If you really need someone to be on your side and fight for your rights, the Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro is the one to call. You won't be disappointed. VERY HIGHLY recommended."

-Silvana Selfollari

## How Are We Doing?

Feedback from our clients lets us know how we're doing. Please tell us about your experiences by leaving a review on Google or on our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/AttorneyShapiroLaw](https://www.facebook.com/AttorneyShapiroLaw). Your support empowers us in our mission to help as many people as possible.



# Word Search



- ARIES
- BLOOM
- BUD
- FLOWERS
- GROWTH
- LUCKY
- MELT
- PUDDLE
- RAIN
- REBIRTH
- SPRING
- SPROUT