

POSSIBILITIES

unleash your imagination

FALL 2025

HOBBIES

I have always had some difficulties with the word hobby. By common definition, a hobby is "something one does during free time for pleasure." Sleeping, eating, scrolling social media, watching reruns of old sitcoms, gazing at the sky, daydreaming, flipping mindlessly through magazines, and an endless list of other things easily fall into this and most other more expansive definitions of hobby. I find that troubling.

Winston Churchill said, "To be really happy and really safe one ought to have at least two or three hobbies, and they must all be real." Oh boy. Just like the word hobby itself, Churchill's comments raise some questions. Like, what would be a fake hobby? And, how does a hobby make you safe? Perhaps if the hobby was karate. Interestingly, Churchill's use of the word safe is reinforced by Sir William Osler who said, "No man is completely safe without a hobby." Clearly, one ignores hobbies at one's peril.

On reflection, I do see the point. We need to partake in activities that help us to restore the parts of us that get worn out when we endlessly pursue work and the many tasks that can easily consume us. To find balance, we need diversions. But, are those diversions necessarily hobbies?

Aldo Leopold, an early 20th century philosopher and writer also wrestled with the notion of hobby. He wrote, "At first blush I am tempted to conclude that a satisfactory hobby must be in large degree useless, inefficient, laborious, or irrelevant." Hmm. This would make most of the items on my aforementioned list of non-hobbies very good hobbies indeed. He goes on, "Becoming serious is a grievous fault in hobbyists. It is an axiom that no hobby should either seek or need rational justification. To wish to do it is reason enough." So, my obsession with

Wordle, arguably a hobby, fails Leopold's definition by virtue of the fact that I justify it on the basis of increasing my mental acumen – my way of fighting the effects of aging if you will. And I'm quite serious about Wordle.

Do I have hobbies then? When people see me with a camera they will often ask if I'm a professional photographer (this isn't really flattering since it is only a comment on the camera gear that I own) or if it is a hobby. My immediate thought is "This is not a hobby." But, my response is always along the lines of "It's a

on my list in the first paragraph.

It must be noted that I am heading (albeit gradually) into retirement. My retirement coach, while rarely using the word hobby, is clearly making me face the idea that I am going to have a surge in free time. I am skeptical about that assumption. I am perhaps rebelling internally to the notion of free time, and discounting the need for any such thing as a mindless or laborious diversion.

In my search for support on that stance I found these words from Fran Lebowitz. "A

hobby is, of course, an abomination, as are all consuming interests and passions that do not lead directly to large, personal gain." And then there's J.D. Salinger who said, "Nobody who's really using his ego, his real ego, has any time for any goddam hobbies." There you go, although, far too extreme for me.

I realize that this is semantics. I don't like prevailing definitions of the word hobby. Fine. But I do partake in a wide variety of activities that I love doing and aren't work. Is that

enough? Perhaps Stephen King's words can put me at ease: "In a polite society, we call our obsessions hobbies."

As my time working decreases I have plenty of obsessions already clamoring for more time on my schedule. My goal, as always, will be to use my time in ways that maximize my joy, and the joy of others. I will keep taking photographs, play some golf, perhaps write for no reason other than the happiness it brings me, and I will spend as much time as possible with my wife and my family. And when I need a diversion, I will play some Wordle. Just don't call it my hobby.

Bill

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passion," passion being a word that no doubt is interchangeable with hobby for some. But, it's not something I do in my free time. I make time for photography when it comes to editing, sorting, and publishing. And when it comes to the taking of photographs, I feel it's more of a responsibility that comes along with traveling or attending family gatherings and other events.

Ok, how about golf, writing, travel? I suspect if I surveyed readers, there would be unanimous agreement that these qualify as hobbies. But all fail completely if measured against Leopold's criteria. None are useless. And none of these are things I work on during the evening hours when I contemplate the need for a diversion. That's much more likely to be something



HOT MEXICAN STREET CORN DIP

WHAT YOU NEED

- 16 oz. cream cheese room temp
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 tbsp hot sauce
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 cups freshly shredded cheese
- 30 oz. drained canned corn
- 4 oz. low-fat feta or Cotija cheese
- 1 jalapeno chopped
- 2 tbsp chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

DIRECTIONS

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Prepare a 9×13-inch baking dish by spraying with nonstick spray.

Combine the cream cheese, sour cream, garlic, hot sauce, lime juice, and 1 cup of the shredded cheese in a high-powered blender. Blend until fully combined.

Scoop the mixture into a large bowl and add the remaining one cup of cheese, the corn, feta, pepper, onion, and cilantro. Stir it all up until combined.

Pour the mixture into your prepared baking dish and sprinkle with more cheese if desired.

Bake for 15-20 minutes or until cheese is hot and bubbly. Serve and enjoy! It will blow people's minds!

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SONIA

It's time for another Bell Financial staff interview. We know our staff are our most valued asset and are also great people to get to know. Our second interview will not disappoint. Read on to get to know Sonia Colhoun.

Interviewer: Hey Sonia. Can you introduce yourself?

Sonia: I'm Sonia, I started at Bell Financial in 1997. I was really inexperienced, and it was my first 'real' job.

I: So how long have you worked here?

SC: 1997, so 28 years!

I: And how many times have you looked for another job?

SC: Laughing. Zero! I have never looked for another job. But I have often thought that I'd love to work at a flower shop.

I: Describe your role here at Bell Financial.

SC: Well, that's difficult. This is sort of a boring question, isn't it? I'm an office manager. I'm an administrator. I do a little bit of liaising with the advisors, the staff, and all the clients. It usually involves behind the scenes work with client inquiries. I find that my experience allows me to help the staff.

I: How long did it take you to feel experienced?

SC: Oh gosh. Although I have a lot of experience, everyday there is something new, something I have never run into. So, I'm still learning for sure.

I: Do you have any unofficial roles at Bell Financial?

SC: I make sure everybody's got their cream and coffee and all the things that they need to make their day great. Coffee is very important.

I: Your coffee is kind of famous.

SC: Yes, strong coffee. Why have coffee that's not strong?

I: What do you like about working here?

SC: I love all the people. And I love how everyone is willing to assist, and it is more like a family. Everyone is interested in you at work but

also what's going on in your life as well. And another thing that I love is that I live really close to the office. A 10 min drive is easy.

I: Have you ever been part of any theft here?

I: Do you have a pet?

SC: I have a dog named Roxy.

I: If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

SC: Japan because my son just came back and he said that he loved it. It sounds like an awesome place to go.

I: What's your all-time favourite record?

SC: Coldplay, A Head Full of Dreams. But I also like Ghost Stories too. It's a somber

one. I feel like it was right when he broke up with Gwen.

I: Have you ever read a book that changed your life?

SC: No. I have never read a book that changed my life. But my favourite author would be Harlan Coben and the Myron Bolitar series. Check it out!

I: What kind of books?

SC: Mystery but also very comedic.

I: What food could you not live without?

SC: Chocolate. I just love chocolate. Milk chocolate, plain, but good quality.

I: Do you have anything else you would like to share?

SC: I think everyone should follow the Merriam Webster dictionary on Instagram. It is informative and really funny. I think everybody will get a kick out of it.

To learn about our sticky handed coffee queen you can check out

<https://bellfinancial.ca/about/our-team>

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LOVE, TRIUMPHANT

On September 4th, 2025, beside a beautiful lake in British Columbia, my younger son Noah was married to Jade Forsyth. An intimate wedding of about fifty guests was made even more cozy by the large, green mountains that surrounded us and the birds that settled in for the festivities. It was as if we were at the epicentre of heaven on earth for the ceremony and the reception that followed. All eyes, those in their seats on the emerald lawn overlooking the lake and others from the trees beyond, were focused on the bride and groom during their vows.

Two years earlier, my older son Ethan married his high school sweetheart Nicole. Their ceremony was even more intimate, having chosen to marry on a wild, wind-swept hilltop in the Scottish Highlands with only officiants and the odd sheep present, which bleated their congratulations at the appropriate moment (upon the newlyweds' return from Scotland family and friends celebrated with them at a local coffee shop/restaurant in Toronto).

At the reception following the ceremony (during which I quietly wept, which would have gone unnoticed if I hadn't blown my nose loudly), Noah spoke first, thanking the people who came from near and far for sharing in his and Jade's happiness. He thanked his in-laws and his parents (more tears), and then he specifically singled out his big brother, whom he called a "huge inspiration" and promised he would try to follow in his footsteps. Through my watery eyes I saw that Ethan was beaming.

My boys have been through a lot over the past 15-20 years. The large majority of children whose parents split up suffer to some extent. No one comes out of a divorce unscathed, but children are impacted most profoundly. During the tumultuous years before and after the failure of my marriage, Ethan and Noah, teenagers through most of this time, had lost their parental anchors and were left clinging to the wreckage, despite our best efforts to stay afloat as a family unit. This is when they turned to each other, Ethan in particular providing support to Noah, who was nearly five years younger. The boys were always close to that point, but they now shared feelings of confusion, grief, anger and sadness over being shuttled weekly from one parent's home to the other. Being a teenager was anxiety-inducing enough, but having to also deal with the destruction of their family pushed them to the brink at times. Although much of what triggered the dissolution was beyond my control, I still feel immense shame for what we had done to the people we loved most, who did not deserve to be treated as collateral damage.

But on Noah's wedding day, I witnessed tangible proof that both of my sons had not only survived the trauma of divorce, but that most of the wounds had healed over.



Here were two young men who were in long-term, committed loving relationships. And now both were married to their best friends. Ethan and Noah could easily have soured on the entire idea of life partners and, in particular, on the institution of marriage; who could have blamed them if they did. Instead, however, they doubled down on their belief in love and mutual respect as the cornerstone of a solid relationship and, with Nicole and Jade respectively, they have forged bonds that seem unbreakable.

When we reach the fork in the road, we have to choose where we are headed next. After my own trauma had begun to dissipate, I faced this choice and I elected to love again. I'm so thankful that my sons have chosen the same road. I think a big reason for the decisions they made is that, through all of the crap they endured, they never stopped loving each other.

I now have two daughters-in-law. I am confident that, with Nicole and Ethan setting the example, Jade and Noah will be a formidable team. There is nothing that these two power couples cannot achieve. This power is not founded on money or influence, but on genuine affection and belief in each other. As I said in my speech to the newlyweds on that wonderful day beside the lake in British Columbia, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Great teams that stick together go on to form dynasties.

Oh, the places you will go.

With love, Dad.

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GREAT MINDS, GREAT Thoughts

“My personal hobbies are reading, listening to music, and silence.”

Edith Sitwell

“I don't have time for hobbies. At the end of the day, I treat my job as a hobby. It's something I love doing.”

David Beckham

“A hobby is a regular activity that is done for enjoyment, typically during one's leisure time.”

Wikipedia

“Recently I began to feel this void in my life, even after meals, and I said to myself, “Dave, all you do with your spare time is sit around and drink beer. You need a hobby.” So I got a hobby. I make beer.”

Dave Barry

“A hobby a day keeps the doldrums away.”

Phyllis McGinley



SAVE PAPER

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