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Check Us Out!

## 'Oh, the Places You'll Go!'

March has always felt like a turning point. After months of snow, short days, and scraping ice off windshields, we finally start to see signs of life again. The sun lingers a little longer. The air softens. The world begins to wake up.

March 2 is Dr. Seuss's birthday, as well as my oldest son, Owen, who turns 16 this year.

Sixteen!

I can still picture sitting on the edge of his bed reading "Green Eggs and Ham" for the fifth time in a row, or closing "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" and wondering how quickly that future would arrive. Back then, 16 felt like a lifetime away. Now, we are talking about driver's licenses, responsibility, and the independence that comes with growing up.

If you have ever read "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" you probably remember the line about "Bang-ups and Hang-ups." It is a playful way of saying something we all eventually learn. Life will not always go smoothly. There will be setbacks. There will be long winters.

But spring always comes.

There is something fitting about celebrating both a birthday and Dr. Seuss in March. His stories are whimsical and light, but they carry surprisingly deep lessons. In "Green Eggs and Ham," the main character resists something new over and over again. "I do not like them!" he insists, until he finally tries it. Only then does he discover he actually enjoys it.

How often do we do the same?

We resist change. We resist discomfort. We resist new challenges, whether it is a career shift, a health goal, or just stepping outside our routine after a long, cold winter. But growth rarely happens inside our comfort zones.

Watching my son approach 16 has reminded me that independence does not happen overnight. It is built slowly through small responsibilities, tough conversations, and yes, even mistakes. As parents, we walk a delicate line. We want to protect our children



The pages turned faster than I imagined.

from every "bang-up," but we also know that resilience is formed through experience.

There is also something symbolic about turning 16 right as winter ends. For months, nature appears dormant. Trees are bare. Lawns are frozen. But beneath the surface, growth is happening. Roots are strengthening. Preparation is underway.

Sometimes, our lives can feel like winter. Progress seems stalled. Challenges linger. But unseen growth is often taking place. Patience, character, and wisdom develop quietly beneath the surface.

Dr. Seuss wrote, "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." That message is not just for children. It is for all of us.

As we step into spring, perhaps this is the perfect time to pause and ask ourselves:

What "new road" have I been hesitant to take?

Where in my life is growth happening beneath the surface, even if I cannot see it yet?

How can I show up with a little more courage and optimism in this next season?

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# DIGITAL DANGERS

## AI'S HIDDEN RISKS TO CONSUMERS

If you've been to an airport lately, you likely have posed for a facial recognition camera before entering your security checkpoint. This technology is just one example of how artificial intelligence (AI) is being used to not only identify who we are, but also learn more about us than we might realize.

In some cases, this reality is not a great thing.

Sure, being tracked online by AI may be considered beneficial by consumers who don't mind receiving alerts on new purchasing opportunities based on their past shopping habits. However, society's growing dependency on this level of technology is problematic when it leads to innocent people being incarcerated on false charges. Here's a look at some of the growing risks surrounding the use of AI ... and what you can do to better protect your privacy and rights from the prying eyes of emerging technology.

### Amazon's Data Defect Debacle

Although AI is seemingly everywhere these days, its use in the corporate world has existed for some time ... and has created considerable gaffes along the way.

Amazon learned about machine learning's potential missteps the hard way. As far back as 2015, the company discovered that its AI-generated tools for screening resumes were biased against female job candidates. The system, designed to assign a rating from one to five stars to each applicant, gave lower scores to women who had applied for technical positions. The reason? The system had been trained to review and recommend candidates based on trends identified in resumes submitted to the company over the past 10 years, a period when men dominated the majority of positions.

Instead of advancing future AI technology, Amazon stumbled back into America's cultural past, creating a PR nightmare and

***"When faulty tech threatens a person's liberty, it's clear that AI's road to perfection still has plenty of potholes."***

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raising serious questions about the potential long-term harm AI could cause in efforts to promote gender equality.

### AI's Misadventures in Faulty Arrests

Facial recognition technology may be all the rage at airports, but the same can't be said for its use at police stations. According to research conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Asian and African Americans are up to twice as likely to be misidentified by facial recognition as Caucasians. This discrepancy has real-world consequences, including the 2023 arrest of a pregnant woman in Detroit who was charged with carjacking after AI technology mistook her for someone else. When faulty tech threatens a person's liberty, it's clear that AI's road to perfection still has plenty of potholes.

### Consumers' Best Practices for Data Privacy

Naturally, everyday consumers may also find themselves in sticky situations as a result of AI's still-imperfect processes. Banking giant JPMorgan Chase offers the following suggestions to help better protect your personal information from AI-driven data tracking:

- Utilize a separate, dedicated email address when engaging with AI chatbots, and avoid using the same email associated with your banking or social media.
- Log off after every AI chat session to help ensure the system is not tracking your subsequent online usage.
- Use only generative AI platforms available through the Google and Apple App stores and other reputable sources.

AI may be a fascinating new chapter in our technical evolution, but it's not without causes for concern. Whether you're ordering shoes online or checking your savings account, forewarned is forearmed when it comes to guarding your identity ... and even your freedom.

## ... CONTINUED FROM COVER

Sixteen years ago, I was reading bedtime stories and tying little sneakers. Now, I am reviewing parallel parking and talking about responsibility. Time moves quickly. Seasons change. Children grow. And so do we.

Dr. Seuss reminded us that we can steer ourselves in the direction we choose. That is not just a message for children heading into adulthood. It is a message for all of us, at every stage of life.

So, as the days grow longer and the snow finally melts, I hope you step forward with confidence. I hope you try the thing you have been avoiding. I hope you encourage the young people in your life as they take their first steps toward independence. And most of all, I hope you remember that growth is not loud or dramatic. Sometimes it's quiet. Sometimes it's slow. But it's always happening.

Spring is coming.

The road ahead is open.

And the places you will go are still waiting.

*-Brian O'Connor*



### ST. PATRICK'S DAY SHAMROCK SWIRL PIE

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup mint chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup green food coloring, for vibrant color
- 1 premade chocolate pie crust
- 1/2 cup chocolate syrup, for drizzling

#### DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form.
2. In a separate bowl, beat softened cream cheese until smooth.
3. Add powdered sugar and vanilla to cream cheese, mixing until well combined. Then, gently fold whipped heavy cream into the mixture.
4. Divide mixture into two bowls. In one bowl, add mint chocolate chips and green food coloring.
5. Layer mixtures into chocolate pie crust, alternating between mint mixture and the plain mixture.
6. Drizzle chocolate syrup over top.
7. Cover with cling wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours to set. Slice and serve chilled.

Inspired by [MixUpRecipes.com](http://MixUpRecipes.com)

# FROM COOKIE JARS TO CAR KEYS

## Building Responsibility in Kids and Teens

If you've ever walked into your kitchen to discover your child's mouth covered in chocolate while they insist they *didn't* dip into the cookie jar before dinner, you know the importance of teaching little ones about being honest and taking responsibility for their actions. Here are a few tips for incorporating age-appropriate lessons on accountability into a child's daily routine.

#### Pathways to Responsible Preschoolers

When teaching children the value of personal accountability, selecting tasks that match their abilities and level of understanding is essential. For children ages 3–6, this could mean having them take responsibility for setting the table (with supervision as needed to ensure safety with utensils and glassware), feeding their pets, or putting away their toys neatly after they finish playing with them.

If they struggle or fail to fulfill a particular responsibility, use it as an opportunity for growth, rather than a reason to ground them. For example, if they forget to feed their dog or cat, show them their pet's signs of hunger ... and remind your child of how sad, tired, and cranky they would feel if *they* were hungry and had to wait a long time to eat. If they forget to pick up their LEGOs, remind them of how much it hurt the last time they stepped on a piece when they weren't wearing shoes. Above all, be sure to maintain a positive atmosphere and praise them whenever they complete a task (especially when they do it without being asked!) or put in their best effort to do so.



#### Guidance for Goal-Driven Teens

If your child has passed the age of picking up building blocks, you can help them manage and fulfill their pre-adult responsibilities. Encourage them to budget their spending money (especially once they start working for the first time), take an active role in maintaining their vehicle, and coordinate their own schedules for after-school or social activities.

While it's always wise to be available to help if or when they run out of gas or sleep through their alarm, giving them space to be more independent (and occasionally make mistakes) will go a long way in teaching them the real-world rewards and consequences of how they handle their responsibilities.

By giving children room to learn, try, and even stumble, we help them build the confidence and character they'll carry into adulthood. With steady guidance and age-appropriate responsibilities, accountability becomes a lifelong habit.



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## BUMPER BETRAYAL INSIDE UBER'S RACKETEERING RESPONSE

It's a devious enough scam to make Tony Soprano blush.

Imagine orchestrating a series of intentional automobile collisions with the sole purpose of suing Uber for the recovery of car repair costs and medical expenses. This outrageous scenario is at the heart of the ride-share company's 97-page lawsuit against a Florida attorney who it claims paid people to crash into each other to instigate fraudulent suits and attempt to rake in millions.

Filed in Miami last June, Uber's suit alleges that personal injury attorney Andy Loynaz, co-founder of the firm Law Group of South Florida, compensated drivers to stage accidents and later claim they were using the Uber app at the time. According to the complaint, these bogus bang-ups occurred near Hialeah, Florida, in 2023 and 2024, with Loynaz submitting \$1 million insurance claims for each one and later suing Uber and its insurance carrier in four separate cases. Additionally, he allegedly coaxed representatives from Miami's River Medical Center, area auto body shops, and other medical clinics to falsely claim the accident had caused injuries and property damage requiring care and repairs.

Uber, which claims to have already spent millions defending itself against Loynaz's suits, is suing the attorney under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. If he loses the suit, Loynaz may be subject to treble damages and attorneys' fees.

Interestingly, the case of the potentially crooked lawyer and his band of allegedly corrupt cronies is far from the only litigation of its kind. Earlier in 2025, Uber filed a suit in New York, alleging that another group of lawyers, medical providers, and clinics was carrying out a similar scheme in the Empire State.

No matter how successful Uber's battle against this level of fraud may be, the amount of allegedly criminal conniving taking place in Florida and New York is enough to make the most hardened mobster raise an eyebrow ... and perhaps demand a cut.

