



THE BALAMS FIRM

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# AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

*This Thanksgiving, I'm Grateful for YOU!*

As the leaves take on their beautiful fall hues and the air grows chillier, my heart fills with excitement — Thanksgiving is near. Each year, I look forward to the simple pleasures of this holiday: the cozy conversations with family and friends, the tradition of gathering and sharing what we are thankful for, and the joy of some delicious food.

Thanksgiving provides a moment to pause and express gratitude for the blessings that enrich our lives. As I gather with loved ones around the table, I feel immense gratitude for the remarkable individuals in my life. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation for each of these invaluable relationships in my life!

## **My Team: The Heartbeat of the Firm**

Behind every successful law firm is a team of exceptional people, and I'm fortunate to have staff who are kind and genuine. To say they put the interests of our clients first is an understatement — each day, they go above and beyond! At The Balams Firm, we are a "girl gang." We are a team of four women with unwavering dedication, incredible expertise, and professionalism. The women I have the pleasure of working alongside are the backbone of the firm; without them, we would not be where we are today!

## **You: Our Cherished Clients**

To our valued clients, I want to express my deepest gratitude. You are partners on a legal journey, and I am thankful for the value you place in our firm and for entrusting us with your loved ones. Your referrals mean the world. If it were not for you, I would not be able to pursue a career I love and achieve successful outcomes on your behalf. Many of you face challenging situations, and your resilience and determination in seeking justice and resolution inspire me.

## **My Beloved Family: The Foundation of My Life**

This time of year, I love celebrating my family. My girls mean the world to me, and my mom is an incredibly instrumental figure in my life. I love gathering with my loved ones and slowing down and appreciating the little things. Laughing, reminiscing, and



creating new memories together are always fun. If you know me, then you know I'm one proud mama — I love motherhood, raising strong kids, and experiencing everything that comes with it. Family is everything.

As we gather to celebrate this Thanksgiving, may we remember the wealth of blessings we have in our lives and pause to celebrate the little things: a roof over our heads, food on our tables, loving families, and valued friendships. Each of you plays a unique and invaluable role in my journey, and in this season of gratitude (and every day), I am thankful for your presence, trust, and support.



From my family to you and yours, happy Thanksgiving! May you have a great holiday season filled with love, joy, and laughter!

*Reatha G. Balams*

# Transform Power Struggles Into Learning Moments With These Techniques

One of the common challenges parents face with their young children is power struggles. When you ask your child to do something, and they refuse, you could spend countless hours and endless energy trying to get them to comply.

Sometimes, the more persistent you are, the more resistant they can become. However, several strategies exist to avoid these arguments with your strong-willed kids. Here are two methods you can adapt to fit some common parenting scenarios.

## Ask critical-thinking questions.

Sometimes, kids don't understand the consequences of their actions — they lack the appropriate problem-solving skills to help them understand why you're making certain requests. Instead of telling them to do something, ask questions that make them think critically about the situation. If they leave their toys outside before a storm,

ask what could happen to them and how they could prevent that. When your child understands that leaving toys out during a storm could damage them, they will realize that putting them away is a good idea.

Remember, when children are forced to do something they don't want to do, they will focus more on being angry at you rather than learning a lesson or new habit. Encouraging them to develop their own conclusions will help them better understand the impact of their decisions.

## Offer choices and the opportunity to choose.

Giving your children choices helps them feel like they have some freedom over what they get to do. Sometimes children refuse to comply with requests because you've offered them no other option. If you want your child to clean their room, don't demand that they do it. Ask what they want



to start on first — make the bed, put away their toys, or hang up clothes. Providing alternatives and allowing them to make a choice will not only get the job done faster but will also increase their confidence in knowing you value their opinion.

Navigating power struggles with children can be a challenging aspect of parenting. But implementing effective strategies can make a significant difference in maintaining harmony at home. So give these methods a try and watch as your relationship with your child grows.

# YOU COULD GET ARRESTED FOR WHAT?!

## 3 Bizarre Laws That Still Exist

Since the beginning of time, cities, states, countries, and other groups have developed laws to provide structure for their citizens. Many laws of the past are now completely outdated, but they're still technically legitimate laws! Here are three of the oddest laws still on the books today.

### Forks and knives are prohibited!

In 1961, Gainesville, Georgia, passed a law that made eating fried chicken with anything other than your hands illegal. The ordinance was a publicity stunt to advertise Gainesville as the poultry capital of the world. Although the rule isn't taken literally and is hardly enforced, 91-year-old Ginny Dietrick received a citation for eating fried chicken with a fork and knife in 2009. The practical joke made everyone in the restaurant, including Ginny, laugh and play along. Ginny's punishment for breaking the law was that she could not leave her table until she mastered the proper way of eating Southern fried chicken.



### You must have a permit to set up a lemonade stand.

At least once in your life, you've either seen or operated a lemonade stand. This longstanding rite of passage teaches kids the value of working hard to earn their own money, so how could this simple tradition be considered illegal?

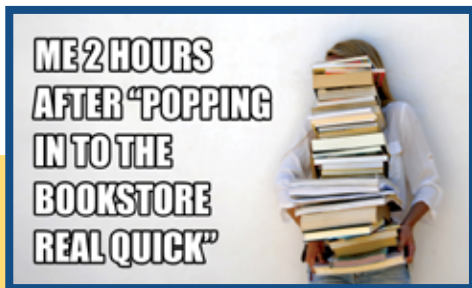
In many cities nationwide, lemonade stands are treated like any other small business — if your child is making money by selling food or beverages, they must abide by food safety regulations and have a business permit or license. Only 14 states don't require permits for kids to set up lemonade stands!

### Fortunetelling is only allowed in health care and religious facilities.

Many cities worldwide have small businesses that provide services in fortunetelling, astrology, palm readings, tarot cards, evil spirit removal, and other New Age practices. In New Orleans, however, it's illegal for a business to provide these kinds of services unless you're in a health care profession or a place of religious worship.

Remember, laws are still laws, no matter how silly they are, so do some research online to see if your city has any bizarre mandates you could be breaking right now!

# TAKE A **BREAK**



## BUTTERNUT SQUASH RISOTTO

Inspired by FeastingAtHome.com



### Ingredients

- 2 cups butternut squash, cubed
- 4 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 2 cups sliced leeks
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 8 sage leaves
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 5 cups veggie or chicken stock
- 2 to 3 handfuls spinach
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. On a parchment-lined sheet pan, toss squash with 2 tbsp olive oil. Roast until tender (30 minutes) and set aside
2. In a Dutch oven, heat 2 tbsp olive oil over medium heat and add leeks. Sauté until tender, then add garlic and sage. Sauté for 2 more minutes.
3. Add rice and sauté for 1 minute, stirring. Add salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Add 1–2 cups of stock to cover the rice and bring to a simmer. Cook until the liquid is absorbed. Continue to add broth 1 cup at a time, stirring occasionally until rice is plump (20 minutes). Stir in spinach, roasted squash, and Parmesan cheese.

## 3 Crazy History Facts Your Textbooks Failed to Mention

Did your high school history class bore you to death? If so, don't blame the past — blame your textbooks. Here are three crazy historical moments we wish made it into their pages!

### USPS once mailed babies!

During the early years of the U.S. Postal Service, the rules and regulations of what you could and couldn't mail were vague. People started testing its limits by sending eggs, bricks, snakes, and babies. In 1913, an Ohio couple took advantage of USPS's new parcel services to mail a special package — their infant son. The family paid 15 cents for the stamps plus an unknown amount to insure the baby for \$50 and shipped him to his grandmother's house (about a mile away). And this isn't the only instance of someone mailing their child. From 1913–1915, seven families used the USPS to ship their infants to a relative.



### People rented pineapples to appear wealthy.

In the Georgian era, pineapples were rare in Europe — you could only acquire this fruit by importing them from the Caribbean. Due to their exotic appearance and rarity in Europe, pineapples quickly became a luxury and high-class symbol. Many would carry a pineapple with them to give off the impression of holding wealth. However, lots of people couldn't afford pineapples, so they began renting them! If you wanted to rent this luxurious fruit, it would cost you \$8,000 in today's money.

### Austrian vs. Austrian?

Seven months into the Austro-Turkish War, the infamous Battle of Karánsebes caused hundreds of injuries and casualties to the Austrian army. Because their military force consisted of people from several cultures and ethnicities, confusion ensued on the battlefield. One Austrian group accidentally fired at another Austrian group, and because both groups spoke different languages and wore different uniforms, they didn't realize they were fighting a full-out battle with their own army!

Who knew history had so many strange twists?



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## SHEERAN VS. TOWNSEND: THE VERDICT IS IN Ed Sheeran Faces Accusations of Copying 'Let's Get It On'

Sometimes, a song can feel similar to another, but when is it so similar that a songwriter needs to be sued? Well, Ed Sheeran faced the legal heat from the family of Ed Townsend after they claimed Sheeran's hit song "Thinking Out Loud" was far too similar to Marvin Gaye's classic song "Let's Get It On," which was written and composed by Townsend.



Photo: Harald Krichel

The lawsuit was filed in July 2017 and was only resolved in 2023. Sheeran wasn't being sued for outright copying the R&B classic but for replicating the "heart" of the song and the "harmonic progressions" and "melodic and rhythmic elements."

Of course, Sheeran denied these allegations and insisted that the song is based on common building blocks for all pop music, which are in no way legally protected. While Sheeran asserted this was merely a similarity many pop songs share, Townsend's attorney and civil rights figure Ben Crump declared, "For far too long, Black artists have created, inspired, and spread music all around the world, and Ed Townsend's family believes Mr. Sheeran's infringement of a Black artist is merely another example of [white] artists exploiting the genius and the work of Black singers and songwriters."

During the court hearings, Sheeran attended in person and even performed live mashups of countless hit songs bearing similar chord progressions and rhythms. The musician's testimony stated, "If I had done what you're accusing me of doing, I'd be quite an idiot to stand on a stage in front of 20,000 people and do that."

On May 4, 2023, a jury found Sheeran not guilty of copying "Let's Get It On," and the songwriter was at last free from the lawsuit. Despite the longstanding legal dispute, Sheeran and the Townsend heirs resolved the issue amicably, as the trial had proved to the family that Sheeran did not intend to copy the hit classic.

Ed Townsend's daughter, Kathryn Townsend Griffin, later said, "I'm just glad it's over," and that the lawsuit was never personal but, instead, a result of her efforts to protect her father's legacy.