

January 11, 2012

It is tiring to forever follow the mess in DC, so today is politics free day! First, our favorite from the NY Times, [John Tierney](#) as he tells us how we might manage our new year's resolutions better.

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- 1) Whatever you hope for this year — to lose weight, to exercise more, to spend less money — you're much more likely to make improvements than someone who hasn't made a formal resolution.*
- 2) If you can make it through the rest of January, you have a good chance of lasting a lot longer.*
- 3) With a few relatively painless strategies and new digital tools, you can significantly boost your odds of success.*

Now for a not-so-uplifting prediction: Most people are not going to keep their resolutions all year long. They'll start out with the best of intentions but the worst of strategies, expecting that they'll somehow find the willpower to resist temptation after temptation. By the end of January, a third will have broken their resolutions, and by July more than half will have lapsed.

They'll fail because they'll eventually run out of willpower, which social scientists no longer regard as simply a metaphor. They've recently reported that willpower is a real form of mental energy, powered by glucose in the bloodstream, which is used up as you exert self-control.

The result is "ego depletion," as this state of mental fatigue was named by Roy F. Baumeister, a social psychologist at Florida State University (and my co-author of a book on willpower). He and many of his colleagues have concluded that the way to keep a New Year's resolution is to anticipate the limits of your willpower.

One of their newest studies, published last month in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, tracked people's reactions to temptations throughout the day. The study, led by Wilhelm Hofmann of the University of Chicago, showed that the people with the best self-control, paradoxically, are the ones who use their willpower less often. Instead of fending off one urge after another, these people set up their lives to minimize temptations. They play offense, not defense, using their willpower in advance so that they avoid crises, conserve their energy and outsource as much self-control as they can.

These strategies are particularly important if you're trying to lose weight, which is the most typical New Year's resolution as well as the most difficult. ...

Believe it or not, the iPhone is now five years old. [Wired](#) has the story of how it has changed in just that short period of time.

Gadget fans may be focused on the CES trade show this week, but there's something else notable going on today: It's the iPhone's fifth birthday.

Five years ago today, Apple unveiled the original iPhone to the world. It wasn't a tightly kept secret, shrouded in mystery and speculation like more recent Apple announcements, but it was arguably the world's most anticipated gadget launch.

Although its form factor — a capacitive touchscreen candy bar — hasn't dramatically changed over the years, each iteration of the iPhone has yielded important improvements. Let's take a look back at how the iPhone revolutionized what we thought a phone could be.

The iPhone Is Revealed

"An iPod, a phone, an internet mobile communicator," Jobs said when [preparing to introduce the iPhone](#) in January 2007. "An iPod, a phone, an internet mobile communicator.... These are not three separate devices!" ...

Wired also tells us drones now make up one third of our country's military aircraft. *Remember when the military actually put human beings in the cockpits of its planes? They still do, but in far fewer numbers. According to a new congressional report acquired by Danger Room, drones now account for 31 percent of all military aircraft.*

To be fair, lots of those drones are tiny flying spies, like the Army's Raven, that could never accommodate even the most diminutive pilot. (Specifically, the Army has 5,346 Ravens, making it the most numerous military drone by far.) But in 2005, only five percent of military aircraft were robots, a report by the Congressional Research Service notes. Barely seven years later, the military has 7,494 drones. Total number of old school, manned aircraft: 10,767 planes.

A small sliver of those nearly 7,500 drones gets all of the attention. The military owns 161 Predators — the iconic flying strike drone used over [Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere](#) — and [Reapers](#), the Predator's bigger, better-armed brother.

But even as the military's bought a ton of drones in the past few years, the Pentagon spends much, much more money on planes with people in them. Manned aircraft still get 92 percent of the Pentagon's aircraft procurement money. Still, since 2001, the military has spent \$26 billion on drones, the report — our Document of the Day — finds.

The drones are also getting safer. ...

Dilbert's Scott Adams just got addicted to golf. He tries to understand why.

I have a hypothesis that the things we do for recreation are usually metaphors that allow us to express our caveman instincts in socially appropriate ways. The nearer an activity is to our basic hunting and gathering nature, the more we like it.

Consider golf. Until recently, I had never golfed, and was baffled by its appeal. On the surface, the game is nothing but random rules about the proper way to put a round object in a hole in the ground. I have a good imagination, but prior to taking up golf, I couldn't imagine enjoying the so-called sport. That said, as part of my "Year of Trying New Things" (more on that another day), I leapt into golf with both feet. Result: Instant addiction.

What the hell??? How could such a bizarre activity be so appealing? I needed to understand this thing. I started by mapping the components of golf to their caveman origins:

Using clubs (Okay, that one is obvious. Humans are tool users.)

Problem solving (Every hole is different.)

Hunting (Locate your ball)

Killing (Whack the ball when you find it.) ...

Popular Science tells how 100 year old Scotch was created from Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic stash.

In 1907, Ernest Shackleton and crew set out on the ship Nimrod to visit Antarctica and, they hoped, the South Pole. The good news was, the entire party survived the trip, thanks in part to the Rare Old Highland Whisky they brought to the frozen continent. But the expedition was forced to evacuate in 1909, some 100 miles short of the Pole they sought. And, as winter ice encroached and the men hurried home, they left behind three cases of the choice whisky.

In 2007, just about a century later, the whisky was found, intact, at the expedition's hut at Cape Royds in Antarctica.

The stuff was made by Mackinlay & Co at the Glen Mhor distillery in 1896 or thereabouts. Mackinlay hasn't been an active brand for a while now, but the current owner of the Mackinlay name, Whyte and Mackay, obtained a few of the precious bottles and set out to do what any right-thinking Scot would do: first, taste the whisky; and second, attempt to analyze and re-create it. The result, a product called Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky, is, as of this writing, buyable in stores.

How was the re-creation carried out? Dr. James Pryde, chief chemist at Whyte and Mackay, subjected the samples to a comprehensive chemical analysis, in conjunction with a rigorous sensory analysis (that is, sniffing and tasting). Firstly, it was established that the alcoholic strength of the whisky was high enough that it very likely never froze over the years it spent interred in Antarctica. In winter, the hut reached a minimum temperature of -32.5°C, but, at 47 percent alcohol, the whisky remained liquid down to a couple of degrees cooler than that extreme. This eliminated what had been a significant source of concern about the quality of the sample, that decades of freezing and thawing had altered or ruined it. Carbon dating verified that the whisky did indeed date from the Shackleton era. ...

We learn from **Entertainment Weekly** Lily on 'Modern Family' will drop the F-bomb in next week's episode.

On next week's Modern Family, toddler Lily is going to use one of the worst of George Carlin's famous Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television.

The adopted two-and-a-half year-old character somehow picks up the profanity "f-k." This naturally horrifies her parents, Cam and Mitchell, who in particular fear she'll blurt it at an

upcoming wedding. Lily is shown saying the word, but it's not audible to the viewer. The episode's title: "Little Bo Bleep."

It might be the first time in a scripted family broadcast TV series where a child has said the f-word. ...

That was fun! Tomorrow we'll get back to finding ways to save our country by ridding ourselves of Valerie Jarrett's Washington stooge.

NY Times

[Be It Resolved](#)

by John Tierney

IT'S still early in 2012, so let's be optimistic. Let's assume you have made a New Year's resolution and have not yet broken it. Based on studies of past resolutions, here are some uplifting predictions:

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They'll fail because they'll eventually run out of willpower, which social scientists no longer regard as simply a metaphor. They've recently reported that willpower is a real form of mental energy, powered by glucose in the bloodstream, which is used up as you exert self-control.

The result is "ego depletion," as this state of mental fatigue was named by Roy F. Baumeister, a social psychologist at Florida State University (and my co-author of a [book on willpower](#)). He and many of his colleagues have concluded that the way to keep a New Year's resolution is to anticipate the limits of your willpower.

One of their [newest studies](#), published last month in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, tracked people's reactions to temptations throughout the day. The study, led by

Wilhelm Hofmann of the University of Chicago, showed that the people with the best self-control, paradoxically, are the ones who use their willpower less often. Instead of fending off one urge after another, these people set up their lives to minimize temptations. They play offense, not defense, using their willpower in advance so that they avoid crises, conserve their energy and outsource as much self-control as they can.

These strategies are particularly important if you're trying to lose weight, which is the most typical New Year's resolution as well as the most difficult. The more you starve your body, the less glucose there will be in your bloodstream, and that means less willpower. Because of this vicious cycle, even people with great self-control in the rest of their lives can have a terrible time remaining slim.

Self-restraint can seem harder than ever because there are so many new temptations being marketed — high-calorie foods, distracting gadgets, time-sucking Web sites. But there are also better strategies than ever available thanks to new research in both the lab and the real world, including vast troves of data from online programs for improving self-control.

Before we get to the data, consider how one well-financed pioneer put these strategies into practice. It is not exactly a typical story — the hero is a hedge fund manager who could afford the ultimate in outsourcing — but it's a good outline of the future of self-control for the rest of us.

DOUG TEITELBAUM was utterly self-disciplined in business and utterly unable to control his weight. He ran a hedge fund in New York and made fortunes turning around companies like Barneys, the tony clothier, but he couldn't stop himself from reaching nearly 375 pounds.

Once, he'd been a serious tennis player, but he'd had to give it up because the weight put too much strain on his 6-foot-1-inch frame and legs. At the age of 40, convinced his own willpower was not enough, he looked for outside help.

He had a gastric band surgically placed around his stomach, and he began slowly exercising again under the supervision of [Jim Wharton](#), a trainer on the Upper West Side who worked with professional athletes. Then a new problem arose. After Mr. Teitelbaum's company bought the Planet Hollywood chain, he had to go to Las Vegas to oversee the conversion of the old Aladdin into the Planet Hollywood Resort and Casino.

It meant leaving home and living for months in a suite at the hotel above the glittering Las Vegas Strip, surrounded by an endless supply of alluring food — all available 24 hours a day. Mr. Teitelbaum knew that his gastric band, the least extreme form of weight-loss surgery, wouldn't save him from 4 a.m. room-service pizzas. He didn't trust his willpower in the global capital of hedonism: the pounds gained in Vegas would not stay in Vegas.

So he and his trainer went on the offensive. To inspire him over the long haul, they aimed for him to lose 100 pounds so that he could return to tennis and play in a popular tournament for charity. To sustain him in the short term, they planned the foods he should eat in Las Vegas and drew up daily schedules for exercise. To make it easy for him to work out, one room in his hotel suite would be turned into a personal gym, complete with dumbbells, weight machines, exercise bike and elliptical trainer. But Mr. Teitelbaum still had doubts.

“I knew if I were going out to dinner every night, the [diet](#) would derail,” he said. “I knew I had to have a trainer to get me into an exercise routine. If I’m not forced to exercise, I’ll end up working instead. I have to be corralled.”

Mr. Teitelbaum took the next step in outsourcing willpower. He hired Jim Wharton’s son and fellow trainer, Phil, to move into the hotel to oversee his daily regimen. Every morning, Mr. Teitelbaum would weigh himself, breakfast on a protein smoothie prepared by Phil, and then work out under Phil’s supervision.

Phil oversaw all the other meals, too, except for one day a week when Mr. Teitelbaum was free to eat whatever he wanted. After four months of this routine, he left Las Vegas 50 pounds lighter than when he arrived. He went on to lose the 100 pounds and more — he hit 190, half his former weight, and took second place in the tennis tournament that had once seemed impossible.

OBVIOUSLY, Doug Teitelbaum is not Everyman. Most of us can’t afford to hire personal trainers to monitor us around the clock. But anyone with a smartphone or a computer has access to outside help, and anyone can still follow his basic strategies:

SET A SINGLE CLEAR GOAL Instead of resolving to “lose weight” or “eat healthier,” set a specific goal — say, lose a pound a week. And limit yourself to one big resolution at a time. If you’re trying to [quit smoking](#) or save money, don’t bother counting how many [calories](#) you consume or burn up. With a finite supply of willpower, it’s tough enough to keep one resolution, as John C. Norcross and other [psychologists](#) at the University of Scranton [reported in 2002](#) after having tracked people for six months after New Year’s.

By the end of January, 36 percent of them had broken their resolutions. After that, the failures happened more slowly. Half were still keeping their resolutions in March, and by July the success rate was still 44 percent — less than half, admittedly, but still impressive compared with a control group of people who had the same goals (like losing weight) but didn’t make formal resolutions. Only 4 percent of the control group made progress.

“Contrary to widespread public opinion, a considerable proportion of New Year resolvers do succeed,” Dr. Norcross said. “You are 10 times more likely to change by making a New Year’s resolution compared to non-resolvers with the identical goals and comparable motivation to change.”

PRECOMMIT Odysseus’ classic strategy, having himself tied to the mast, still works against modern sirens. Besides the simple things you do yourself — plan meals in advance, keep junk food out of the kitchen, schedule workouts with friends, go to the store without a credit card — you can further bind yourself by e-mailing your goal to friends or posting it on Facebook.

OUTSOURCE You can outsource self-control by sharing your progress with friends through Twitter posts about your weight or your workouts, or by making a formal contract at Web sites like [stickK.com](#), which was started by economists at Yale. At stickK, you set the goal and have the option of naming a referee to enforce it. You also set the penalty. It might be just an e-mailed announcement to a list of friends (or enemies), but you can also put money on the line. You can precommit to paying the penalty to anyone you designate, including an “anti-charity,”

which for a Democrat could be the George W. Bush library. (The Clinton library is available for Republicans.)

The more you precommit, the better you do, according to stickK's analysis of 125,000 contracts over the past three years. The success rate for people who don't name a referee or set financial stakes is only 29 percent, but it rises to 59 percent when there's a referee and to 71.5 percent when there's money at stake. And when a contract includes a referee and financial stakes, the success rate is nearly 80 percent.

KEEP TRACK Nutritionists used to advise people not to weigh themselves more than once a week — supposedly so as not to get discouraged by fluctuations — but recent research has shown that [daily weigh-ins](#) work better. Self-monitoring is vital to any kind of resolution, and new tools will do the grunt work for you. Scales like one made by [Withings](#) will log your weight on your computer and notify your friends (if you want). Gizmos like the [BodyMedia Fit armband](#) and the [FitBit clip](#) can estimate how many calories you've burned by keeping track of your movements all day long. You can let all your financial transactions be automatically categorized by [Mint.com](#). After analyzing 2 billion transactions by 3 million users, Mint's analysts confirmed the benefits of monitoring: once people started tracking where their money went, they tempered their spending.

Entrepreneurs are rushing to monitor just about every aspect of your life — your health, your moods, your sleep — and you can find dozens of their products by consulting Web sites like [Quantified Self](#) and [Lifehacker](#).

DON'T OVERREACT TO A LAPSE One reason dieters fail is a phenomenon formally known as “counterregulatory eating” — and informally as the “what the hell effect.” Once they lapse, they figure the day's diet is blown anyway, so they go on to finish the whole carton of ice cream, thereby doing far more damage than the original lapse.

TOMORROW IS ANOTHER TASTE One of the cheeriest new findings from diet research comes from an experiment in which people had to resist a bowl of M&M's. The ones who told themselves they could have the candy later had a much easier time than the ones who swore off M&M's permanently. So when the dessert cart arrives, promise yourself that you'll sample each of the treats, but just not tonight.

REWARD OFTEN If you use willpower only to deny yourself pleasures, it becomes a grim, thankless form of defense. But when you use it to gain something, you can wring pleasure out of the dreariest tasks. Young people who seem hopelessly undisciplined in school or on the job will concentrate for hour after hour on video games because there's a steady series of prizes. That's the feeling to aim for in the real world.

If you quit smoking, earmark some of the savings for expensive meals. If your waistline shrinks, splurge on new clothes. One new exercise monitor, the [Striiv](#), will make donations to charity based on how many steps you take. Other gadgets and apps will award points or trophies. Even the tiniest and silliest rewards can make a difference. If you want your willpower to last all year, every little bit helps.

Wired

iPhone Celebrates 5th Birthday — How Has It Changed?

by Christina Bonnington



People stand outside the Apple Store on Chicago's Michigan Avenue, Friday, June 29, 2007, waiting to get in to purchase the company's new iPhone during the official launch day. Photo: M. Spencer Green/Associated Press

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The [original iPhone](#) launched on AT&T with a handful of Apple-created apps. It had a 320×480 resolution, 3.5-inch capacitive touchscreen and 2-megapixel camera, and ran iOS 1.0. Inside, it featured a 412MHz ARM 11 processor, a proximity sensor, and an accelerometer.

Priced at \$499 and \$599 for 4GB and 8GB models, the iPhone didn't actually go on sale to eager hordes of consumers (hundreds of whom waited outside Apple Stores) until June 29.

“As a device, [it's a genre-bender](#),” former Gadget Lab editor Dylan Tweney said in his review of the landmark device. “Never before have American consumers had access to a phone that is simultaneously so powerful, so elegant, and that performs so many functions.”

iPhone 3G, the App Store and iOS 2.0

Apple's second generation iPhone debuted in the summer of 2008. Internally, it was largely identical to its predecessor: same processor, same type of display, same 2.0 megapixel camera, same amount of memory. But the iPhone 3G, as the name implied, now supported 3G network operability, as well as GPS.

More importantly, though, the launch of the 3G was accompanied by iOS version 2.0, which included an industry-altering addition: the App Store. The App Store finally let independent, third-party developers legally create apps for the device with a 70/30 revenue split weighted toward Apple.

The App Store has been an incredible success story for Apple and developers alike. It houses more than half-a-million apps, and there's been more than [18 billion downloads](#) to date. Pretty much every mobile platform has its own app market now, and most are [modeled similarly](#) to Apple's.

iPhone 3GS Takes Photography Seriously

The iPhone 3GS was primarily an [incremental improvement](#) over the 3G, but it included some notable hardware improvements that would continue through later iterations of the phone.



First, the 3GS included a camera upgrade: a 3-megapixel, autofocus camera that shot decent video that could be edited and easily sent to YouTube or other destinations. Photography would become an increasingly important feature for iPhone users. The processor was upgraded to a 600MHz Samsung chip, and the display was upped to 480×320 pixels. The 3GS also added a compass, a tool that would prove incredibly useful in apps like Google Maps.

On the software side, the 3GS also added Voice Control, and iOS, now at version 3.0, finally added a cut/copy/paste functionality to the system.

iPhone 4: Prototype Leak, ‘Antennagate’ and Verizon

The iPhone 4 stunned the world with its radically redesigned look, which [Gizmodo revealed early](#) after getting its hands on a prototype.

A 3.5-inch Retina Display put pretty much every other smartphone display to shame: At 960×640 and bearing a 326ppi pixel density, it offered pixels smaller than the human eye could detect. The iPhone 4 was also encased front and back by slim slabs of glass, and ringed by an aluminum rim. The visual conceit was slick, and Apple received kudos for its smart industrial design refresh.



Unfortunately, that aluminum rim became the source of a debacle known as “[Antennagate](#)”: Because of the external antenna design of the phone, if users held it a particular way, they would experience a drop in signal strength.

The [iPhone 4](#) debuted in June 2010, still on AT&T like its predecessors, but in January 2011, Apple expanded availability to [Verizon](#).

iPhone 4S Delivers Siri

Expecting an entirely differently designed iPhone 5, some Apple fans were disappointed by the announcement of merely an “iPhone 4S.” However, [pre-sale numbers](#) and opening weekend [sales numbers](#) proved the 4S to be the most successful iPhone launch in Apple’s history.

A major reason for the success of the 4S was its new voice-controlled virtual assistant, [Siri](#). Hackers attempting to port Siri to [other iOS devices](#) have *almost* succeeded, but the solution just isn’t available for the masses. Others though, are more interested in hacking Siri to control [other gadgets in their lives](#) like thermostats or a rotary dial phone.

Wired

[Almost 1 In 3 U.S. Warplanes Is a Robot](#)

by Spencer Ackerman and Noah Shachtman



Remember when the military actually put human beings in the cockpits of its planes? They still do, but in far fewer numbers. According to a new congressional report acquired by Danger Room, drones now account for 31 percent of all military aircraft.

To be fair, lots of those drones are tiny flying spies, like the Army’s Raven, that could never accommodate even the most diminutive pilot. (Specifically, the Army has 5,346 Ravens, making it the most numerous military drone by far.) But in 2005, only five percent of military aircraft were robots, a report by the Congressional Research Service notes. Barely seven years later, the military has 7,494 drones. Total number of old school, manned aircraft: 10,767 planes.

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But even as the military's bought a ton of drones in the past few years, the Pentagon spends much, much more money on planes with people in them. Manned aircraft still get 92 percent of the Pentagon's aircraft procurement money. Still, since 2001, the military has spent \$26 billion on drones, the report — our Document of the Day — finds.

The drones are also getting safer. (To operate, that is; not for [their targets below](#).) Drone crashes get a lot of attention; 38 Predators and Reapers have crashed in Iraq and Afghanistan thus far; most recently, Iran looks like it got ahold of [an advanced, stealthy RQ-170 Sentinel](#). But the congressional report finds that the Predator, for instance, has only 7.5 accidents per 100,000 hours of flight, down from 20 accidents over that time in 2005 — meaning it's now got an accident rate comparable to a (manned) F-16.

But the report doesn't mention some of the unique vulnerabilities of the drones. There's no mention of the [malware infection that reached into the drone cockpits](#) at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, a story [Danger Room broke](#). Nor does it go into the workload problems for military imagery analysts caused by the proliferation of the drones full-motion video "Death TV," which is pushing the military toward [developing selective or "thinking" cameras](#). The ethical issues attendant to remote-control war also go unexplored.

Still, the report does explore the downsides of the Pentagon's drone obsession. There are way too many redundant drones, it finds, and the expensive sensors they increasingly carry drive the costs of a supposedly cheap machine up. They're also bandwidth hogs: a single Global Hawk drone requires 500 megabytes per second worth of bandwidth, the report finds, which is "500 percent of the total bandwidth of the entire U.S. military used during the 1991 Gulf War." And it also notes that a lot of future spy missions might go not to drones, but to the [increasing number of giant blimps and aerostats](#), some of which can carry [way more sensors and cameras](#).

And the current fleet of flying robots is just the start. The Navy's developing a next-gen drone that can [take off and land from an aircraft carrier](#). Future missions, the report finds, include "stand-off jamming" of enemy electronics; "psychological operations, such as dropping leaflets" over an adversary population; and even measuring the amount of radiation in the earth's atmosphere. The military's working on increasingly autonomous drones — including [tiny, suicidal killers](#) — and on increasing the number of drones a single ground station can operate.

The Air Force even holds out hope for a "super/hyper-sonic" drone by 2034. It's a good time to be a flying robot.

The Dilbert Blog

[The Caveman Hypothesis](#)

by Scott Adams

I have a hypothesis that the things we do for recreation are usually metaphors that allow us to express our caveman instincts in socially appropriate ways. The nearer an activity is to our basic hunting and gathering nature, the more we like it.

Consider golf. Until recently, I had never golfed, and was baffled by its appeal. On the surface, the game is nothing but random rules about the proper way to put a round object in a hole in the

ground. I have a good imagination, but prior to taking up golf, I couldn't imagine enjoying the so-called sport. That said, as part of my "Year of Trying New Things" (more on that another day), I leapt into golf with both feet. Result: Instant addiction.

What the hell??? How could such a bizarre activity be so appealing? I needed to understand this thing. I started by mapping the components of golf to their caveman origins:

- Using clubs (Okay, that one is obvious. Humans are tool users.)
- Problem solving (Every hole is different.)
- Hunting (Locate your ball)
- Killing (Whack the ball when you find it.)
- Territorial instinct (Try to capture the green.)
- Tribal hierarchy (The handicap system)
- Being outdoors
- Mating displays (Colorful fashions for men)

We know from animal studies that random rewards are far more addictive than predictable rewards. Golf has the most random-feeling outcomes of any sport I have experienced. No matter how well you golf, you never really know what will happen after you swing your club. On those few occasions when the ball goes exactly where you intend, your brain's reward center gives you a big payoff.

Golf also has a selective memory phenomenon working for it. I had always heard golfers say they remember only the good shots, but I didn't realize how true that is. Your memories of the few good shots do in fact stay with you while the bad shots fade away. Golf has a great aftertaste.

On Friday, I golfed with family members for over four hours, and during the four hours on the course, I never once thought of anything beyond the moment. That's a big deal for me, because my mind wanders in every other context. I can watch a great movie and still organize my to-do list in my head. But on a golf course, the rest of the world stops existing, and the feeling lasts for hours.

If you prefer high octane fun, you can get more of that from soccer, tennis, basketball, and lots of other activities. Society labels golf a sport because humans need to put things into categories. But golf is a different animal. It stands alone as a simple and direct connection to your primal nature.

The takeaway here is that if you're trying to design a product, or organize an event, you'd do well to find a metaphor to our primitive nature. That's what people respond to. Everything else is just rationalization.

Popular Science

How Scottish Scientists Re-Created a Hundred-Year-Old Whisky

Preserved in Antarctica since 1907, the Scotch that Ernest Shackleton drank is now available in stores

by Paul Adams



The Rediscovered Bottles courtesy Whyte and Mackay

In 1907, Ernest Shackleton and crew set out on the ship Nimrod to visit Antarctica and, they hoped, the South Pole. The good news was, the entire party survived the trip, thanks in part to the Rare Old Highland Whisky they brought to the frozen continent. But the expedition was forced to evacuate in 1909, some 100 miles short of the Pole they sought. And, as winter ice encroached and the men hurried home, they left behind three cases of the choice whisky.

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The stuff was made by Mackinlay & Co at the Glen Mhor distillery in 1896 or thereabouts. Mackinlay hasn't been an active brand for a while now, but the current owner of the Mackinlay name, Whyte and Mackay, obtained a few of the precious bottles and set out to do what any right-thinking Scot would do: first, taste the whisky; and second, attempt to analyze and re-create it. The result, a product called Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky, is, as of this writing, buyable in stores.

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Syringe of Whisky: Instead of pulling the corks, the scientists drew whisky from the bottles through a sterile needle.

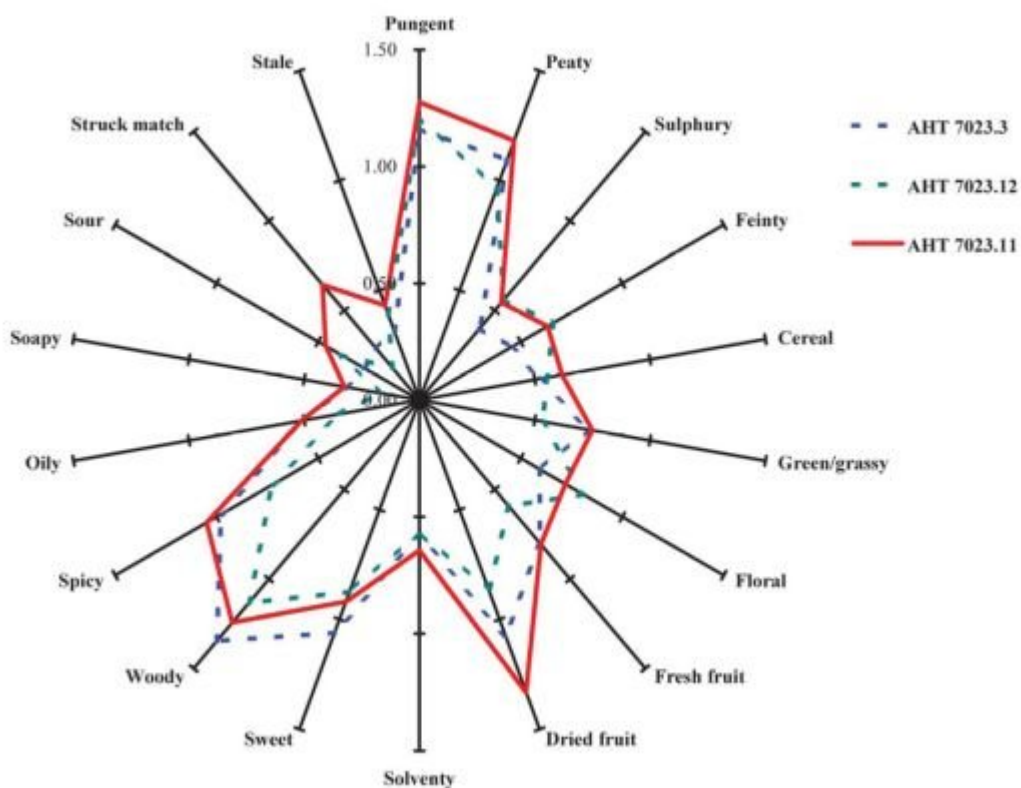
Phenol and related phenolic compounds show up in Scotch whiskies, giving them the unmistakable character that's referred to "peaty," because the flavor is introduced when the grain is exposed to peat smoke during the malting process. Chemical analysis revealed not only the quantity of phenolics in the Mackinlay -- surprisingly low, given that era's reputation for heavily peated malts -- but also the particular balance of compounds, which enabled the experts to pinpoint what region the peat used had likely come from. The answer? Orkney.

Similarly, analysis of the compounds that result from barrel-aging was able to finger the barrels in which the whisky was aged as ones made from American oak and probably used once before to age wine or sherry. Gas chromatograph olfactometry, in which the spirit is broken down into

its volatile components and each of these smelled individually by experts, gave clues as to details of the fermentation and distilling process. The analysts write:

Other aromas detected by olfactometry and related to lactic acid bacterial growth were a stale solvent aroma of ethyl 2-butenate, and sweet/peaches, sweet/peaches/coriander leaf aroma at retention times of 15.4, 38.71 and 39.41 min respectively; the latter retention indices and descriptors agreeing with those published for γ - and δ -dodecalactones.

Armed with all this detail, Whyte and Mackay's master distiller, Richard Paterson, was able to delve into the wealth of warehoused casks and, with the help of his prodigious nose, blend a number of whiskies in exact proportions to replicate the Shackleton spirit. The re-creation, which is given a stint in sherry casks before bottling, includes some of the remaining whisky from the Glen Mhor distillery, which was demolished in 1986, supplemented with comparable liquor from nearby Dalmore, Benriach, Glenfarclas, and other Speyside whiskies lend their character, along with Balblair, Pulteney, and Jura.



Sensory Analysis: The characteristics of the three sample bottles were mapped thusly.

The resulting blend was subjected to the same battery of chemical analysis as the original, and found to stack up quite comparably, their phenolics and esters finely matched.

Finally, minus the milliliters of whisky that had been carefully syringed out through their corks, the original bottles were returned from Scotland to the Shackleton expedition's hut, where they have been re-situated as part of the preserved environ by the Antarctic Heritage Trust.

For the complete details of the analysis of the Mackinlay whisky, a copy of the paper published by Dr. Pryde et al in the *Journal of the Institute of Brewing* is available [here](#).

Entertainment Weekly

Toddler Lily says the f-word on upcoming 'Modern Family'

by James Hibberd



On next week's *Modern Family*, toddler Lily is going to use one of the worst of George Carlin's famous Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television.

The adopted two-and-a-half year-old character somehow picks up the profanity "f-k." This naturally horrifies her parents, Cam and Mitchell, who in particular fear she'll blurt it at an upcoming wedding. Lily is shown saying the word, but it's not audible to the viewer. The episode's title: "Little Bo Bleep."

It might be the first time in a scripted family broadcast TV series where a child has said the f-word.

Creator Steve Levitan revealed the storyline during an ABC comedy showrunner panel at the network's press tour presentation in Pasadena. "We had to really convince ABC," Levitan told EW.com after the panel. "We thought it was a very natural story since, as parents, we've all been through this. ABC will tell you *Modern Family* gets away with a lot, because I think it's all about context. We are not a sexually charged show. It has a very warm tone so people accept it more. I'm sure we'll have some detractors."

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Another interesting moment came when Levitan was asked his opinion of sitcoms shot in front of studio audiences with laugh tracks.

"Living in L.A., you sometime hear coyotes eating cats," Levitan said, drawing somewhat horrified laughter. "And to me, that's the sound of a multi-cam laugh track. I just can't take it anymore. I've done it [on previous comedies like *Just Shoot Me*] for 15 years. I couldn't take another minute of it. I don't think there's any thing wrong with it — when done well like *Raymond*

like *Friends* like *Frasier* and like *Cheers*, the laugh track disappears and you're in that world and it's a heightened reality and it works."

In other *Modern Family* news, Kevin Hart will return for another guest stint on the show. He joins upcoming guest stars Greg Kinnear and Ellen Barkin.

