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Nature's Hidden Network **How Plants Talk to Each Other Underground**

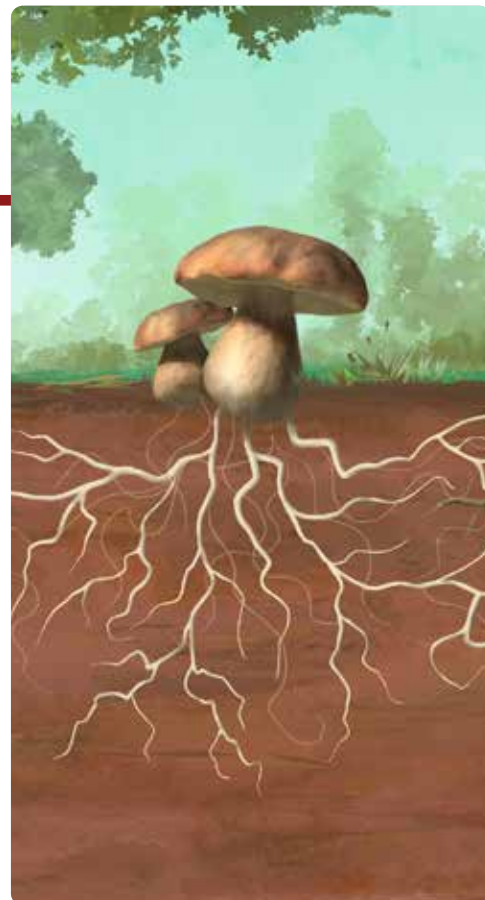
You probably don't think of plants as chatty, but they have a lot going on underground. Scientists have discovered that thin fungus threads in the soil connect many plants — nature's version of the internet. These threads help plants share nutrients and even send messages to one another.

The fungi grow around and between plant roots, building a bridge from one plant to the next. If one plant gets sick or bug-bitten, it can send a warning. Neighboring plants "hear" that signal and might boost their defenses. It's somewhat like a heads-up before a storm.

It's not just gossip, either. These fungal helpers also help shuffle nutrients around, especially from bigger, well-fed plants to smaller, struggling ones. In return, the fungi get sugars and energy from the plants. It's a win-win.

This hidden teamwork has real-world effects. Farmers and gardeners who know about these underground networks can change how they treat their soil. If the fungi are wiped out — say, by chemicals or heavy digging — plants lose their lifeline. But if the networks stay intact, crops tend to grow better and fight off threats more easily.

This is still a growing field of research, but it's changing how we see plant life. If you want to dig a little deeper, check out a recent book, "The Light Eaters: How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth" by Zoë Schlanger. What looks like a quiet patch of greenery might be a neighborhood full of chatter. You just have to know where to look.



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LISTEN UP!

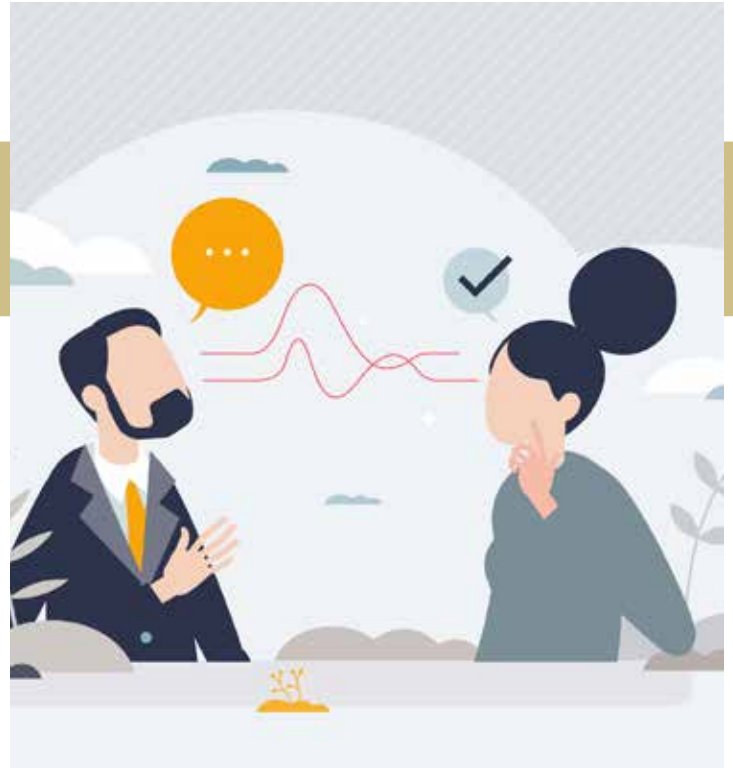
The Underrated Skill That Can Transform Your Life

Whenever we have a conversation with someone, we gain an opportunity to work on one of the most important skills that directly impacts our overall success. Listening is more than hearing; it's a way to understand what someone tells us. By improving our listening skills, we can become better friends, partners, coworkers, leaders, and parents. July 18 is World Listening Day and is a great reminder to work on this vital skill that's often overlooked.

From the perspective of an attorney, business owner, and father of three daughters, being a good listener is essential. Whether it's hearing a client's concerns, understanding a staff member's challenges, or grasping the unspoken meaning behind a teenager's words, listening is the foundation of building trust, solving problems, and making sound decisions. Success doesn't solely come from speaking clearly; it stems from deeply understanding each conversation and situation.

Listening hasn't always been one of my strengths. Like many skills, I had to develop it over time. When I was younger, I focused more on what I wanted to say next instead of giving my full attention to the person in front of me. This is something many of us struggle with. We're too quick to assume what people are trying to say before they finish speaking. While queuing up our response internally, we often miss important details from the conversation and can't grasp what the other person is trying to tell us.

With experience and a few hard lessons, I realized that real listening means being fully present. You must set aside assumptions, suspend your judgment, and be willing to hear not just the words, but the meaning, emotions, and gaps behind the communication. Waiting for the other person to finish before forming a response also plays a role in being present. This is a skill that takes practice and patience. Listening isn't passive. It's an active, intentional effort to understand and requires practice, curiosity, and empathy, whether you're at home, the office, or elsewhere.



In today's noisy world, where distractions are constant and conversations get reduced to soundbites, the skill of listening is more important and powerful than ever. In honor of World Listening Day, we should ask ourselves how to become better listeners.

A great place to start is by trying to be fully present. Put away the distractions and give the speaker your undivided attention. When they speak, listen to understand instead of just trying to figure out what to say next. Don't interrupt, even if you think you know where the conversation is leading. If you don't understand, don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions. Reflect what you hear by paraphrasing to show you're listening, and pay attention to their body language to help you notice any nonverbal cues. And maybe most important, approach every conversation with genuine curiosity. Treat each person's story as something worth fully hearing.

As the saying goes, we have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Strong active listening is more than a skill; it's a way to lead, serve, and live with greater impact.

-Brad Scott



Michel Lotito: The Man Who Ate an Airplane

Would you snack on a bicycle? How about a TV set or a shopping cart? Sounds completely absurd, but Michel Lotito — a French performer known to fans as “Monsieur Mangetout” (Mr. Eat All) — did exactly that.

Although he certainly got attention, Lotito wasn’t just looking for it; his peculiar diet came from a rare condition called pica. People with pica crave non-edible objects, though very few act on these cravings. But Michel didn’t hold back. Doctors found he had an unusually strong digestive system and a thick stomach lining. These traits allowed him to safely digest things most people wouldn’t put near their mouths, let alone swallow.

The list of items Lotito managed to consume is hard to believe. He once famously ate an entire Cessna plane, taking two years to finish every last nut and bolt. How did he do it without getting hurt? Carefully and one bite at a time. Michel chopped objects into tiny bits and sipped mineral oil to help everything slide down smoothly.

Lotito’s feats earned him a place in the “Guinness Book of World Records,” but his true legacy is simpler: He got people thinking. Scientists, doctors, and everyday observers began to wonder how adaptable — and, frankly, strange — the human body can be.

Michel Lotito passed away in 2007 at 57, but his legend lives on. A guy who casually munched on bicycles might seem easy to dismiss, but his “normal” shows us that reality is sometimes far stranger than fiction.

OVERRULED WITH BRAD SCOTT & DAVID VICKNAIR

*On the Latest Episodes of the
‘OVERRULED’ Podcast:*

On the Mic: Stories of Grit, Growth, and Giving Back

Our recent podcast episodes have been all about resilience, wisdom, and everyday heroes making a big impact.

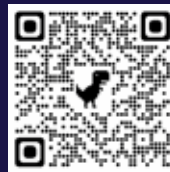
First was Thomas Matthews, an entrepreneur who began with a pair of clippers and a strong work ethic. From cutting hair to scaling real estate and restaurants, Thomas opens up about the mindset, mistakes, and lessons that shaped his path.

Next, we welcomed Katherine Israel, a dedicated educator and the winner of our High Seas and ABCs teacher cruise giveaway! Katherine shares her shift from nursing to teaching and why de-escalation might be her hidden superpower.

We dove into the legal world with Brian Katz, president of the Louisiana Association for Justice. Brian breaks down rising auto insurance premiums, the misleading promise of tort reform, and policy changes affecting everyday citizens.

Finally, Dr. Angelique Arcuri joined us to discuss her evolution from salon owner to founder of Luxury Studio and the Luxury Girls Golf Club. A multi-hyphenate, Dr. Arcuri is creating spaces for women in beauty, business, and beyond.

Whether you’re an aspiring entrepreneur, educator, advocate, or just love a good story, these episodes offer something for everyone. Tune in and get inspired.



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Cruise Winner: Cindy LeBeouf

A STORY OF DEDICATION AND COMPASSION

Announcing our 2025 High Seas and ABCs Cruise Winner: Cindy LeBeouf!

We are overjoyed to share that Cindy LeBeouf has been selected as the winner of this year's High Seas and ABCs Cruise Giveaway! Nominated by Camryn Guidry, Cindy's story stood out among many as a shining example of what it means to be a dedicated educator, compassionate mentor, and inspiring role model.

Cindy is retiring this year after 33 years in education, during which she made a lasting impact on her students. Known for ensuring her students feel capable of reaching their full potential, Cindy touched the lives of countless families, many of whom still sing her praises.

Cindy is a devoted mother and she inspires her community with her selfless commitment and unwavering positivity. Whether she's mentoring new teachers, supporting fellow staff, or uplifting her students, Cindy leads with kindness and grace.



This cruise is a small token of our appreciation for your extraordinary service. Congratulations, Cindy — you've more than earned this adventure! Bon voyage!

Project Backpack Returns - July 26!

We're thrilled to bring back **#SVProjectBackpack** - our annual event to help local students start school with confidence.

When: Saturday, July 26

Time: 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Where: Volunteers of America Headquarters

At Scott | Vicknair, we're proud to give back to the families who support us. Project Backpack is our way of helping kids feel seen, supported, and ready for success.

Here's how you can help:

- Share with families who could benefit
- Register at **ScottVicknair.com/ProjectBackpack** OR simply scan the QR code (limit 5 backpacks per registered person)
- Spread the word!
- Join us on July 26 to make it special

We can't wait to see you there!



SWIPE RIGHT AT ANY AGE

Online Dating Tips for Older Adults

Online dating can be intimidating at any age, but it can feel like learning a new language and culture for older adults who didn't grow up using technology. While dating might seem like a younger person's game, plenty of people your age (and older) are messaging, swiping, and making new personal connections online daily.

A common misconception is that online dating is only for the tech-savvy, but most apps are user-friendly and designed to help you learn as you go. Various apps are available — like Bumble, Hinge, or Match — so you can find one that matches your specific goals. Whether you're looking to meet new friends or want long-term companionship, there's a platform for you.

Create a profile once you find a dating site that feels like a good fit. Your profile doesn't need flashy language or complicated details, but it should highlight your values. You'll also need to include photos. Focus on current pictures that reveal a bit about your personality and interests.

After setting up your profile, you're ready to look for potential dates. This is where things get exciting, but don't forget to prioritize safety. Early conversations are best kept within the app itself, and always meet people you connect with in public places. Also, don't let rejections discourage you. Online dating can take some patience, but it can also be fun. Stay open, stay safe, and you just might find someone special.

