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Western Washington University

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• SOME LIKE IT LIGHT
  A not-so-bold switch to light-roasted coffee

• THE BREAKING POINT
  Putting on the pressure to take down your opponent

• THE GUILT OF GIVING IN
  Why we feel bad about the things that give us pleasure
Dear Reader,

It is in our nature as humans to assume that weakness, in its most literal form, insinuates disadvantage or fault; almost instinctively, our minds seem to formulate the dichotomy between weakness and strength.

We each have our own intellectual, physical and emotional attributes that define our personal singularity. Varying connotations of the word “weak” stand as one such example of our uniqueness and variety, yet despite these different interpretations, we all experience weakness in one way or another.

In this issue of Klipsun, you’ll read that for some, weakness is indulging in our guiltiest pleasures – which may mean secretly listening to Vampire Weekend’s self-titled album, while assuring friends that they’re “too mainstream.”

You’ll see that it’s common, especially in the Pacific Northwest, for one to think they’re getting their daily dose of caffeine by ordering the boldest roast that Starbucks has to offer, when in fact, the lightest roasts pack the biggest caffeine punch, so to speak.

And in one case, while coming out of a coma leaves him at his weakest physical state, one student’s struggle proves to have the strongest mental and spiritual implications for his fervor for life.

This issue of Klipsun looks to set aside preconceived notions of “weakness” and broaden the interpretation of the word “weak.”

Before you read any further, take a minute and think about how you would define the word “weakness.”

Now forget that definition.

As you flip through these pages, remember that our weaknesses are what help us relate to one another. They’re what make us feel human. And without them, we’d only have our strengths – and how boring would that be?

Cheers,

Elysia Nazareth
Editor-in-Chief

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

4 SOME LIKE IT LIGHT A not-so-bold switch to light-roasted coffee
12 THE BREAKING POINT Putting on the pressure to take down your opponent
15 PUREBRED PROBLEMS Genetic weaknesses in designer dogs
19 WINNING WITH WORDS Finding the middle ground in an argument
20 WHEAT WORRIES Overcoming gluten intolerance
26 THE GUILT OF GIVING IN Why we feel bad about the things that give us pleasure
28 FAMILIES FIGHTING ALCOHOLISM When genetics plays a role in decision making
31 “WHAT’S YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS?” Creating a strong answer to the hardest interview question

SUPER WITH A SIDE OF HUMAN
Why some people like their heroes with humanity

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES @ klipsunmagazine.com

HACKING: IT’S EASY AS 1, 2, 3
Protecting yourself with a strong password
RESTRICTED ACCESS
How Uncle Sam only wants some of you
SILENCING THE STUDENT
The communication breakdown between students and professors
ADDING INSULT TO INJURY
The high cost of staying healthy in the United States

FIGHT OR FAINT
When basic instincts kick in at the sight of blood
Drew Fitchette takes out a scale and sets it on the polished wooden counter inside Onyx Coffee Bar in Bellingham. He measures out exactly two grams of finely ground African coffee for every one ounce of water he’s boiling, and he pours the water into a preheated metal kettle resting nearby. He begins to pour. He lets enough of the water in — to just cover the grounds, and then he waits.

He chats with a customer while the aroma of the coffee releases and the water extracts the flavor from the bean. The color scheme is made up of black, whites and browns, with a splash of rainbow on its in-house coffee cups. The interior of Onyx is stark and finished perfection.

At Onyx, they don’t carry sugar, milk or creamer, and they pour coffee into a filter, which rests lightly inside a glass cone. The cone sits on top of a clear glass carafe.

While he measures the grounds, his water reaches a boil, and he pours it into a preheated metal kettle resting nearby. He begins to pour. He lets enough of the water in — to just cover the grounds, and then he waits.

He chats with a customer while the aroma of the beans releases and the water extracts the flavor from the coffee. The coffee bar doesn’t need to make money,” Fitchette says. “It’s just fun to mess with people’s perceptions. It can be hard in this town; some people are opposed to lighter roasts. As coffee enthusiasts become more aware of the origin of their coffee, they are also more particular about the precise flavors.”

Weak coffee may taste watery and flavorless. When coffee is over-extracted, the grounds intersect with the water too much, resulting in a bitter taste. This can be due to an excessively long brew time, or water that is too hot. When coffee is under-extracted, not enough flavor is pulled from the grounds. This could be because of the opposite: a short brew time or a temperature that is too low.

Behind the brown counter is a smaller-than-expected wooden counter inside Onyx Coffee Bar in Bellingham. He measures out exactly two grams of finely ground African coffee for every one ounce of water he’s boiling, and he pours the water into a preheated metal kettle resting nearby. He begins to pour. He lets enough of the water in — to just cover the grounds, and then he waits.

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By the second day, the California State Patrol was after her. They chased her into "Splash Mountain," but she lost them in the murky ride.

Finally, after three days, officers cornered and tackled Coyote on "It's a Small World." She bused home, accompanied by a state patrol at every stop. This is a story about Coyote. However, the person telling this story is not Coyote.

Diana Ash is a 30-year-old Western transfer student. Coyote is one of 57 distinct personalities that Diana lives with. When talking about Coyote’s escapades, she switches from first person to third person, as if she is telling a story about a close friend. Diana has dissociative identity disorder, known by many as multiple personality disorder.

Dissociative identity disorder involves two or more distinct identities, or personality states, that regularly take control of a person’s behavior and lead to difficulty recalling important personal information, which is not due to substance abuse or a general medical condition, says psychotherapist Diane Burgert.

Individuals with this disorder experience frequent gaps in memory, normal developmental growth in definitions of the self is hindered, instability of mood, fear, anger and frustration, Burgert says.

Diana was born on August 5, 1981 with fetal alcohol syndrome. Her mother drank during pregnancy, which can cause behavioral issues and facial deformities. However, Diana did not come out of her mother’s womb. Sarah did.

When Sarah left her biological mom as an infant and was put up for adoption, Diana says her mind split and fragmented.

As Diana Ash, 30, looks in a three-sided mirror, she says she sees Jack, 5, crossing his eyes, Jesse, 10, stick out her tongue, and Lilly, 15, winking. Diana says each day she avoids looking in the mirror for too long because all her personalities come forward and she can see them looking back at her.

"Being a mother with dissociative identity disorder has a lot of stigma. I got calls from Child Protective Services telling me I was an unfit mother."

-Diana Ash, Western student

Story by Eliza Chan • Photos by Jaynie Hancock

Living with multiple personality disorder
into two parts because she did not want to live with the adoptive family, the Mains. This is when Diana arrived.

“Sarah is 14 days older than me,” she says. “She is the core of my system and was born first on July 24, 1981.”

When Diana was growing up, her mother would see Diana playing with her imaginary friend Sarah. In Diana’s mind, Sarah was a real girl in front of her. She later realized that she was part of Sarah.

At age 3, Diana was sexually abused by her adoptive father. The horrific abuse continued for many years. During this time, she developed about five identities per year between the ages of 9 and 15. In 1994, her father, was convicted for rape of a child in the second degree and imprisoned in Whatcom County Jail for six months. At age 2, Diana was sexually abused by her adoptive father. The horrific abuse continued for many years. During this time, she developed about five identities per year between the ages of 9 and 15. In 1994, her father, was convicted for rape of a child in the second degree and imprisoned in Whatcom County Jail for six months.

“People with dissociative identity disorder often report experiencing severe physical and sexual abuse, especially during childhood,” Burgert says.

People with this disorder may have posttraumatic symptoms like nightmares, flashbacks and startled responses. Self-mutilation and suicidal and aggressive behavior can occur, Burgert says.

“It was early in our marriage and one of Diana’s alters realized she was married and was like, ‘Shit, I need to bail!’” says. “I blocked her off and she removed the window screen and jumped out of the second-story window and got a sprained ankle. She outran the window screen and jumped out of the second-floor window and got a sprained ankle. She outran the Bellingham Police Department, but couldn’t outrun the canine.”

Casey had to win the trust of not just one woman, but several. It was a learning curve a for the both of them, he says. After winning Diana’s trust, they had their first child, Lauren, on January 23, 2007.

“Being a mother with dissociative identity disorder has a lot of stigma. I got calls from Child Protective Services telling me I was an unfit mother,” Diana says. “They didn’t take her away, but they kept me under a watchful eye. I didn’t know how to be a mom. I just knew what not to do.”

Diana draws upon different identities to take care of her daughter. Usually two or three identities take turns playing with Lauren.

Parenting is not supposed to be easy, Casey says. Lauren doesn’t understand or know about her mother. She sees it as mood swings. All the people that Diana could switch into are safe and great with Lauren.

In the beginning of their relationship, Diana would regularly disappear. She had several blackouts during this time.

Diana ended up at the Lake Chelan Trauma Center, where she was diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression.

Casey stuck with her through her diagnoses. They were married on April 19, 2002.

“The horror of my system and was born first on July 24, 1981.”

When Diana’s father was released from prison and after she graduated from high school, she ran as far away from her parents as she could. She ended up on the streets and finally found comfort in her now-husband Casey Ash’s home.

“He made me feel normal,” Diana says. “When I was with him I was able to express myself and feel that I could be loved.”

“Sometimes if she switches into a young one, they play together and I catch them coloring,” he says.

It is not definite, but those with mental illnesses are likely to pass the illness onto their offspring, Burgert says. Lauren is hard of hearing and suffers from anxiety already. She could later develop depression, Diana says.

Since her daughter was born, Diana has developed several physical issues alongside her mental illnesses. Paralysis from the waist down struck her last year during fall quarter. She can barely walk and is bound to a wheelchair made of metal, rubber and cotton.

Deafness also runs in Diana’s family. She knew she would lose her hearing eventually, but it came all too soon. In 2001, she became deaf. All of these illnesses affect how people see her, Diana says.

Different than physical disorders, most mental illnesses are invisible to most people, so there is less understanding and sometimes less compassion for those with psychiatric disorders,” says Emily Gibson, physician and director of the Western Health Center.

The most common mental disorders seen at the health center are anxiety, mood and depressive disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, attention disorders, psychotic disorders and all types of addictions, Gibson says.

The last time Diana was hospitalized was July 5, 2008. She voluntarily hospitalized herself and found treatment in Florida to help her cope and live with her disorder after her symptoms went haywire. She needed to find help slowing the hospitalizations down. She was in the treatment center for almost two months.

“I came home a brand-new woman. I was able to be a wife, a mom and I was able to go back to school and graduate,” she says. “I am not fully cured, but I can stay out of the hospital and can go on vacation without being institutionalized. Now I am here loving school and loving the opportunity to be here and share my journey and knowledge.”

Diana’s 5-year-old daughter Lauren notices her mom’s personalities, but is too young to understand. Diana and her husband explain them as mood swings, and plan on telling her about the disorder when she is 10 years old.
**SUPER WITH A SIDE OF HUMAN**

Why some people like their heroes with humanity

*Story by Branden Griffith*
*Photo by Brian Corey*
*Illustration by Ryan Hume*

As an emerald spark shoots through the pitch-black sky, a tremendous beam of energy catches up, and knocks it out of the air. Hurdling to the earth, the spark lodges into the ground, spewing dirt and rock from the impact. As the rubble clears, a man is left standing. Showing only a few singed hairs and a torn suit, the man is barely injured by the blast. The spark is actually the rugged Marauder, a superhero dressed in brilliant green, created over the course of 30 years by Burlington author and Western employee, P.J. Creelman.

Creelman has been a fan of comics since he was a child, and has begun writing a script for a series of comics, which he hopes to publish through Dark Horse Comics in Oregon.

“I want to create superhumans, but with an emphasis on human,” Creelman says.

Like other superheroes, his character Marauder has a weakness. Although it isn’t kryptonite that brings him to his knees, something else holds power over the unkempt good-guy.

Marauder is similar to the DC Comics superhero Superman in that he can fly, deflect bullets and has incredible strength. However, in both stories the troubled past affects the hero. This is a trait becoming more common in comics.

“You are almost obligated to give characters weaknesses now,” Creelman says. “It is Marauder’s past that haunts him.”

Western English literature graduate Jazz Espiritu is an avid comic book reader. He says he is noticing more of these traits in the comic books he reads.

“I like to connect with my superheroes,” Espiritu says. “I don’t have powerful rings and I’m not Superman’s cousin. The emotional weaknesses really get me. Those are the ones you can relate to as a reader.”

Espiritu references Superman who was first introduced in Action Comics in 1938. Espiritu says at the time, Superman was invincible because that is what people wanted. Now readers want to connect with the superheroes.

In September 2011, the comic publishing company DC released complete overhauls to each story line, including Superman. “They kept all the heroes the same with all the same weaknesses, but now Superman has no mother, and she was his only connection to Earth,” Espiritu says. “He is dealing with more than just Kryptonite.”

Despite Marauder’s invincibility, similar emotional struggles weigh on the hero, causing distress.

“He is unstable,” Creelman says. “He was bullied as a kid, so he has deep—seeded fears and anger, but now he has got this anger with an indestructible, super-powerful body and he can do something about it.”

Marauder also values life above all else, Creelman says. In the eyes of his enemy, this is a weakness. They use hench-men wearing exploding proximity bombs, killing the villains as Marauder gets farther away.

“The trap was to keep him from leaving,” Creelman said. “But once I wrote him into the trap, I had to write him out of it, and that created a challenge for me.”

The heroes of “The Second String Theory,” as Creelman calls it, were loosely based on already popular heroes such as The Flash, Batman and The Green Arrow, but have specialized weaknesses.

For instance, a character named Speed has super speed but only average reflexes, which causes crashes and blunders. The character Half Shot wields a bow and arrow, which he passed down from his father, who was the only person he knew how to connect with.

“I like to connect with my superheroes. I don’t have powerful rings and I’m not Superman’s cousin.”

-Jazz Espiritu, Western graduate
various schools of martial arts capitalize on the body’s areas that can be exploited through martial arts. The framework are specific vital points and areas of weakness; it is far from invulnerable. Scattered throughout the body’s capable of regenerating tissue and recombining bone, yet ‘maximum effect with minimum effort.’”

The human body is an amazingly resilient organism, capable of regenerating tissue and recombining bone, yet it is far from invulnerable. Scattered throughout the body’s framework are specific vital points and areas of weakness – areas that can be exploited through martial arts. The various schools of martial arts capitalize on the body’s weaknesses in different ways, yet all center on stopping an opponent with minimal force, Eis says.

Besides arteries, the eyes, temple, throat, groin and shins are the most susceptible to debilitating attacks, Eis says. “The blood rodeo and blood choke are good for life-or-death situations;” he says. “But not all self-defense situations warrant that much force. The force must always equal the threat.”

Eis began learning judo at the age of 10 when his father was stationed in Hawaii. Now, 30 years later, he teaches eight styles of martial arts at his facility near Western, including kickboxing, ju-jitsu, muay thai and street self-defense. Eis also works as a security guard at Whatcom County Juvenile Detention. Traditional schools such as ju-jitsu and karate have cultural and historical backgrounds, while street self-defense centers mainly on protecting oneself, he says.

The eye jab and blood choke are good for life-or-death situations, but not all self-defense situations warrant that much force.”

-Rob Eis, owner of Unbridled Martial Arts

Martial arts also weaken those points that are normally considered strong. JT Taylor, a black belt and martial arts expert for more than 40 years, says utilizing anatomical physics generates weaknesses in the body. "You can create weakness using things like torque or leverage," Taylor says. "Now you may have a strong arm, but if I do a joint lock, then an elbow lock, then a shoulder lock, it creates weakness where there’s strength. That is what ju-jitsu is all about.”

Taylor instructs self-defense and martial arts classes through Western’s Physical Education Department and also teaches at the Pacific Northwest Karate Center in Bellingham. He says situational awareness, controlling fear and weaknesses of the body are the main tenets of self-defense. Taylor recommends using distraction techniques, such as slapping an attacker’s face. “Using brain work, you are taking their focus away from their muscles,” he says.

Taylor says, whether in martial arts or any sporting endeavor, the mind can be a weakness. “The mind can create doubt and fear,” he says. “Mental conditioning, that’s important too.” Taylor says focusing on ideas such as self-confidence and self-awareness keep the mind strong. “I think it’s a part of the body that doesn’t get enough attention,” he says.

Shayne Simpson, owner of the Pacific Northwest Karate Center, says the best defense is being aware of the dangers in the world and remembering that what may be a vital point for one, may not be the same for someone else. “You built up those weak points and it’s no longer a vital target,” Simpson says. “It turns weakness into strength, but it can do the reverse too. Unchecked confidence and power can be used righteously or unrighteously.”

Psychological weakness plays a large role in martial arts and remains Simpson’s main focus in his instruction. “Awareness, courage, communication – a lack of any of these is weakness as well,” he says. “I want to turn those weaknesses into strengths. (Martial arts) empowers people and empowers lives.”

Tristie Johnson, a Western junior, experienced that empowerment and self-awareness firsthand since joining Western’s Judo Club five months ago. She says the
everything in life,” she says. “But I’ve made great friends and I find it an anchor.”

In contrast to karate, ju-jitsu and muay thai, judo makes use of actions and reactions by using an opponent’s momentum and leverage against them. In terms of weak points, judo utilizes pressure points such as joints, arms and elbows, primarily because those are less painful.

Johnson has been a severe asthmatic since the age of 4 and although this forces her to sit out of practice occasionally, she has adapted to the rigorous exercise. “Progress takes a while, but that’s fine,” she says. “Judo is a double-edged sword because you are constantly getting pinned, sat on and flipped over, but you can still get up.” Johnson says the process has not come without frustration.

Ultimately, the martial arts enable humans to overcome the physical and mental weaknesses inherent in the human body. Students of judo, ju-jitsu, karate and mixed martial arts learn self-confidence, psychological dexterity and the means to turn weakness into strength. For Eis, martial arts also provide him with discipline to get out of bed in the morning and the confidence to know when not to fight. “The longer you do it, the less you put yourself in those situations,” Eis says. “I’ll do more laundry than I ever will fighting in my life.”

“I find it an anchor.”

“[Judo] is a double-edged sword because you are constantly getting pinned, sat on and flipped over, but you can still get up.”

-Tristie Johnson, Western junior

There are weaknesses, but in here you can overcome them.

-Cara Jerde practices the rear naked choke on instructor Rob Eis during a class at Unbridled Martial Arts on Jan. 26. Eis says the carotid artery is a weak area because rear naked chokes cause unconsciousness six times faster than airway chokes.

Paris the Pekingese has been with Western alumna Sarah Rice since he was a 7-week-old puppy. Two weeks after Rice bought Paris, the genetic weaknesses that come with purebred dogs began to show.

“Paris poked himself in the eye when he was 8 or 9 weeks old with a stick,” Rice says. “That’s when he got his first eye ulcer.”

Paris is now almost 8 years old and weighs 8 pounds. He has long, white hair that becomes matted easily. His face is flat and wrinkled, and his eyes protrude from his tiny head — a defining feature of the breed.

Purebred dogs are known for their genetic weaknesses, a result of inbreeding closely related animals. Small, bug-eyed dogs have a history of eye problems. Their eyelids aren’t big enough to completely cover their large eyes, so their eyes become dry and are easily poked.

“We had to put up a barrier around our Christmas tree because he could just walk by it and poke his eye with a pine needle,” Rice says.

“I rub his throat so he’ll swallow and breathe, which calms him down.”

-Sarah Rice, Western graduate

Every day, Rice uses eye drops to keep Paris’ eyes from drying out. Breathing problems are also prevalent in small purebreds. Paris is brachycephalic, which means he has a flat face and shortened or flattened throat and breathing passages. This can result in a lack of oxygen. When Paris becomes panicked, Rice says his breathing sounds like reverse sneezing.

“When that happens, I rub his throat so he’ll swallow and breathe, which calms him down,” Rice says.

Karen Hase has been breeding and showing American Kennel Club (AKC) registered Shetland Sheepdogs, or Shelties, for 25 years. The Club is a national association that sets rules and regulations for dog shows.

Hase says that Shelties’ primary genetic problems are their hips and eyes. She always has puppies examined by an orthopedic panel, which reviews X-rays of their eyes and hips and grades them. Based on that rating, Hase chooses whether she will breed the dogs.

“The problems, Rice says, come from people who want designer dogs, or “purse dogs” as Rice likes to call them.

Hase says that finding a reputable breeder is the best way to assure that a purebred will be healthy. “I believe that the majority of people who show and breed purebreds do it for the love of their dogs and the competition,” Hase says. “But purebred-dog breeders say that as long as it is done properly, breeding can improve bloodlines, protecting future generations from genetic problems.”

“I believe that the majority of people who show and breed purebreds do it for the love of their dogs and the competition.”

-Sarah Rice, Western graduate

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Finding strength after coming out of a coma

Story by Brianna Gibbs
Photos courtesy of Blake Parsons

In May 2011, Blake Parsons awoke in the hospital, unaware of how he got there. The last thing the 21-year-old remembered was being in school at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Wash.

Less than 48 hours prior, Parsons was running home from a friend's house in the dark. He stumbled over a 4-foot ledge lining the road — a misstep that sent him flying head first into the pavement. The fall spared most of his body, but the impact fractured multiple bones in his face. His brain ricocheted off the right side of his skull into the left, causing a traumatic brain injury that sent him into an immediate coma.

Within hours, Parsons was air lifted to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. It was just after 1 a.m. when his parents scrambled from their home in Redmond, Wash., to meet their youngest son at the hospital.

His tall body lay motionless on the hospital bed and his bruised face was swollen. Tubes ran down his throat, clearing it of blood and allowing a steady stream of oxygen to his lungs. Blake was in a coma, and doctors predicted he would not make it through the night.

A coma is often described as the body's emergency response when faced with traumatic injuries. In an effort to protect the brain and body, the conscious parts of the mind will shut down to decrease activity and promote healing.

Recovering from traumatic brain injuries is a long process. Victims must undergo months of physical therapy to strengthen the damaged parts of their brain. Not all victims of a traumatic brain injury are rendered unconscious, but a coma often hints at the extent of their injury, said Dr. David Peterson, an emergency-room physician for more than 40 years.

"The length of the coma will often determine the rehabilitation that follows," he says. "But even short durations of unconsciousness are met with months of rehabilitation to repair a patient's weakened mind and body."

The road to recovery

More than 24 hours after arriving at Harborview, Blake began showing the first signs of consciousness.

"As a parent it was horrible," Blake's mother, Lynda Parsons, says. "I imagine it's almost as bad as your child actually dying. It's just so close to it and that's what you're really afraid of — that he's not going to wake up."

Less than 48 hours after the accident, Blake did wake up. But it wouldn't be until five days later that he fully understood what was happening.

Blake's brother, Brent, says during the first few days at the hospital Blake could barely remember what he had for lunch.

"This recovery didn't seem fast at first," Brent says. "He couldn't remember if you were there in the morning or even what year it was."

Doctors estimated Blake would have to remain at the hospital for 10 days of inpatient rehabilitation, followed by three months of outpatient care. The injury damaged his brain to the point where he could no longer walk, balance, eat or go to the bathroom by himself. He would have to relearn all of this.

A week after his accident, Blake began intense rehabilitation. Beginning at 8 a.m. each day, he underwent extensive hours of walking, exercise and problem solving through simple cooking tasks and puzzles.

"I remember seeing a camel once and knowing what it was, but not being able to say it. That was such a strange feeling."

- Blake Parsons

"It was all very grueling and he needed assistance with everything," Lynda Parsons says. "He was always tired, but he had a great attitude and never complained. He just kept going."

While much of his early memory of the hospital is foggy, Blake says he remembers almost everything from his inpatient rehabilitation.

"I did a lot of puzzles and looking at picture books to name what an item was," Blake says. "I remember seeing a camel once and knowing what it was, but not being able to say it. That was such a strange feeling."

He says short-term memory was the hardest hurdle in his recovery. The accident had damaged his ability to think clearly about specific events.

Part of Blake's occupational therapy involved learning how to complete basic life tasks. Early in his rehabilitation he was asked to cook an egg and prepare instant coffee. He says he burnt the egg and ruined the coffee.

"They wanted me to be able to multitask and do things spontaneously," Blake says. "It was really just so overwhelming and I could only focus on one thing at a time."

Despite the severity of his injuries, Blake did recover. Within a month, he was discharged from the hospital and continued his rehabilitation at home.

"The doctors gave us a timeline of healing," Lynda Par-
“I changed the anatomy of my brain, of course I was going to be different, but I also had a second chance at living my life.”

-Blake Parsons

sons says, “The first six weeks have rapid healing, then slower healing after six months. They say where you are a year after the accident is the most your brain will improve.”

Adding to a Blake’s recovery was the financial burden of his injury. According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, an organization that helps family and friends of traumatic brain injury patients, the lifetime costs for someone battling traumatic brain injuries can reach $4 million.

“We had insurance, but that doesn’t cover everything,” Lynda Parsons says. “You can’t even imagine the costs. We all know how expensive it is to go to the doctor for 15 minutes, so imagine being there for two weeks. It’s staggering.”

From weakness comes strength

An MRI of Blake’s brain in September showed a full recovery, and his motor skills have improved enough to drive a car and even go wakeboarding.

“I always understood that things were going to be different,” Blake says. “I changed the anatomy of my brain, of course I was going to be different, but I also had a second chance at living my life.”

Almost a year after his accident, Blake still has impaired hearing on his right side and said his agility remains weak. He is back to taking classes full time at Central and says he notices slight changes in his emotions, but has retained his humor and positive attitude.

“It seems like he has a shorter temper,” Brent Parsons says. “But it’s nothing bad at all. That’s the only difference I’ve really noticed and even that is only in certain situations.”

Blake says he has high hopes to be in the best shape of his life this May, a year after the accident.

“I know I’m a stronger person now,” he says. “Not just physically and mentally, but emotionally and spiritually. I had the biggest reality check anyone could get and now I just have such a desire to live.”

Blake says he doesn’t really believe in the notion of living each day like it is your last, but finds his own ways to cope with how close he came to dying.

“How I think of it is living each day so that when you go to bed at night, if it was your last day, you’d be happy,” he says.

Finding the middle ground in an argument

When Bellingham lawyer Philip Buri was 6 years old, he convinced his younger sister that his dime was worth more than her dollar and they traded.

Now, when Buri argues with his wife about doing the dishes, he doesn’t want to prove who is right or wrong. The ultimate goal is to reach a compromise and move on.

Whether it is marriage, a committed relationship or just friendship, this situation may sound familiar. Here are a few tips that can be helpful in resolving arguments and maintaining healthy relationships.

Tip #1
A good argument starts with strong content and an understanding of the topic, says associate professor and debate team coach Steven Woods. Many arguments are spur-of-the-moment, but if the argument takes place in a public forum, you should take time to research the topic.

Tip #2
Take an argument and give it color and life, says Ziad Youssef, managing partner at mytrafficsman.net, a law firm for legal answers on traffic violations. He says the power of charisma is the best way to win an argument.

“If you bring in charm to an argument, you give life to what you want people to believe,” Youssef says. “Charm is how you present yourself. It’s about being a charming person, he says. A person can show charisma without smiling, he says. Martin Luther King Jr. rarely smiled during his speech at the Washington Monument, but the charisma in his voice moved thousands of people. Bill Clinton’s smiles and jokes moved an entire country, he says.

Tip #3
Never tell someone what he or she thinks, says Daniel Hagen, Western’s last Associated Students Civil Controversy coordinator for 2011.

“When you say things to someone that are your own words, it’s more personal,” Hagen says. “Keep in mind what someone says to you might not be what they are trying to communicate to you.”

Tip #4
Fight fair, Buri says.

“Arguments designed to push someone’s buttons or make them feel guilty may have temporary power, but they are never persuasive,” he says. “They are designed to shut someone’s mind down and they are used to react with the emotions, not the mind.”

Buri says personal attacks will leave them feeling angry and manipulated. That is not the goal of an argument. The ultimate goal of an argument is to resolve conflict, he says. The best outcome is a decision that is a compromise.
Overcoming gluten intolerance

Story by Bren Baxter • Photo Illustration by Sarah Richardson

For Western junior Chyena Markley, being sick her whole life started to seem natural. Markley would catch bronchitis five times a year and get sick more often than her friends, but doctors kept telling her she just had a weak immune system.

After a round of blood tests at age 18, Markley finally discovered what kept making her sick. She was allergic to gluten, along with dairy, eggs, yeast, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, spinach and shellfish.

One in 130 people may have a gluten intolerance in the United States. Gluten intolerance involves being very sensitive to gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. A person’s symptoms can be similar to those with celiac disease, a lifelong autoimmune condition that doesn’t allow a person to consume any food containing gluten.

“When I found out, I was so depressed because that was literally everything that I ate,” Markley says.

The wafting smells from a pizza parlor or fresh homemade baked goods at friends’ houses are constant temptations for Kelle Rankin-Sunter. For more than nine years, Rankin-Sunter has lived a gluten-free lifestyle, but the temptations for Kelle Rankin-Sunter. For more than nine years, Rankin-Sunter has lived a gluten-free lifestyle, but the temptations for Kelle Rankin-Sunter are constant. Rankin-Sunter is the Bellingham Gluten Information Group leader, and works to increase awareness of gluten intolerance and sensitivity.

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“The really good news is that being gluten-free is all about being in control of your own health,” Rankin-Sunter says. “There are no medications to take, no surgeries to prepare for and recover from. Staying gluten-free will help to keep you as healthy as you can be.”

For some, being diagnosed gluten intolerant is the best thing that ever happened. It forces that person to eat single-ingredient items — vegetables, fruit, fish, meat — instead of processed, packaged food.

The dangers of gluten

Dr. Jean Layton, a naturopathic doctor at the Layton Health Clinic in Bellingham, Wash., specializes in diagnosing and treating gluten-intolerance and celiac disease.

There is a mourning cycle for gluten, just like any other loss. First you don’t believe, then you believe but don’t agree, and then you realize that it is real and necessary, Layton says.

Layton explains that there is a big misconception surrounding gluten-intolerance. Many people have the impression that it is a choice rather than a medical necessity.

A 2010 study in the Journal of the American Medical Association looked at 30,000 patients from 1969 to 2008 and examined deaths of people in three groups. The study looked at those with celiac disease, latent celiac disease and those with gluten sensitivity.

The findings concluded that there was a 35 percent increased risk of death in those with celiac disease. This research proved that a person didn’t have to have celiac disease to have the serious health problems and complications — even death — from eating gluten.

For those living with this intolerance, gluten starts to become a dietary boogeyman. If gluten is ingested, people feel the pain and discomfort after eating wheat products, but sometimes lack the hallmark signs of celiac disease such as intestinal deterioration.

There are also some people who are affected by gluten that show no symptoms at all, Rankin-Sunter says.

It has been more than 10 months since Markley has cheated on her diet. If she were to have the slightest bite of gluten now, it will cause her to have a stomach ache a couple hours after eating. If she were to eat an entire meal with gluten in it, she would instantly become nauseous and most likely vomit.

“When I first found out, it took me a good year to completely cut out gluten,” Markley says.

With her laundry list of food allergies, Markley experiences more than just stomach aches. “I get bruises down my legs because of my allergies,” she says.

When Markley consumes gluten her body starts to physically weaken, making it difficult for her to stand on her own.

Protective eating

At first a gluten-free diet can be a difficult to follow, but with time it becomes easier to live with.

“Never ever let a meal that is not correctly prepared leave the table and be returned to the kitchen,” Layton says.

“If something is prepared wrong, the kitchen needs to start over, not just pull the crooutons off of the salad.”

Learning how to be protective while eating out or shopping at the grocery store is key to starting a gluten-free diet the right way.

Layton suggests carrying extra food for when you get hungry and a wheat-based product starts to look really good. Carrying extra enzyme supplements that specifically degrade the gluten in products can help ease possible side effects of accidentally eating gluten. These are similar to supplements that are used by those with lactose intolerance.

During Markley’s freshman year at Western in 2009, she only lived in the dorms for two quarters due to the inconvenience of gluten-free items.

“Having a meal plan was a waste of money for me,” Markley says.

Having a gluten-intolerance doesn’t have to be a weakness. More awareness means more implementation on the part of restaurants, grocery stores and schools.

Rankin-Sunter suggests contacting a local support group to answer questions and provide emotional support during the tough days.

Chances are most supermarkets are already carrying items labeled “gluten-free” where this wouldn’t have existed five years ago. Gluten-free is not a fad diet. There is no magic pill to make it all go away. Identifying and eliminating the foods that do not work is the only answer.

“I feel like a whole new person. I have so much more energy now. I feel so different.”

—Chyena Markley, Western junior

Food labels are getting better. The Atrium and Zoe’s Bookside Bagels both offer gluten-free options for students.

Looking on the bright side

After years of failed doctor visits, Markley’s luck finally changed with her gluten-free diet.

“T’ve feel like a whole new person. I have so much more energy now,” Markley says, having been on her diet for four years. “I feel so different, it was weird never being sick.”

Markley plans to begin a gluten intolerance support group at Western in the spring, now that she understands the battle of her intolerance while in college.

While the gluten-free industry is rapidly growing, it’s important to do research and be aware of what items are bought and consumed.

First, accept that you will probably get contaminated at some point, but you can become your own advocate and educate yourself about being gluten-free, Rankin-Sunter says.

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In July 2010, 23-year-old Bonifacio Sanchez arrived 12 hours late for his mother’s cousin’s wedding in Mount Vernon, tired and hungry, after hours of studying and exams. The grueling summer heat did not help his situation. Chilean music played in the background as couples danced the night away. The men drank their bottles of beer and the women chatted in groups — separate from the men. Sanchez found himself in a dilemma: how to obtain some food for his growling stomach.

In Latin cultures, specific gender roles are assigned to men and women. The woman’s role is to cook, clean and raise the children. The man’s role is to provide for the family, show dominance and display power — machismo. Latin American studies professor Maria Chavez says from a cultural-anthropological view, machismo is the concept of male virility (male conquests over women who are neither their girlfriends nor wives). Machismo comes from the Spanish word “macho” which means man or masculine. “Sometimes machismo expresses itself as hyper-masculinity and there is nothing female about you,” Chavez says.

After minutes of deliberation, Sanchez walked into the kitchen filled with women putting tortillas in bags, rice and beans in containers, and others cleaning dishes. He politely nodded to those who saw him and headed straight to the large pot sitting on the counter still filled with beans.

Sanchez grabbed a plate, helped himself to a serving of beans and tortillas. Content, he walked out of the kitchen without a word to the dumbfounded women. Too scared about what the men would say to him after his blatant display of anti-machismo and too shy to join the women, Sanchez ate silently by himself in a corner closest to the kitchen.

His mother saw what he did and joined him. She was weary from a full day of cooking and cleaning. Sanchez asked his mother if what he did was wrong. She shook her head and said no one cared. But he knew it bothered some people because they stared at him and shook their heads.

Being a man who is Mexican, he says the idea of machismo is an issue he struggles with daily by trying to express his feelings and emotions more. Sanchez says he tries to teach others to treat women with respect and as equal partners.

At the wedding party, Sanchez says the machismo way was to ask one of the women to go back into the kitchen and serve him.

“I thought it was very disrespectful of me to go up to [them to be served] so late after they had been working since 6 a.m.,” Sanchez says. “I thought they might want to enjoy the party.”

A man has to show his machismo to be respected and it is accomplished through dominance, Chavez says.

Now a Western senior, Sanchez says education is the only way to shine light on machismo because it is rarely discussed in the home. He describes machismo as a form of hierarchy between male and female gender roles; it encourages both domestic violence and alcoholism, Sanchez says.

According to an article in the Christian Science Monitor, more Latin American countries are shunning machismo through the media. An advertisement in Ecuador that ended with “machismo is violence” caused a 25 percent increase in domestic violence reports in 2011, reports that were never reported in 2010.
Family vs. anti-machismo

Growing up in a household run by a machismo father, Sanchez says his father is the breadwinner and financially supports the family. His mother works equally as hard for their family as a housewife, who seasonally works as a migrant farm worker, he says.

“She wakes up earlier than my father every day to make breakfast for him and she takes care of the kids after he is gone,” Sanchez says. He is one of 10 children.

A man shows virility by the number of children or wives he has, says Chavez. In Latin American culture, a man can have more than one household – a wife and children – and a different household,” she says.

The challenge for the man becomes providing food, shelter and security for the families. If he cannot do one or the other households, Chavez says. In Latin American culture, a man can have, Chavez says. MECHA has given her an outlet to invoke awareness in others. In machismo, the woman is seen as weak, a concept she is actively changing through the club.

Education and job opportunities

Chavez says going to college helped him learn more about machismo. He says as an American-cultural studies major, he took a class where they discussed machismo, its positives and negatives are associated with machismo such as domestic violence and supporting the family.

To a man, a defining positive aspect of machismo is defending his and his family’s honor, Chavez says. Due to poor economy and lack of education, some men turn to deviations, such as alcoholism and domestic violence, when they cannot support their family, she says. In Latin America there are more female headed households with many children, Chavez says.

“We need to increase education and job opportunities for women because they are left abandoned and stay with the children,” Chavez says.

Sanchez says education has empowered him and he is trying to slowly change his family’s pro-machismo beliefs while being careful not come off as disrespectful to them.

As the current co-chair of MECHA, he is actively pursuing change like Del Toro.

Redefining the gender roles

Del Toro says the best way to get rid of the machismo stereotype is through education and reaching out to other youth. She says by teaching the youth that anti-machismo is not a weakness, they will learn to treat all females as equals. She says treating a woman as an equal partner in life, at work or at home takes a different strength from machismo.

Sanchez says he is no longer reserved for his mother and sisters. Now he helps his mother in the kitchen without worrying about a confrontation from his father, Sanchez says.

“I think he is slowly coming around to me being in the kitchen, cooking and cleaning for myself,” he says.

Story by Stephanie Lonzak • Photo illustration by Jaynie Hancock

When Christopher Gil sees blood he feels a sickly, cold-sweat feeling coming on. If the Whatcom Community College student happens to catch a glimpse of the pure-red substance, he starts to feel lightheaded, sometimes to the point where he can’t stand. Once he starts feeling woozy his next move is to do something, anything, to get the image of the oozing-ruby droplets out of his mind.

Gil says he gets lightheaded when he sees blood. Many people have some weakness toward blood, whether they see it, feel it or think about it; the idea of blood doesn’t sit right with them.

“I can see little scrapes and little cuts — but anything that’s more than a paper cut — I definitely start feeling uneasy right away,” Gil says.

Gil says seeing blood on TV or in the movies doesn’t bother him as much. However, when he gets that cold-sweat feeling and lightheadedness he knows so well when he sees blood, he copes by looking away and does his best to forget the sight of it.

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When basic instincts kick in at the sight of blood

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The guilt of giving in

Why we feel bad about the things that give us pleasure

For some people, it’s watching Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi drunkenly prance around on MTV’s “Jersey Shore.” For others, it’s flaunting an openly hip taste in music among friends, but secretly believing that rapper R. Kelly is the lyricist of this generation. And for the millions of Americans who pledged, once and for all, to keep their New Year’s resolution and lose that extra weight, it’s succumbing to pure desire and devouring that pint of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream.

“Everyone has [guilty pleasures], and sharing them, often even if you’re kind of embarrassed about it, will make people feel more comfortable because they feel more accepted about their own guilt,” she says.

In a similar vein of vapid pop culture, Nick Dillon, an employee at Everyday Music on East Magnolia Street, feels no shame in admitting his love for female pop singers Beyoncé and Rihanna.

“It’s just really fun sometimes to listen to straight pop,” he says.

Dillon says his musical taste ranges from hardcore to metal to ambient noise, and he says he would actually find more shame in listening to a “buzz band” popularized by a trend-watching music website such as Pitchfork. Dillon says a band that puts on a cool front, such as Vampire Weekend, may be more of a guilty pleasure than an artist who openly embraces the silliness of pop.

“I try to avoid that stuff because it… caters to my generation. I don’t really like it,” Dillon says.

At Chocolate Necessities, located on Cornwall Avenue, guilt comes in a more tangible — and delicious — form. The shop specializes in gourmet gelato made locally from high-quality European ingredients, rich dark chocolate and decadent truffles. The treats would make a true chocolate connoisseur weak in the knees.

Chelsea VonStubbe, a manager at the shop, says that it’s not uncommon for people to come in and sample an item but not buy anything.

“Why we feel bad about the things that give us pleasure

Story by Kirsten O’Brien
Photo illustrations by Sarah Richardson

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Story by Kirsten O’Brien
Photo illustrations by Sarah Richardson

For some people, it’s watching Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi drunkenly prance around on MTV’s “Jersey Shore.” For others, it’s flaunting an openly hip taste in music among friends, but secretly believing that rapper R. Kelly is the lyricist of this generation. And for the millions of Americans who pledged, once and for all, to keep their New Year’s resolution and lose that extra weight, it’s succumbing to pure desire and devouring that pint of Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream.

“Everyone has [guilty pleasures], and sharing them, often even if you’re kind of embarrassed about it, will make people feel more comfortable because they feel more accepted about their own guilt,” she says.

In a similar vein of vapid pop culture, Nick Dillon, an employee at Everyday Music on East Magnolia Street, feels no shame in admitting his love for female pop singers Beyoncé and Rihanna.

“It’s just really fun sometimes to listen to straight pop,” he says.

Dillon says his musical taste ranges from hardcore to metal to ambient noise, and he says he would actually find more shame in listening to a “buzz band” popularized by a trend-watching music website such as Pitchfork. Dillon says a band that puts on a cool front, such as Vampire Weekend, may be more of a guilty pleasure than an artist who openly embraces the silliness of pop.

“I try to avoid that stuff because it… caters to my generation. I don’t really like it,” Dillon says.

At Chocolate Necessities, located on Cornwall Avenue, guilt comes in a more tangible — and delicious — form. The shop specializes in gourmet gelato made locally from high-quality European ingredients, rich dark chocolate and decadent truffles. The treats would make a true chocolate connoisseur weak in the knees.

Chelsea VonStubbe, a manager at the shop, says that it’s not uncommon for people to come in and sample an item but not buy anything.
Families fighting alcoholism

When genetics plays a role in decision making

Charlie White remembers his mom and stepfather screaming at each other, both clutching cans of Milwaukee’s Best beer. Bottles and cans littered the coffee table and a chair was haphazardly on its side. His stepfather’s face was inches from his mother’s. He screamed that she pushed him and made him trip over the chair on purpose. Watching, White burst into tears. His stepfather turned and advanced on him, still holding his beer, and yelled for him to be quiet. That’s when the 8-year-old boy realized he would never touch alcohol.

“I realized my dad’s drinking deprived me of friends since I couldn’t show them my life. I just went through school with a fake smile on instead.”

-Brenda Ortega, Western sophomore

Story by Amy Holm • Photo illustrations by Sarah Richardson

Charlie White remembers his mom and stepfather screaming at each other, both clutching cans of Milwaukee’s Best beer. Bottles and cans littered the coffee table and a chair was haphazardly on its side. His stepfather’s face was inches from his mother’s. He screamed that she pushed him and made him trip over the chair on purpose. Watching, White burst into tears. His stepfather turned and advanced on him, still holding his beer, and yelled for him to be quiet. That’s when the 8-year-old boy realized he would never touch alcohol.

“Simply put,” White says of his childhood, “It was hell.”

Children of alcoholic parents are four times as likely to develop alcoholism, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Though it is still a mystery, there is evidence to suggest that there is a genetic component to alcoholism — a person’s genes could increase their susceptibility to developing dependence on a substance.

College students drink more than any other age group, due to the idea that it is the time for experimenting, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. In 2010, 31 percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse, where alcohol negatively affects school, work or relationships. Students with parents who drink heavily often choose to stay away from alcohol because of the family dynamics that change when liquor is added to the mix.

White’s mother, older sister and stepfather are all recovering alcoholics. And his uncle died at age 52 after many years as an alcoholic. White knows if he were to drink, there would be a high possibility of becoming an alcoholic. But the main reason he doesn’t participate is because it brings up too many painful memories.

“When they got into their really bad arguments, which were about once a week, I saw the bottles and cans on the table and I wanted to get as far away as I could,” White says. And for a young boy, that’s only as far as the safety of the bedroom.

White says his family members are normally wonderful people, but that alcohol changes them. He says his mom would drink heavily and then shut down, as if she wasn’t even in the room. And he says his stepfather was an incredible person, except on those occasions when he would drink too much and get angry about the smallest issues.

In October 2010, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Brookhaven National Laboratory did the first study that gave scientific evidence for a genetic component of alcoholism. The results linked a deficiency in the brain of dopamine D2 receptors to an increased vulnerability for alcoholism.

This means that someone with fewer dopamine receptors, the body’s “feel good” chemical, is more likely to develop alcoholism because they aren’t able to process normal levels of pleasure as easily.

Genetics are an important part of alcoholism. But environmental factors also play into whether or not someone will become an alcoholic, says Elva Giddings, the Prevention and Wellness Services Director. “We all adapt our behavior to what we see happening around us and what we perceive as expected behavior.”

But for White, being around alcohol his whole life has made him completely against drinking. He hates to be around drinking or hear his friends talking about how wasted they got the past weekend.

He was labeled “preachy” by the party kids in high school because he warned them against drinking, explaining his past and that he was trying to protect them.

“In 2010, 31 percent of college students met criteria for a diagnosis of alcohol abuse, where alcohol negatively affects school, work or relationships.

Source: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

White’s warnings caused many arguments and broken friendships in high school.

White thinks everyone can have just as much fun, if not more, doing activities sober rather than drunk. “It’s a weak point in society that a right of passage is drinking yourself into a hangover every weekend, and sometimes on Wednesdays,” White says. “I always say the devil lies at the end of a bottle.”

Every person reacts differently to alcohol. One person may tell everyone they meet they love them, and another person may turn angry and violent.

Brenda Ortega, a Western sophomore, has told only four of her close friends that she has called the police on her own father.

“My dad’s drinking got to the point where my parents would argue, and then he actually hit my mom,” she says. Five years ago, Ortega was home the day before Thanksgiving and heard her mom’s screams.
Alcoholism: a destructive pattern of alcohol use that includes tolerance to or withdrawal from the substance, using more alcohol or using it for longer time than planned, and trouble reducing use.

Alcohol abuse: involves engaging in maladaptive behaviors with alcohol, but doesn’t include withdrawal symptoms or needing increasing amounts to achieve intoxication.

Source: MedicineNet.com

"What's Your Greatest Weakness?"

Story by Amanda McIntosh
Illustration by Danielle Yocom

With so many daunting possible questions and no way of knowing which ones will be asked or what the "right" thing to say is, job interviews can often seem like nothing more than a nerve-wracking test of character.

But one thing is certain: it will come in handy for job-seekers to have a clear idea of what their weaknesses are, or at least be prepared to answer the question, "What is your greatest weakness?" It is one of the most frequently asked questions in job interviews.

This question is most often dreaded by interviewees, says Susan Anderson, a career counselor in Western’s Career Services Center. But Anderson says students shouldn’t shy away from it or any other challenging interview questions.

Some people try to answer this question by turning strength into a weakness. Anderson says, for example, they will say things like, "I work too hard." Anderson advises not to answer the question this way.

"The best way to answer this question is to think about something you’re working to improve on and talk about how you’re trying to improve it," Anderson says.

For example, if you’re not good at organization, tell the interviewer, but add that you’ve been making to-do lists and using a daily planner.

Western Career Services Center’s assistant director, Kergie Garcia, agrees with Anderson.

"An interview is meant to be a positive experience," she says. "Don’t dwell on what you don’t have; talk about what you do have.

Creating a strong answer to the hardest interview question

"Try to think of what your last supervisor told you about [your strengths] and tell them about that," Anderson says.

Garcia recommends that job seekers learn how to answer the question, "Tell me about yourself."

"This is your opportunity at the beginning of the interview to give your sales pitch on why you are a good fit for the job," she says.

Ashley Reese, 22, is a 2011 Western graduate with a degree in kinesiology. Having done several interviews recently, Reese says the most common question she has been asked is, "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Reese’s biggest tip for a successful interview is to learn as much as you can about the position. "Know the basics of the position and research the company," Reese says. "When I researched the company, my interview was much easier."

In an interview, it is always best to focus on your strengths instead of your weaknesses, Anderson says.

"An interview can be a stressful experience for most people, but Anderson notes that it would be unusual if you weren’t nervous. A little bit of anxiety can keep you on your toes, she says.

"An interview is meant to be a positive experience," she says. "Don’t dwell on what you don’t have; talk about what you do have."
KLIPSUN IS A LUMMI WORD MEANING “BEAUTIFUL SUNSET”

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