**Preparation**

**Build up, build up, prepare the way,**

**remove every obstruction from my people’s way.**

***(Isaiah 57:14)***

**Go through, go through the gates;  
prepare the way of the people;  
make the highway smooth, gather out the stones;  
lift up a standard for the people.  
*(Isaiah 62:10)***

**Animal trainer: Because of a sprained ankle, Gunther Gebel-Williams couldn’t get his badly swollen foot into a boot. He decided to do the act in black tie. A tux would go with the soft black slippers he was wearing to favor his foot. Gunther should have remembered that at the beginning of every season, he walks up and down outside the steel cages, speaking reassuringly until the tigers within are used to his new costume. This day, Gebel-Williams entered the big cage without preparing them, and the snarling tigers came to kill him. “Hey! It’s me! It’s me!” he yelled, tearing off his jacket and shirt, letting the cats pick up his scent. The tigers lunged angrily. Gunther limped painfully backward, forcing himself to use the same firm, quiet tone the tigers knew. First one and then another tiger recognized him -- and Gunther Gebel-Williams again survived to tell the tale. *(John Culhane, in Reader’s Digest)***

**According to a court transcript, a defense lawyer questioning a witness in a drunk-driving case asked, “Officer, you say you are absolutely sure the defendant was intoxicated?” “Yes, sir,” was the answer. “And how long have you been with the state police?” “Six months,” replied the police officer. “After only six months on the force,” continued the defense attorney, “you are able to say with certainty that the defendant was intoxicated?” “Well, before I joined the force,” replied the rookie, “I was a bartender for 16 years.” *(Margie Boule, in The Oregonian)***

**Mating season for bats is autumn. But the females don’t become pregnant until spring. They retain the wherewithal through a sort of dormant period until they’re ready. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Dozens of people looked at a boiler that wasn’t working right, but couldn’t fix it. Then along came a man who whammed it with a hammer. It started right up and the man said his fee was $2,000. The owner said that was too high, because all he did was hit it with a hammer. The man said that was his fee because he was 20 years learning where to hit. *(Bits & Pieces)*  
  
Ray Bradbury, a prolific writer of science fiction, stuffs his mind with everything he can lay his hands on -- essays, poetry, plays, lithographs, music. “You have to feed yourself information every day,” he says. “When I was a kid, I sneaked over to the grown-up section in the library. Now, to make sure I’m fully informed, I often go into the children’s section.” *(Dudley Lynch, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Butterflies have cold blood. They have to sit in the sun for awhile before they can take off. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Professor Peter Grothe of the Monterey, California, Institute for International Studies says that a popular joke in what was East Berlin concerns the secret police: “Since they’ve lost their jobs, they’ve been working as cabdrivers, and they provide the best taxi service in the world. You just tell the driver the name of the person you want to see – he knows the address.” *(Herb Cain, in San Francisco Chronicle)*Rummaging through her attic, my friend Kathryn found an old shotgun. Unsure about how to dispose of it, she called her parents. “Take it to the police station,” her mother suggested. My friend was about to hang up when her mom added, “And Kathryn?” “Yes, Mom?” “Call first.” *(Karen Whedon, in Reader’s Digest)***

**So up jumps Allen Funt with his Candid Camera show again. Excellent. Do you know how he first got that notion? During World War II, he was put on a project to develop concealment techniques. He not only learned how to hide men and arms, but cameras and microphones, too. At war’s end, he converted his technical savvy to that appealing Candid Camera game. *(L. M. Boyd, in Boyd’s Book of Odd Facts, p. 64)***

**What causes a caterpillar to suddenly find a quiet place to hang upside down, spin a bunch of threads around itself, and wait quietly for some catastrophic change to occur? *(Rev. Richard Stratford)***

**During World War I Agatha Christie worked in a hospital dispensary, and it was there she acquired her extensive knowledge of poisons. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 117)***

**Outside a church: “Come in and let us prepare you for your finals.” *(The World's Greatest Collection of Heavenly Humor)***

**You qualified for the clergy in medieval times if you could read the opening words of the last verse of the 51st Psalm. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**College graduates are preparing for job interviews. One young man went into a department store to buy a necktie. He asked if it came with instructions. (Orben’s Current Comedy)**

**Setbacks pave the way for comebacks. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**In swimming especially, athletes use “peaking” to prepare for competitions, as follows:(1) Several months before the time, they train very, very hard, swimming 4-5 hours a day. (2) Then 4-5 days before the meet, they stop the intensive training and begin to peak. That is, they reduce the training to 1/2 hour a day, doing nothing to dissipate their energy, cut down on studies, rest in the afternoon, read and watch TV, eat and sleep. Given no outlet to their tensions which are now building up in them, at the competition, they will just explode! *(Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 1281)*The U.S. Constitution was an outgrowth of many factors: 150 years of American colonial experience, the failed Confederation years, studies of other governmental systems as well as a bit of what is called “Yankee ingenuity.” It reflected a century and a half of practical political experience. *(Paul Kroll, in Plain Truth magazine)***

**Economy is the method by which we prepare today to afford the improvements of tomorrow. *(Calvin Coolidge)***

**Champions don’t become champions on the field – they are merely recognized there. *(Bob Costas, national sports anchor)***

**At the county clerk’s office where I work, a couple applying for a marriage license complained that they were having a hard time finding a clergyman who would tie the knot without requiring premarital counseling. “What do I need counseling for?” the groom-to-be moaned. “I’ve already been married three times!” *(C. Gail Trent, in Reader’s Digest)***

**In one out of every five court trials in New York, it takes longer to pick the jury than to try the case. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**When Charles Wilson was president of General Electric, he was asked by the president of a small mid-western company how his experience as president of a major company could apply to the president of a very small company. Wilson answered by detailing a job he had had when he was a kid. He worked for a dairy, and his job was to fill milk bottles. The bottles were different sizes. Some were pint, some half-gallon, and others gallon bottles. They all had different size necks. On his way home from a ten-hour workday, he asked himself what he was learning. The answer was that no matter what size the bottle, the cream always came to the top. Improve yourself to become the cream. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 51)***

**Jesus recognized order as a fundamental factor in the law of increase. When He fed the multitude He made them sit down in companies. If you study the story carefully you will see that there was a great deal of preliminary preparation before the demonstration was made. There was a recognition of the seed ideas, the loaves and fishes carried by the small boy. There was a prayer of thanks for that supply and then it was blessed. All this preceded the actual appearing and appropriation of the supply. Every demonstration is based on the same law of increase and goes through the same orderly steps. *(Charles Fillmore, in Prosperity, p. 84)***

**Although at least half the original weight disappears in the process, cutting more than doubles the price of a diamond, for the labor involved is costly and arduous. The large rough gems have to be studied for days, or occasionally weeks, to determine how their grain runs. A decision is then made whether to saw against the grain or to cleave with it. If the decision is to saw, an entire day may be required for the whirring blade to slice through a single carat. If the decision is to cleave, the expert scratches a nick on the surface with a diamond chip (only diamonds are hard enough to cut diamonds), inserts a steel chisel in the groove, utters a silent prayer, and taps down sharply with a wooden or metal rod. If his calculations have been correct, the crystal will split neatly. If there is an invisible knot or fissure, the stone may shatter -- reducing a $10,000 investment to dust. *(Ronald Schiller, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A young man worked as a janitor, collecting dirt. With that training, he now writes political speeches. *(Gaylord Morrison)***

**Other signals that indicate an earthquake: if the ground starts tilting suddenly, if the ground creeps, it there is unusual quiet or if there are changes in the speed with which waves go through the Earth. *(Bill Scanlon, in Rocky Mountain News)***

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**We are always getting ready to live but never living. *(Ralph Waldo Emerson)***

**Don’t waste time in doubts and fears; spend yourself in the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour’s duties will be the best preparation for the hours or ages that follow it. *(Ralph Waldo Emerson)***

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**There was an engineer who had an exceptional gift for fixing all things mechanical. After serving his company loyally for more than 30 years, he happily retired. Several years later, company officials contacted him regarding a seemingly impossible problem they were having with one of their multi-million-dollar machines. They’d tried everything and everyone else to get the machine fixed, but to no avail. In desperation, they called on the retired engineer who had solved so many of their problems in the past. The engineer reluctantly took the challenge. He spent a day studying the huge machine. At the end of the day, he marked a small “x” in chalk on a particular machine component and said, “This is where your problem is.” The part was replaced and the machine worked perfectly again. The company received a bill for $50,000 from the engineer for his service. They demanded an itemized accounting of his charges. The engineer responded: Chalk mark -- $1. Knowing where to put the chalk mark -- $49,999. *(Rocky Mountain News)***

**My cousin Rena, home from college for the weekend, was complaining about how difficult her exams were. She was especially worried about one coming up that week. Her mother lectured, as she had done in the past, “You should try studying this time.” Taking the advice, Rena studied intensely for three days. When she returned home the following weekend, her mother asked how she had done. “Mom,” she replied, “I don’t know why I bothered to study. That was the easiest test I’ve ever taken.” *(Darcy M. Thompson, in Reader’s Digest)***

**If you put your finger in ice water for 15 minutes four times a day, that finger will adapt in about a month, and thenceforward seemingly stay perfectly warm when so immersed. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**When you are not fishing, be mending the nets. *(Irish proverb)***

**By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail. *(Benjamin Franklin)***

**In fair weather prepare for foul. *(Thomas Fuller, 17th-century English clergyman, historian, and popular author)***

**Sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for Army basic training, my fiancé, Roland, underwent standard adaptability tests. Once, he and five other trainees were told to don gas masks and enter a gas-filled chamber one by one. Inside, a drill sergeant ordered each soldier to remove his mask and recite his name, rank and serial number before exiting. Except for Roland, every trainee began coughing – eyes watering and noses running. The sergeant looked surprised that Roland was unaffected by the gas, so my fiancé explained, “I’m from L.A.” *(Lorinda J. Liscano, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Canada geese summer -- and feed -- in northern Quebec. To get ready for their long flight south, they put on seven times their normal weight.  *(L. M. Boyd)*  
Please note there were professional caddies long before there were professional golfers. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Between two friends in a restaurant: “Well, we haven't actually gone out yet. We're still just faxing.” *(Brenda Burbank, in Woman's World)***

**I can only hope my life is good preparation for whatever comes next. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**My wife and I were watching the gorillas at the zoo when several of them charged at the enclosure fence, scattering the crowd, except for one elderly man. Later, my wife asked him how he had kept his composure. “I used to drive a school bus,” he explained. *(Marvyn Saunders, in Reader’s Digest)***

**If you have a calling, experiment with a full throttle. When Billy Graham was a student at Florida Bible Institute, he would paddle a canoe out to a tiny island and bellow out sermons to birds, alligators and tree stumps. He didn’t get converts, but he sure learned how to rock the rafters. *(Harvey MacKay, in Outswimming the Sharks)***

**What’s so unnatural about gaining 250 pounds in nine months? Some grown male grizzly bears store up that much extra fat between spring and fall to survive the next winter’s hibernation. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Our Lamaze class included a tour of the pediatric wing at the hospital. When a new baby was brought into the nursery, all the women tried to guess its weight, but the guy standing next to me was the only male to venture a number. “Looks like 9 ½ pounds,” he offered confidently. “This must not be your first,” I said. “Oh, yes, it’s my first.” “Then how would you know the weight of a baby?” He shrugged. “I’m a fisherman.” *(Tim Loversky, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Girl: “Hi, Duncan! Guess what, I started guitar lessons already!” Duncan: “Cool!” Girl: “First you hafta learn all the names of the strings, how to put them on, and how to tune it. Then you gotta knows the names of the music lines and the spaces between them. Then, I gotta do finger exercises.” Duncan: “When do you get to play actual music?” Girl: “I dunno. I'm still not very good at taking it out of the case!" *(Lynn Johnston, in For Better Or For Worse comic strip)***

**Last year Tony Gwynn of the San Diego Padres won his third consecutive National League batting crown (his fourth over all) and his third Rawlings Gold Glove Award for outfield excellence. His success derives from more than talent alone. Gwynn and his wife have set up a “video central” room in their house where they record every televised baseball game. Before playing in a game against, say, Los Angeles, Gwynn will watch a tape of the various pitches and pick-off moves of Dodger pitchers. He’ll also study all the Dodger hitters so that he can position himself properly in right field. To Gwynn, each success provides him with a new starting point in his quest to be the best outfielder in baseball, the smartest base runner and the first player since Ted Williams to hit .400 in a season. This is what baseball – and life – are all about. *(Syd Thrift & Barry Shapiro, adapted from The Game According to Syd)***

**One of the most successful writers of the 1970s developed his writing interest while in the Navy. For eight years he wrote a myriad of routine reports. After he returned to public life he wrote an array of stories and articles that never got published. Several years later he wrote a book that touched the world. Alex Haley and Roots made history. (Glenn Van Ekeren, in Speaker's Sourcebook II , p. 281)**

**Patrick Henry began his study of law only six weeks before he was admitted to the bar. *(E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts, p. 62)***

**Barbara Walters offers this advice to prospective, anxious job seekers: “Homework. Homework helps enormously when you apply for a job.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Hurricanes differ in one especially noteworthy manner from such other lethal natural disasters as tornadoes, ice storms, earthquakes: After a hurricane warning, coastal residents can expect at least 10 hours of daylight before the deadly danger strikes. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Because my son had frequent ear infections as an infant, his delayed speech as a toddler made me worry that he had suffered hearing loss. But after examining Donald, the doctor assured me nothing was wrong. “Don't worry,” he said. “He’s just practicing to be a husband someday.” *(Lori A. Carroll, in Reader's Digest)***

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**Frank says to the employment agency guy who is looking for qualified astronomers: “Experience? On my last job I did a lot of staring off into space.*” (Bob Thaves, in Frank & Ernest comic strip)***

**When our daughter’s boy friend was preparing for a job interview, he balked at having to dress up. “It’s a casual office,” he argued. “Why should I show up in a shirt and tie?” Our daughter Heather smiled and told him, “You have to make the team before you get to wear the uniform.” *(Dorothy Davis, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**Life is not long, and too much of it must not pass in idle deliberation how it shall be spent. *(Samuel Johnson)***

He who wants to leap high must take a long run. (Danish proverb)

A father promised his small daughter a bicycle if she stood at the head of her class. However, the close of the school year found the girl far from the top. “What’s the trouble?” the father asked. “I know you have the ability. I can’t understand why you didn’t do better. What have you been doing all this time?” “Well, Daddy,” she said, “the fact is I’ve been learning to ride a bike.” (Bits & Pieces)

Think before you speak. Read before you think. (Fran Lebowitz)

**A friend wanted me to enroll in an aerobics class. “No way!” I exclaimed. “I tried that once.” “What happened?” she asked, looking puzzled. “I went, and I twisted, hopped, jumped, stretched and pulled,” I replied. “And by the time I got those darn leotards on, the class was over!” *(Louise Osier, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**Abraham Lincoln, like most writers of great prose, began by writing bad poetry. Early experiments with words are almost always stilted, formal, tentative. Economy of words, grip, precision, come later (if at all). A Gettysburg Address does not precede rhetoric but burns its way through the lesser toward the greater eloquence, by long discipline. Lincoln not only exemplifies this process but studied it, in himself and others. He was a student of the word. *(Garry Wills, in Atlantic Monthly)***

**I will prepare, and someday my chance will come. *(Abraham Lincoln)***

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**There are locusts that have an adult life span of only a few weeks or so, after having lived in the ground as grubs for fifteen years. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 87)***

**Luck is preparation meeting opportunity. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Mom says to another woman while observing Dolly talking to her little brothers: “Dolly is already practicing how to manage men.” *(Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)***

**On the “David Susskind Show” a few years ago, he had three guests who were self-made millionaires. These men, in their mid-thirties, had averaged being in eighteen different businesses before they hit it big. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 251)***

**Girl: “I don't wanna do this project! I don't wanna do it! I hafta look up all this stuff! It's just too much! I hate this! Why do I hafta do this! Stupid, dumb, crummy, stupid. It's not fair! I won't do any more! Quit! After she cuts, snips, pastes, clips, colors, writes, clips, cuts, and pastes, she says: “There's. It's done. I did it. I just had to get in the mood!" *(Lynn Johnston, in For Better Or For Worse comic strip)***

**A house mouse is ready to breed when it’s little more than a month old. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I once interviewed actor Paul Newman after he was hailed as an overnight success in a Broadway show. He laughed hollowly at the term. “Oh, sure," he said. “Overnight after ten years in plays that folded and road companies where you were lucky to get bus fare to the next town." *(Michael Drury, in Reader's Digest)***

**If, instead of working on making more money, the average businessperson would spend an hour each and every day in quiet contemplation of how to be of greater and more creative service to his clientele, he and they would be richer for it. *(Earl Nightingale, American motivational speaker)***

**It’s been reported that Greece, where they’re going to hold the Olympics, may not be able to finish building all the event sites. As a result, this year’s triathlon combines running, swimming and pouring concrete. *(Conan O’Brien, 2004)***

**Homemade sign on a highway in Atlanta, where preparations are being made for the 1996 Summer Olympics: “It’s been over 100 years since anyone came through here with a torch!” *(Rebecca Langley, in Reader’s Digest)***

**When we were in Florida a few years ago a citrus fruit grower told us many interesting things about the growth of his orchards. There are many swamps in Florida. He had instructed his men to go out into these swamps, into the muddy black waters infested with creeping things, there to dig up the wild-lemon saplings with their strong, vigorous roots, to transplant them into well-prepared soil, and then to graft into them buds from his prize domestic fruit trees. Thus new trees laden with golden fruit appeared in due time. The strong vigorous root of the wild lemon gave the new fruit added flavor and quality. *(Charles & Cora Fillmore, in Teach Us To Pray, p. 19)***

**It was while making newspaper deliveries, trying to miss the bushes and hit the porch, that I first learned the importance of accuracy in journalism. *(Charles Osgood, in Defending Baltimore Against Enemy Attack)***

**The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today’s work superbly well. *(Sir William Osler)*  
  
The great pianist, Paderewski, was giving a command performance for a royal family in Europe. After his concert a duchess came to him, bubbling with enthusiasm, and said, “Maestro, you are a genius!” He replied, “Ah yes, but before I was a genius I was a clod.” In other words the moment of genius was the result of years of discipline and overcoming and practice, practice, practice. *(Eric Butterworth, in Unity Magazine, April, 1994, p. 12)***

**A few years ago, actress Gwyneth Paltrow was offered the lead in a movie opposite a rapper. At first, she wanted to do it, but later, aided by her parents’ advice, she changed her mind. For the woman who would later star in Emma, the rejection began a trend in which Paltrow turned down the lead for five more films early in her career because, she realized, she was still learning. “I told them I wasn’t ready. At that point, if I had done something just to be the star of a movie, the responsibility would have been placed on me,” she explains. “I wasn’t in a hurry, and I didn’t want to be held accountable for the success of a film at 21.” *(Nancy Jo Sales, in New York)***

**A graduate student, I was just concluding 18 long years of schooling, and took heart that my classroom days were finally over. Soon after I acquired this freedom, however, my wife informed me that she had enrolled both of us in a prenatal parenthood class. “Will there be any homework?” I asked a bit forlornly. “You’ve already completed your assignment,” she replied. “Now just prepare for an eight-pound final exam.” *(Peter Anthony Gagnon, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Plans come to me, but I never decide on my movements until I have let the matter rest without argument. I take it into the silence and lay my plan before Infinite Intelligence. The inner conviction will come. Follow it. Do not argue. Trust. Maintain the quiet, trustful attitude. Eliminate the personal wish. Do not be afraid to follow the inner conviction. There is the guiding voice in every experience. *(Dr. Nona L. Brooks, In the Light of Healing)***

**Overheard in a diner: “I have the feeling he's about to pop the question. Last night he took me home to meet his computer.” *(Mickey Mansfield, in National Enquirer)***

**The more you practice, the better. But in any case, practice more than you play. *(Babe Didrikson Zaharias, American athlete)***

**I know of a manufacturer who likes to drive back and forth to work so that he can think about business problems without interruption. “One morning,” he relates, “I suddenly realized that problems were always coming up that I had not anticipated. How could I think about crises before they ever happened? Only by prayer. Right there I began to pray that I might meet wisely and well the problems of the day ahead.  I arrived at my office feeling refreshed and confident, and I had one of my best days. I soon realized that I had hit upon a wonderful technique. Instead of praying to get pulled out of troubles. I was now conditioning myself in advance to make calm, rational and sound decisions on any problem that came up.” *(Fulton Oursler)***

**Clemson University sophomore quarterback Nealon Greene doesn’t get rattled easily – certainly not by something like an oncoming defense. Greene is one of six quarterbacks in Clemson history to throw a touchdown pass in his first game, and he even enjoyed playing in front of 80,000 howling fans. The reason he’s so composed? Greene grew up in a tough section of Yonkers, NY, that was filled with crime, drugs and broken dreams. Despite the demons, though, Green was never tempted. “I was one of those kids who knew what they had to do. I didn’t get in trouble. My mother always knew where I was.” *(Jim Henry, in College Sports)***

**A few years ago I worked as a radio operator with the Second Infantry Division in Korea. Traffic over the radio came fast and furious, and it became apparent early on that handling it all was a special skill. During one particularly hectic day I took a break and walked past another unit, where an operator calmly manned three radios while flawlessly taking down messages. Later I ran into the soldier and remarked how impressed I was with his cool efficiency. “What is your secret?” I asked. “I had training as a civilian,” he responded. “I worked the McDonald’s drive-through.” (*Gregory Lipe, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Ziggy: “Sometimes we have to put up with a lot of rain while we're waiting for our rainbow!” *(Tom Wilson, in Ziggy cartoon)***

**Ronald Reagan’s upbeat personality developed early in life as a way to both accept and transcend a beloved alcoholic father. But years of performing and public speaking molded it into a persona that helped win landslides and kept his enemies off balance. Reagan could go to Berlin and tell Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall!” just months after negotiating earnestly with the Soviet leader at Reykjavik, all the while withholding concessions on the development of the Strategic Defense Initiative, the very thing Gorbachev most wanted. *(Richard Bookhiser, in Time)***

**Frank Lloyd Wright never went around ringing doorbells to find out what kind of homes people liked. The most heavily researched car in history was the ill-fated Edsel. *(William L. Mitchell, in New York Times)***

**Joaquin Phoenix attended a rock ‘n’ roll “boot camp” to train for his role as Johnny Cash in 2005’s Walk the Line. The hard work paid off, though; he sang every note in the film, to rave reviews. Co-star Reese Witherspoon not only sang her own songs, she also learned to play the autoharp, which, she revealed, made her job doubly difficult. *(Tidbits of Loveland)***

**Foundation courses for understanding quantum mechanics: Arithmetic, High school algebra, Euclidian geometry, Differential and integral calculus, Ordinary and partial differential equations, Vector calculus, Mathematical physics, Matrix algebra, and Group theory. *(Carl Sagan, in The Demon-Haunted World)***

**Gloria: “Lance, would you like to prepare the tofu-and-bean-sprout salad?” Lance: “Maybe I should first prepare myself for the tofu-and-bean-sprout salad, Gloria.” *(J. C. Duffy, in The Fusco Brothers comic strip)***

**Diane Sawyer’s success formula for TV: It’s in the preparation -- in those dreary pedestrian virtues they taught you in the seventh grade and you didn’t believe. It’s making the extra call and caring a lot. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**There is only one kind of shock worse than the totally unexpected: the expected for which one has refused to prepare. *(Mary Renault, author)***

**So shy are some people that if they must go to parties, they show up early, so they don’t have to walk into rooms already crowded. They need “getting used to it” time. Actor Van Johnson once said he was like that. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**There once lived a wondrous good and wise man named Socrates. But he gave offense to those who were in power, and they jailed him; they told him that he would have to die. Socrates received the news with a smile. “You should prepare for death,” they told him, but he shook his head and kept smiling. “I have been preparing for death all my life,” he said. “In what way?” they asked. And Socrates said, “I have never, secretly or openly, done a wrong to any man.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Soldiers of old Rome signed up for 20 years and took basic training for four, sometimes five years. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Before the space shuttle Discovery was cleared for launch, NASA ran off 160 million virtual missions of the shuttle on a computer to head off any catastrophic malfunctions. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 22, 2005)***

**Battle of Gettysburg: Edward Everett was invited on September 23rd, to appear October 23rd, 1863. That would leave all of November for filling the graves. But a month was not sufficient time for Everett to make his customary preparation for a major speech. He did careful research on the battles he was commemorating -- a task made difficult in this case by the fact that official accounts of the engagement were just appearing. Everett would have to make his own inquiries. He could not be ready before November 19th. *(Garry Wills, in Atlantic Monthly magazine)***

**To clarify an earlier item, before the squirrel buries the nut it takes it out of the husk, but not the shell. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The best speakers know enough to be scared. “Stagefright is the sweat of perfection,” said Edward R. Murrow. “The only difference between the pros and the novices is that the pros have trained the butterflies to fly in formation,” said Edwin Newman. What’s the best medicine to keep stagefright from becoming disaster? In a word: Preparation. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**The strongman at a circus sideshow demonstrated his power before a large audience. Toward the end of his act, he squeezed the juice from a lemon between his hands. He then said to the audience, “I will offer $200 to anyone in the audience who can squeeze another drop from this lemon.” A slight, scholarly-looking man came forward, picked up the lemon, strained hard, and managed to get a drop. The strongman, amazed, paid the man and asked, “What is the secret of your strength?” “Practice. I was treasurer of my church for 32 years.” *(A Treasury of Humor, Ballantine Books)***

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**In Holland 400 years ago, it took four years to train a hatmaker and three to train a surgeon. (L. M. Boyd)**

**One of the questions asked on our company’s employee application form is: “Did you receive any training in the U. S. Armed Forces that is relevant to the position applied for?” An applicant answered, “To wake up early and go to work.” *(Joyce Potter, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**A lot of people about to take trips come down with little illnesses in the week before they’re supposed to leave. Statistically, the minor ailment rate among them reportedly runs about twice as high as in the general population. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**R & B singer Tina Turner developed her powerful voice as a child in a farm town where no one had a phone, so they used to shout to each other from house to house. *(Bob Fenster, in They Did What!?, p. 28)***

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**Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education. *(Mark Twain)***

**Gets the facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please. *(Mark Twain)***

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**So I’m suggesting that if you want your cherished dreams to come true, if you want good things to happen in your life . . . take lots of time to warm the inner fire, the ever-glowing fire of the spirit of God within you. *(Charles Roth, in Unity magazine)***

**Another form of fine art being appreciated more and more as a business investment is fine tapestry. The artist-weaver who designed and made tapestries a couple of hundred years ago could weave only about a square yard in a year! (These are the ones filled with battle scenes and lots of soldiers, nobles, horses, etc.) Before a person could start weaving in earnest, that square yard a year, he first had to spend fifteen years learning the art. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 213)***

**A baseball coach once rebuked a confident player who said their team would win because it had “the will to win.” “Don’t kid yourself,” said the coach. “The will to win is important, but it isn’t worth a nickel unless you also have the will to prepare.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A woman’s age in ancient Greece was counted from the day she married. In the philosophical view of that time and place, every year before the wedding was preparation for the woman’s real life. Thus, today’s 36-year-old woman who’d married at 20 could consider herself as age 16 right now. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The best preparation for work is not thinking about work, talking about work, or studying for work: it is work. *(William Weld)***

**Renee Zellweger likes to say that her singing career began in the shower, crooning along to Beatles hits. Fans of Bridget Jones’s Diary that remember Zellweger’s painful karaoke rendition of “Without You” were probably shocked to later find out that the actress can, indeed, carry a tune. That was really Zellweger hitting the high notes in her role as Roxie in the 2002 film adaptation of Chicago. *(Tidbits of Loveland)***

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