

‘How to ...’

BY RACHEL BUTTNER STANKO, BA'03

Creighton has always been shaped by the people who teach here. Faculty members bring a wealth of real-world experience and care into every classroom, lab and conversation. They are accomplished scholars and mentors who believe learning happens best when ideas meet practice.

That approach does not end at graduation. A Creighton education is meant to stay with you. In that spirit, three faculty members and a Jesuit share practical insights and thoughtful guidance on a range of topics, offering alumni a little wisdom to carry forward.

Help Adult Children Transition to Financial Independence

Brad Klontz, PsyD

*Associate Professor of Practice, Economics and Finance
Heider College of Business*

PARENTS OFTEN STEP IN TO HELP their children navigate the bumpy transition to adulthood. It may start with covering rent after a job loss or welcoming a graduate back home or taking on student loan payments. But even well-meaning support can slide into dependency, creating expectations that erode parents' long-term financial security.

This pattern is not a moral failing, Klontz says. "Behavioral reinforcement creates it. Money is one of the most powerful reinforcers of behavior." However, he emphasizes, repeated giving can reward stagnation rather than motivate change, stalling a young adult's growth.

Klontz, a certified financial planner, offers these tips for shifting from support to self-sufficiency:

Hold firm with clarity. Saying you will turn off the money tap is one thing. Following through is another. Parents should prepare for pushback, especially when support has been significant. Rehearsing a response ahead of time can help.

"When you actually cut them off, you get what we call in psychology an extinction burst," Klontz says. "It's like an adult tantrum." Standing firm matters.

Step down gradually. Most parents hesitate to cut off support all at once. One option is to reduce assistance incrementally over time. Another option is to reframe future help as loans, with clear expectations, reinforcing accountability.

Use specific language. Avoid vague statements such as, "We'll need to cut back," which can create anxiety without clarity. Be explicit about how much support you will provide and for how long.

Get it in writing. The agreement does not need to be legally binding. Writing down a plan to phase out financial support helps clarify expectations and signals commitment.

Enlist professional help. In some cases, involving a financial planner or attorney can help deliver the message. Hearing it from a third party can underscore how ongoing expenses are affecting parents' financial security.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY NATHALIE DION

Maintain Balance and Strength as You Age

Rashelle Hoffman, DPT, PhD

Director of the MoveCog Research Lab and Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy
School of Pharmacy and Health Professions

AS WE AGE, CHANGES ACROSS MULTIPLE BODY SYSTEMS can affect strength and balance. Muscle loss, reduced neuron communication, decreased sensation in the legs and changes in vision and vestibular function, even certain medications, may increase fall risk.

Still, Hoffman emphasizes, it is never too late to improve your long-term health and mobility.

"Your body responds to everyday activities," she says. "If you do not challenge your balance and strength, you will see declines in both regardless of age."

Research shows the benefits of exercise at every stage of life. For older adults, fear of falling can lead to reduced activity and, in turn, greater mobility loss. Appropriate strength and aerobic training, Hoffman notes, has been shown to improve balance, reduce fall risk and lower the likelihood of conditions such as osteoporosis.

Here are Hoffman's tips for proactive care:

Focus on functional exercises. For the biggest impact, focus on major muscle groups and exercises that translate to everyday activities. Repeated sit-to-stand movements can make it easier to get up from low chairs or vehicles, while upper-body exercises such as rows or overhead presses support tasks like opening doors or lowering items from high shelves.

Reexamine your routines. Small daily choices also build strength over time. Look for moments when convenience has replaced movement. Choosing stairs, parking farther from entrances, walking around the grocery store and standing up during commercial breaks all add up.

Include stretching. Flexibility is another key component, especially for the arms and legs. Hold stretches for 60 seconds. Overall, aim for at least 30 minutes of combined aerobic and strength activity each day.



Turn Interruptions into Invitations

The Rev. Larry Gillick, SJ

Director, Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality

A FEW YEARS AGO, AT THE OMAHA AIRPORT, a woman bumped into Fr. Gillick. She apologized. Without much thought, he replied, "It was not an interruption, because all interruptions are invitations." Thinking on his feet, he tried to explain. She walked him to his gate and asked if he really believed that and if he lived that way. He told her he tried. He said she shared, with a smiling voice, "I hope so. They just announced your flight is delayed for 90 minutes."

That delay became the invitation. A man in line who had overheard them asked if Fr. Gillick was a salesman. "Kind of," he said. The man then asked if he was a priest. For the next 90 minutes, they spoke about something that needed a priest. That conversation would not have happened without the interruption, Fr. Gillick says.

How to prepare, if possible, for the unexpected, as explained by Fr. Gillick:

Things, unplanned by us or others, do occur and we either react or respond. The real surprise is finding out what follows, what is given, what will be created. This is where interruptions become the invitations.

It takes humility to be surprised. Those who are "surprised" must be in control always.

God is not in control, nor are we in most of life's drama. We have plans for what will happen, must happen, should happen, but God is creating us always. Our lives are the adventure of being created, using our God-given gifts: senses, intellect, imagination and a power to decide.

We can profit from a sense that we are not in charge of everything.

A suggestion: With one darkened eye, hold regret, disappointment, anger, resentment. With the other eye, remain open and patiently wait for the next life-event in creation.

Interruptions are the results of allowing the ever-creating God to be God. Who are we? Loved, constantly being-created creations. Stay available.

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Lead with Moral Courage

Jennifer Moss Breen Kuzelka, PhD

Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary EdD Program in Leadership

MAKING DECISIONS GUIDED BY OUR VALUES is a common goal in both personal and professional life. Yet, in shared workplaces, those values are not always universally held. At times, organizations may take actions that feel misaligned with what we believe, creating internal tension and making it harder to engage fully. Still, organizations — and you — must make difficult decisions every day.

Here are Kuzelka's tips to embracing shared values:

Name your values openly. Speaking up requires vulnerability, especially when we know our values may not align with the situation or with those around us. But, Kuzelka emphasizes, "the simple act of speaking our values, or our 'truth', not only introduces new ideas to others but frees us from the anger and anxiety that arise when decisions feel misaligned."

This willingness to speak, despite discomfort, is moral courage in action.

Listen actively and ask questions. Before voicing our perspective, we must seek to understand the intent and desired outcomes of others. Asking thoughtful, open-ended questions can "unearth unseen challenges or outcomes of our and others' actions," Kuzelka says.

Simple prompts like "Tell me more about that" or "What could go right or wrong if we take this approach?" invite reflection rather than defensiveness.

Lead with integrity. Integrity means doing what we say we will do and standing fully behind that belief. It is the foundation of trust, and without trust, meaningful progress is difficult. Leading with integrity means choosing what aligns with your values, even when it's hard.

