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Wordscapes puzzle of the day

I was sitting at my desk the other day and felt completely overwhelmed. Like many of you, as a business owner I had many things to do at once: three calls to make, an article due, meetings to attend, and random appointments scattered throughout the day. I was completely paralyzed in the moment. Every task seemed equally important and unimportant at the same time.If you're an entrepreneur, you have many things to keep track of: Marketing, communication, client work, providing services, leadership—that's five without even stopping for a breath.How do you keep all of that in mind without feeling like you're it's all going to fall apart? Well, one way is instead to think of putting it all together instead. Like a puzzle.If you've ever done a puzzle, even as a kid, you know how it goes. It's somewhat random and can seem overwhelming at first, but there are steps you can take to make it easier on yourself. You take a good long look at the picture on the cover of the box, so you have a sense of the ultimate result. You can find the four corners and put them into place. You can build the edges around the perimeter of the puzzle. You can sort the pieces out on the table so you can see them all, then choose one at a time to pick up and put into place.If you are patient and do one piece at a time, puzzle-making can be a surprisingly relaxing activity. As you finish little sections, you get a tiny thrill of satisfaction, and of course, there's that big feeling of achievement at the end when, at last, the puzzle is complete.Now that you're remembering what the spirit of puzzle building is, let's also remember what it isn't. Putting together a puzzle isn't usually stressful. There's never a timeline or a deadline. You don't have to finish it. You can just drop in, do a few pieces, change your mind and work on a different section for awhile, and put it down to return to some other time.Imagine if managing a busy day could so light and (dare I say) fun? It can be, if you apply the same kind of thinking.Let's go back to the scenario we started with. You're at your desk feeling overwhelmed, somewhat scattered and sure you'll never finish anything, much less everything, on your list. So you decide instead to think of it as a puzzle. You take those first few steps to make life easier on yourself.Write down everything you have to do. This is the picture on the cover of the box.Schedule the ones that can be scheduled. These are your "corners."Put the rest of the tasks on a To Do list. These are your "edges."Organize your desk so you can see everything easily. This is the sorting process that will help you be efficient.Now you can pick up one task at a time, just like the individual pieces of a puzzle.The shift in thinking that makes the biggest difference is to remember that even though you may feel an internal sense of urgency, most of the time you can be patient and take your time--trusting that when you do, you actually move more efficiently through your tasks than when you race through them in a rush of urgency and stress.There may be a lot of pieces to your business, but they're all part of one cohesive whole. Focusing on one area at a time, and working on a few different areas a day, will help you put the whole thing together.Now, so far we've been talking about using the puzzle idea to schedule your day. Whatif you applied this logic to your whole business? It's a strategy I teach entrepreneurs for being able to manage a complex, multi-faceted endeavor of building a business.Study the "cover on the box." How do I want your whole business to come together? What will success for your company look like? Now you remember what you're doing this all for.Look for the cornerstones. Puzzleshave corners; businesses have cornerstones. What's the vision? What's the mission? What's the strategy? What are the goals? With those four pieces in place, your business is anchored into place.Form the edges. One of my favorite new books is Essentialism by George McKeown. In it he asks a life-changing question: what's essential? You can even ask yourself that question in the moment: What's essential today? Staying aligned to what's essential will help you prioritize, in the big picture of your business and in the day to day implementation.Look for themes. It's the rare puzzle builder who can randomly pick up any piece and put it neatly into place. Why do we expect this of ourselves in our business? Give yourself permission to work on themes. Maybe today's the day you work on a new article you've been wanting to submit. That's one "part of the puzzle." Maybe tomorrow you'll spend some time with clients--another part of the puzzle. In this way, nothing has to be started and finished in one sitting--you can work on things as they come naturally, while trusting that eventually, it will all come together. It always does.Puzzle making at first seem random and chaotic, but puzzle-building can be methodical and relaxing. One by one, the pieces of your busy day will go into place--just like the pieces of a puzzle. Tatiana Ayazo/Rd.com, Puzzle Courtesy Sik Cambon JensenDecember 21 is a significant day for several reasons—it marks the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, and four days left to do your Christmas shopping. But it's also an important day for word nerds, because it's the anniversary of one of the most popular word games of all time—the crossword puzzle.December 21 is “Crossword Puzzle Day” because on this day in 1913, Arthur Wynne published a puzzle called a “Word-cross.” Wynne’s puzzle would go down in history as the first crossword ever published. (Did you know crosswords are so popular that one man designed one for his own tombstone?)Wynne’s original puzzle looked a bit different from crossword puzzles we see today—the boxes were arranged in a diamond shape, not a square, with an open space in the middle. However, the rules were almost exactly the same. Each row of boxes, horizontal and vertical, corresponded to one word, and a short clue was given for each word. Even over 100 years later, Wynne’s puzzle is still totally solvable for 21st-century word nerds. Take a look at the puzzle above and its clues below, and then give it a try! Doing crossword puzzles can make your brain younger, so why not?Wynne’s puzzle has one word already filled in—“fun,” the name of the newspaper section in which the puzzle was published. The clues are slightly different—instead of “across” and “down,” the clues say the numbers of the starting and ending boxes of that word. For instance, the word below “fun,” 2 across, is written as “2-3” in the clue list. The clue for 2 down is “2-11.”Some of the words are a little old-fashioned, and you might have to brush up on your Russian geography, but overall, we’re sure it’s nothing a word-savvy puzzler like yourself can’t handle. (Finally, here’s one more hint: the word “dove” is in there twice.) Now get puzzling!2-3.What bargain hunters enjoy.6-22.What we all should be.4-5.A written acknowledgment.4-26.A day dream.6-7.Such and nothing more.2-11.A talon.10-11.A bird.19-28.A pigeon.14-15.Opposed to less.F-7.Part of your head.18-19.What this puzzle is.23-30.A river in Russia.22-23.An animal of prey.1-32.To govern.26-27.The close of a day.33-34.An aromatic plant.28-29.To elude.N-8.A fist.30-31.The plural of is.24-31.To agree with.8-9.To cultivate.3-12.Part of a ship.12-13.A bar of wood or iron.20-29.One.16-17.What artists learn to do.5-27.Exchanging.20-21.Fastened.9-25.To sink in mud.24-25.Found on the seashore.13-21.A boy.10-18.The fibre of the gomuti palm.If you’re stumped, click here for the answer key.Want to be puzzled even more? Try your hand at this word quiz inspired by the 2016 American Crossword Puzzle Tournament.[Source: American Crossword Puzzle Tournament] Photo Courtesy: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images While many of us now consider Memorial Day the unofficial start of the summer season, the original intent behind the occasion has a much more somber and honor-focused meaning. This federal holiday was formalized as a way of remembering and mourning members of the U.S. military who died in service, and people often mark the occasion by visiting cemeteries and decorating headstones of fallen soldiers with flags and wreaths. In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson recognized Waterloo, New York, as having celebrated the first Memorial Day 100 years earlier. However, multiple towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, and the holiday’s long evolution makes it unclear where exactly it began. On top of that, there are many persistent myths about how Memorial Day started. Learn more about these and how they relate to the holiday’s origins. While people have commemorated the sacrifices of soldiers for as long as there have been conflicts, Memorial Day as we know it in the United States got its start during the American Civil War. During the war, some people began the practice of decorating the graves of soldiers who’d been killed in battle and saying prayers for them. And, as the Civil War wound down, people across the North and South continued honoring fallen soldiers in this manner. As the practice of decorating soldiers’ graves became more common, it also began gaining more formal recognition. Photo Courtesy: dsharpie/E+/Getty Images One such ceremony was held on May 1, 1865, in Charleston, South Carolina. Local Black churches led a gathering of roughly 10,000 people, many of whom were formerly enslaved, in properly reburying Union soldiers whose remains had been deposited in a mass grave. The groups also held a ceremony to honor the soldiers’ sacrifice and dedicate the new cemetery. The event included speeches, the laying of wreaths and crosses, drills performed by Union soldiers and even picnicking. However, it’s unclear if the event influenced any other similar ceremonies in the country, and historians are unsure whether this should be considered the first Memorial Day. Numerous places around the country claim to have first celebrated Memorial Day as a recurring holiday rather than a one-off event. Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, cites an 1864 gathering of women to mourn the deaths of soldiers at the Battle of Gettysburg as what makes it the founder of the holiday, while Carbondale, Illinois, claims two markers in its cemeteries as well as a parade led by Major General John A. Logan (more on him in a moment) as proof that it held the first annual celebration. There are even a Columbus, Georgia, and Columbus, Mississippi, with competing claims. Photo Courtesy: MediaNews Group/Orange County Register/Getty Images While Waterloo, New York, eventually won federal recognition because of evidence that its celebrations involved the full closure of the town, it has well over 20 rivals for the title, and all of them — even Waterloo — rely on evidence that’s at least somewhat disputed. But there’s only one event that unambiguously served as a forerunner to Memorial Day. Major General Logan was the head of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a Civil War veterans organization. With the increasing popular support for coronies celebrating fallen soldiers, in 1868, he declared May 30 to be Decoration Day, a holiday specifically meant for the adornment of fallen soldiers’ graves. Different sources suggest his motivation for choosing the day was either because that’s when flowers are in bloom across the country and therefore ready to be left on graves or because May 30 is a day on which no Civil War battles were fought. Photo Courtesy: Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images While Decoration Day wasn’t a national holiday, it was widely commemorated across the country. By 1890, it had been made a state holiday by each of the Northern states. Southern states, however, continued to celebrate separate Confederate days of remembrance until World War I. Confederate Memorial Day is still celebrated as a holiday alongside Memorial Day in some states today. Decoration Day became a federal holiday in 1888, although it only applied to government employees in Washington, D.C. as was customary at the time. However, other states began adopting the holiday over time until every state eventually commemorated it. As the United States moved on from the Civil War to participate in other conflicts, particularly World War I, the holiday also broadened to include honoring all soldiers who died in the line of duty. By the end of World War II, “Memorial Day” had also supplanted the name “Decoration Day.” Photo Courtesy: rhyman007/E+/Getty Images In 1968, a law made the name change official. It also moved Memorial Day to its modern date: the last Monday of May. This law, called the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, came into effect in 1971 and created the annual Memorial Day weekends that Americans know and love today, but it also angered people who felt it shifted the focus from remembrance to enjoying time off. While the states eventually fell in line, many veterans continued to voice dissent on the issue.

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