

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue One

Thanks for getting in on the ground floor of my free e-newsletter. It will be coming once monthly and will grow in scope and length. I would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. Please contact me at drgettis@aol.com.

Notable Quote

The probability of any of us being here is so small that you would think the mere fact of existence would keep us all in a contented dazzlement of surprise.

-Lewis Thomas

Your Actions Count

Karma is the belief that our actions have consequences. Everything we do matters. What we do will lead to either negative or positive effects. It stems from the idea that everything in the entire universe is connected. If that's the case, the solution is to create good karma. Creating bad karma would be the equivalent of cutting off your nose to spite your face.

The Scenic Route

On the road to happiness, you will encounter detours, road blocks, uncharted territory, obstacles, and slow downs. Don't give up. Just keep going. The road to happiness is always under construction. However, if you're relatively sure that you're going toward unhappiness, put on the brakes and turn around. If you don't change directions, you may end up where you're headed.

Passion Poem

"What I Have Learned So Far"

Meditation is old and honorable, so why should I not sit, every morning of my life, on the hillside, looking into the shining world? Because, properly attended to, delight, as well as havoc, is suggestion. Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit to no labor in its cause? I don't think so.

All summations have a beginning, all effect has a story, all kindness begins with the sown seed. Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of light is the crossroads of – indolence, or action.

Be ignited, or be gone.

-Mary Oliver, Pulitzer Prize Winning Poet

A Bit of Humor?

Dijon Vu – the same mustard as before.

Story of the Month

“Would You Like That Super-Sized?”

Buddhism reveals how life’s usual pains, losses, predicaments, and dilemmas are worsened by our minds. We’re experts at turning pain into suffering. We’re filled with regret or guilt about the past, irrationally pursue pleasure in the present, and worry about the future. We become proficient at making things more emotionally difficult than they need to be.

Robert Sapolsky of Stanford University calls this “adventitious suffering.” This means that humans, unlike other mammals, layer optional distress atop inevitable pain. We think about things in such a way so as to make the situation worse than it needs to be. We deal with the pain of what was, what is, and what could be, sometimes simultaneously. It is painful enough to lose a job or a lover. But, we tend to add to our pains and burdens with our mind rantings and ruminations. Adventitious means extra. If you ordered at McDonalds, they would ask, would you like that super-sized? If you say yes, you get a lot more than if you say no. Emotional pain is similar. Our natural tendency is to feel the pain and automatically tell our mind to “super-size it.”

For example, the pain of losing a job is exacerbated when you dwell on:

- Regretting taking the job
- Wasting the last four years
- Being unemployed
- Being seen as a failure
- Worrying about getting a job
- Worrying about finding a job you like
- Worrying about your future pay
- Fearing future failure
- Thinking of other disappointments in your life
- Whether you’ll be able to pay your bills
- Not being able to buy that new car
- Not getting treated fairly
- Getting revenge on your old boss

You can see how the pain of losing the job can turn into adventitious suffering. It’s been said that pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional. Suffering occurs when we take the pain and super-size it. When you’re about to do that, catch yourself in the act and say, “No thank you.” Recognize when enough is enough.

(Our minds make the wolf bigger than he is.)

November Thoughts

I am both a psychologist and nutritionist. As the days grow shorter, the nutritionist in me recommends you consider taking 800-1000 units of Vitamin D daily (with a meal). It will help your bones and your mood. The psychologist in me advises that you slow down and take time for fun and stress reduction. This is a hectic time of year. Wishing all of you a warm and happy Thanksgiving.

-Alan Gettis

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