

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

2009, Issue IV



Quotes of the Month

Still the mind, and the symphony begins.

-Robert Joseph Ahola

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

-Mary Oliver

A Bit of Humor?

Mahatma Gandhi, as you know, walked barefoot most of the time, which produced an impressive set of calluses on his feet. He also ate very little, which made him rather frail and, with his odd diet, he suffered from bad breath. This made him a super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.

Nutrition Corner

The results of a 10 year study involving over half a million people was published in the March 23, 2009 issue of *The Archives of Internal Medicine*. The study was led by Dr. Rashmi Sinha of The National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health. The subjects were tracked to determine the effects of red and processed meat intake on mortality.

Researchers found that both men and women who consumed a low meat diet had significantly lower death rates from cancer, heart disease, and all other

causes than those who consumed a high meat diet. For purposes of the research, "red meat" included beef and pork, cold cuts, luncheon meats, hot dogs, bacon, and sausage. A popular ad years ago had an elderly spokeswoman asking, "Where's the beef?" Now we have a research scientist who, based on a 10 year study of a half a million people, is saying, "Hold the beef!"

Recent Experiment

On a winter's morning inside the Washington, DC Metro Station, a street violinist played six Bach pieces. During those 45 minutes, roughly 2,000 people walked by him, most of them on their way to work. Almost no one stopped to listen. Children stopped, but their parents forced them to move on quickly. In total, six people stopped to listen for a short while. About 20 people threw money in his open violin case, totaling \$32. When he stopped playing, no one applauded.

As it turned out, the "street musician" was Joshua Bell, one of the world's greatest musicians. He played beautiful and intricate Bach compositions using a violin worth \$3.5 million dollars. Just two days earlier, he sold out a prestigious Boston concert hall where seats averaged \$100 each. This experiment leads us to wonder: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world, playing some of the finest music ever written, with one of the most beautiful instruments ever made - how many other things are we missing?

Links to News Stories on Happiness

www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-david-walker/seven-steps-to-achieving_b_278455.html

www.smh.com.au/executive-style/culture/key-to-happiness-be-kind-exercise-20090911-fjy2.html

Story of the Month

"When I'm 64"

When I turned 64, I took up playing the blues harmonica. I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to jam with Dylan. As if that wasn't enough, I was able to join in with the Doobie Brothers on one of my favorite songs, "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed." And Joe Cocker and I teamed up for a great rendition of "You Are So Beautiful," which I often sang to my daughter Jenna when she was little. As I played my heart out during the summer of 2008, sweating profusely and having a ball, life was good. Just me and the CDs I was jamming with.

The Beatles queried, "Will you still love me when I'm 64?" I sang that song much of the day I turned 64. Not altogether voluntarily. The truth be known, I couldn't get it out of my head.

I could be handy, mending a fuse
When your lights have gone.
You can knit a sweater by the fireside
Sunday mornings go for a ride,
Doing the garden, digging the weeds,
Who could ask for more?
Will you still need me, will you still feed me,
When I'm sixty-four?

Around the same time that summer that I wailed the blues on the harmonica, something very unexpected occurred. I developed a fascination with, of all things, bird watching. My wife bought me some binoculars and the *Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. I was off and running. Make that sitting and watching. I set up a bird feeder and the word spread rapidly. The procession began. They paraded themselves in front of me all day long as I eagerly sought to identify them via my field guide.

Black-capped Chickadees were plentiful. There was a very occasional Blue Jay, weaver finches, a Pine Grosbeak, Common Grackle, and an early Mourning Dove. I'm sure I was driving friends and family crazy with my unbridled enthusiasm as I told them about the bright yellow American Goldfinch breeding male with black wings, the Brown-headed Cowbird, the Fish Crow, and the female Northern Cardinal in all her splendor. Sandpipers,

blackbirds, sparrows, and on and on and on. They all took turns getting logged into my notebook.

Will you still need me, will you still feed me when I'm 64? To me, it feels like it's the universe asking the question. Asking, can you love me unconditionally? Can you love life unconditionally? Can you, so to speak, jam with life? Do you stop to look around? Can you still be amazed? Can you appreciate and feel gratitude for 64 and feel excited about what's yet to be discovered at 65?

Doing the garden,
Digging the weeds,
Who could ask for more?

Closing Thoughts

This month we celebrate Thanksgiving. Giving thanks rearranges our biochemistry. Our nervous system settles. It's a pretty powerful thing to do. Take a few minutes and express yourself. Who and what are you grateful for?

Please visit www.drgettis.com.