

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

June 2008



Quotes of the Month

In the game of life, nothing is less important than the score at
halftime.

-Unknown

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.

-Dalai Lama

It isn't what you have, or who you are, or where you are, or what you
are doing that makes you happy or unhappy. It is what you think about.

-Dale Carnegie

A Bit of Humor?

Sam, an elderly gentleman, proudly told his neighbor, "I just
bought a state-of-the-art hearing aid. The best one money can buy.
It's perfect."

"Really?" answered the neighbor. "What kind is it?"

"Four thirty," replied Sam.

Nutrition Corner

British researchers studied over 20,000 men and women ages 45-
79. Four parameters were looked at:

- (1) Regular exercise
- (2) Eating at least five servings daily of fruits and vegetables
- (3) Not smoking
- (4) Drinking alcohol in moderation

The subjects of this study were given one point for each healthy habit they had. Those scoring four points lived about 14 years longer than those scoring a zero. Not smoking had the single greatest effect. Even people with cancer and heart disease who adopted good habits lived longer. It's never too late to begin cultivating healthy habits, because good health is the factor most highly correlated with happiness.

Recent Research

Once again, Omega-3 fatty acids have proven to be helpful in dealing with mood disorders. There is also a growing body of research connecting Omega-3's with heart health in general and fewer sudden cardiac deaths in particular. If you are grappling with depression, ask your physician about utilizing Omega-3's. If you don't want to take fish oil caps, you could eat salmon, tuna, sardines, flaxseed, soy, walnuts, and use some flaxseed oil on your salad.

Stories of the Month

"The Humble Dog"

In Greek Mythology, there is the story of Daedalus and his son, Icarus. They were imprisoned inside a huge labyrinth. The resourceful father was able to make each of them a pair of wings. So it was that they were able to escape. They were free. Knowing the risks and responsibilities that come along with freedom, Daedalus warned his son, "Don't fly too high or the sun will melt the wax on your wings and you will fall." Icarus was young and lacked his father's wisdom. He felt such exhilaration as he flew, he forgot to heed his father's warning.

He flew much too high. When he got too close to the sun, the wax melted. Icarus fell into the sea and drowned.

I used to wear a t-shirt when I ran that had a picture of a huge dog and the imprint "If You Can't Run With the Big Dogs, Stay On the Porch." In retrospect, I was as brash and immature as Icarus. I'm a bit ashamed that I wore that shirt and I wouldn't consider wearing it again. I've lost a t-shirt but gained humility. The word "humble" comes from the Latin humus, which means "earth." Humility is derived from the Latin humilis, which means "on the ground." A humble person doesn't have his nose up in the air and does have his feet on the ground. He is of the world and not above the fray.

One of my running routes took me past a neighbor's house. Tom had little use of his legs because of a muscular disease. One day, as I ran past Tom's house, he waved me down to ask me a question. As we stood face to face, I realized I was wearing the Big Dogs t-shirt. After that day, I never wore that t-shirt again. It's never too late to call yourself on the carpet. I was arrogant. I'm not anymore. I'm luckier than Icarus. I didn't fall into the sea and drown.

Mary Oliver's poem entitled "Long Afternoon at the Edge of Little Sister Pond" is one of my favorites. Its essence reflects numerous qualities associated with happiness, including humility, an appreciation of life's mysteries, and the awe connected to the universe:

As for life,
I'm humbled,
I'm without words
Sufficient to say

how it has been hard as flint,
and soft as a spring pond,
both of these
and over and over,

and long pale afternoons besides,
and so many mysteries
beautiful as eggs in a nest,

still unhatched

though warm and watched over
by something I have never seen -
a tree angel, perhaps,
or a ghost of holiness.

Every day I walk out into the world
to be dazzled, then to be reflective.

Closing Thoughts

If you can, kick back a bit this summer. Take it down a notch. The summer is a good time for destressing and regeneration. Take a vacation from being perfectionistic, judgmental, unforgiving, and controlling. Take a vacation from worry, guilt, and fear. Give yourself permission to relax and enjoy.

There have been changes on the website. Check them out at:

www.thehappinesssolution.com

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