

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

2009, Issue V



Quote of the Month

Chase down your passion like it's the last bus of the night.

-Glade Byron Adams

A Bit of Humor? (On Cats & Dogs)

The new patient said to the psychiatrist, "I think I'm a cat." When the doctor asked how long this had been going on, the patient replied, "Ever since I was a kitten."

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The new patient said to the psychiatrist, "I keep thinking I'm a dog." The doctor told him to lie down on the couch so he could evaluate him. The patient responded, "I can't. I'm not allowed on the furniture."

Nutrition Corner

You might want to rethink your snacks when going to the movies. At a Regal cinema, a large popcorn with butter flavoring and a large soda supply over 2200 calories, 70 grams of artery clogging saturated fat, and 33 teaspoons of refined sugar. In contrast, a bottle of sparkling water and a bag of pretzels will give you roughly 200 calories, zero grams of saturated fat, and zero teaspoons of refined sugar.

Recent Experiment

The November 2009 issue of the American Psychological Association's *Monitor* reported on the practice of yoga, which has evolved from being a spiritual practice involving very few people to being a mainstream activity that over 15 million U.S. adults are engaging in. Research has focused on its physical benefits. There are many of these resulting from yoga's emphasis on stretching, strength, flexibility, deep breathing and meditation. Lung capacity increases while heart rate and blood pressure decrease. Health benefits have been well documented.

More recently, several studies have found there are pronounced psychological benefits derived from practicing yoga. A 2004 study appearing in the *Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology* (Vol. 48, No. 3) shows that yoga helps with anxiety and depressive disorders. It reduces the stress response activity of the sympathetic nervous system and reduces the stress hormone cortisol. A 2007 study done by Boston University School of Medicine researchers used MRIs to compare levels of the neurotransmitter GABA before and after two types of activities: an hour of yoga and an hour of reading a book. GABA is thought to counteract anxiety and reduce the chances of other psychiatric disorders occurring. GABA levels went up 27% in the yoga group, but remained unaltered in the reading group. Other recent studies have shown yoga to reduce insomnia, improve mood, and decrease neurotic symptoms.

One of my goals for 2010 is to develop a regular yoga practice. Interested in joining me?

Interesting Articles

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/11/05/happiness.simple.joy/>

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/evolved-primate/200911/beyond-happiness-other-praising-emotions>

Stories of the Month

"The Story of The Mexican Fisherman"

An American investment banker was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish?

The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs.

The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siestas with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine, and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats, eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing, and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually New York City, where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "15 - 20 years."

"But what then?" asked the Mexican.

The American laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions!"

"Millions - then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siestas with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

"Keep Your Eye On the Ball"

Self-consciousness, fear and doubt arise when you don't keep your eye on the ball. It's like listening to the static rather than the music. Keeping your eye on the ball is paying attention to whatever it is that you're doing in such a way that you are fully engaged. You're neither passing time, buying time, killing time or wasting time. Instead, you're alive, awake, and involved. You're keeping your eye on the ball. The ball may be any event, interaction, or happening. In essence, the ball is life.

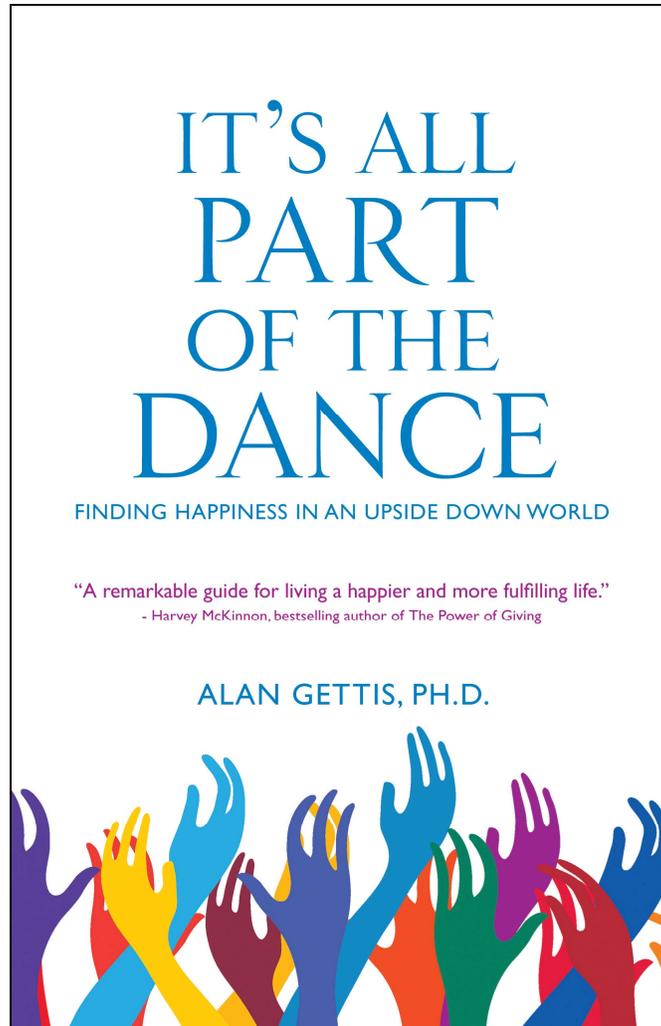
We live a hectic existence. It's the age of information. The world is at our fingertips. It can get a bit overwhelming. There are so many things to remember to attend to that we wonder how we'll ever find time to get to it all. Therefore, we try to do several things at the same time. That strategy usually backfires.

There is a story of a student spending his first evening at a Zen Monastery. Shortly before bed, he goes to the latrine and begins urinating and brushing his teeth at the same time. A head monk walking by sees this and swiftly takes the toothbrush from the student without a word being said. It was months later that the student fully grasped this teaching of one-mindedness. If you urinate and brush your teeth at the same time, you'll most likely do a lousy job at both.

Even when we have so many things to do, it's usually best to give our undivided attention to one thing at a time. If you're hammering a nail, focus fully on the nail and the hammer. Give it all your attention. If you're making love, invest yourself fully in being with your loved one. It doesn't matter whether you are doing a crossword puzzle, doing brain surgery, or changing a flat tire. Focus only on that activity. Just keep your eye on the ball. And remember, never urinate and brush your teeth at the same time.

My New Book

My new book has just been released. The early reviews are exceptional. Go to my website at www.drgettis.com to read all about *It's All Part of the Dance: Finding Happiness In An Upside Down World*. If you place an order this week, it will be there in time for the holidays. I'll be happy to sign them to your friends or family members as gifts. You can shoot me an email with specific signing instructions - drgettis@aol.com.



Closing Thoughts

Have the best holiday season possible!
My warmest and best as usual,
Alan Gettis