

The Happiness Solution Newsletter ♦ 2010, Issue II



Quote of the Month

"Sometimes I lie awake at night and ask, "Why me?"
Then a voice answers, "Nothing personal;
your name just happened to come up."
-Charles Schultz

A Bit of Humor?

"Mr. Clark, I have reviewed this case very carefully," the divorce court judge said, "and I've decided to give your wife \$750 a week."

"That's very fair, your honor," the husband said. "And every now and then I'll try to send her a few bucks myself."

Nutrition Corner

Research appearing in the April 2009 edition of the *British Journal of Nutrition* concluded that walnuts improve cognitive function and seem to be neuroprotective, while arresting both age related cognitive and motor deficits. Throw them in salads, put some in your oatmeal, or simply munch on a handful.

Recent Research

Vitamin D deficiency is now being recognized as the most common vitamin deficiency in the general population. Numerous researchers and theorists now believe that vitamin D deficiency can adversely affect mood and can possibly be a significant

contributor to depression. In a new study, the association between vitamin D levels and symptoms of depression was looked at with respect to 441 Norwegian subjects. Those with low vitamin D levels scored significantly higher on the Beck Depression Inventory than did individuals with higher levels of vitamin D. The subjects were then randomly assigned (double blind study) to receive either supplemental vitamin D or placebo for a year. Those actually getting the vitamin D did much better than those on placebos when they were re-tested on the depression inventory.

If you have any questions about vitamin D, please email me at drgettis@gmail.com.

Stories of the Month

"Ho Hum"

Are you bored a lot? If so, you're not going to like what I'm about to tell you. It's your fault! People are bored because they make boring choices. There is a Zen proverb that says, "Painted cakes do not satisfy hunger."

The word "boring" comes from the Latin "borinitus," which means "to not act or to stagnate." In this sense, boring equates to passivity or the lack of seeking stimulation. By the way, I just made up that Latin root idea so as to make my point. In reality, I have no idea of the etymological origins of the word boring.

I think I remember someone once proposing that there should be a profession of "idea cataloguer." It would be this person's job to come up with thousands upon thousands of suggestions to make your life more stimulating and fulfilling. In the absence of such a professional, the task becomes your responsibility. It is necessary to ask yourself what you are and are not choosing that contribute to your boredom. As the noted philosopher Jean Paul Sartre has stated, "You are your choices." If you are waiting to be entertained, stimulated, or excited, you may have a long wait. Create your own list of ideas that will add interest, zest, or passion to your life. Ideas that will make you a happier person.

The reason for looking at boredom has to do with the results of studies that focus on happy people and the characteristics they have in common. In particular, these people have been shown to be curious and zestful. They are open minded, eager to learn, and are willing to take risks. These traits are related to producing active and happy people who are rarely, if ever, bored.

Try some new websites. Learn something new. Take a course. Try a new sport. Do a puzzle. Listen to new music or read a new poet. Bake bread. Spend an afternoon at a new museum. Join a club or organization. Take a hike (literally,

not figuratively). Make decisions that could help reshape relationships more to your satisfaction.

Alleviating boredom by doing interesting things does not mean skirting responsibilities. Six college kids who felt bored decided to go to a concert instead of showing up for their Friday biology exam. They devised a story about getting a flat tire and therefore missing the test. They asked if they could have a make-up test. The professor arranged for their exam to be taken a few days later. The six students were each placed in different rooms, each with his or her own proctor. Each student received the exam. On the first page of the test were ten multiple choice questions that were worth one point each. When the students finished page one and turned to page two, this is what they read at the top of the page: "For 90 points, who changed the tire and which tire was it?"

I added the above anecdote just to make this story more interesting, and I'm happy that I did. Remember, you are your choices. Happiness has less to do with finding yourself than it does with creating yourself. It is not a boring world. It's a fascinating world. An amazing world. A world waiting to be discovered by you.

Learn, go, join, do, try, discover, play, get involved. Feeling bored means you are not harnessing your potentials and passions in your one and possibly only life. Ben Irwin once said that most of us spend our lives as if we have another one in the bank.

By the way, did I mention that the root of "boring" comes from the French word "bourain," which means "to withdraw?" If you're uncertain if that's factual or if I'm only playing with you, look it up. At least you won't be bored.

"P is for _____"

The word "pusillanimous" means lacking in courage and resolution. Many people lead pusillanimous lives exemplified by fearful thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The word is derived from the Latin pusillus, which means tiny or puny, and from animus, which refers to the soul and/or mind. So, being small minded or puny souled is at the root of lives of quiet desperation.

Another interesting "P" word is perfunctory. It refers to doing things mechanically, without enthusiasm. People often utter the overworked phrase, "Have a nice day," in a perfunctory manner. The word is also of Latin origin, from perfungi, which means to perform in such a way as to get it over with. Some people approach their lives in a perfunctory manner.

I'm proposing an exchange of P's. Try to replace pusillanimous and perfunctory with passion and purpose. It equates to a change of attitude in which you face your

fears and show up for your life. It's less about performing and results and more about living authentically while trusting things will work out okay.

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company...a church...a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past...we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is ten percent what happens to me and ninety percent how I react to it.

-Charles Swindoll

Closing Thoughts

It's important to love yourself, not in a narcissistic or egocentric way, but rather in a compassionate way. Don't give yourself a hard time. Relentlessly encourage yourself. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt. Be the best friend possible to yourself. If you're able to do that, you'll be able to give freely of yourself to others as well. Happiness is related to your ability to stop giving yourself and others a hard time. Treat yourself and others well.

Please visit www.drgettis.com.