

# The Happiness Solution Newsletter ♦ 2010, Issue III



## Quotes of the Month

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

**-Glade Byron Adams**

**"Psychologists estimate that we have 60,000 to 70,000 thoughts a day, 99% of which are more or less of what we thought yesterday. Our habits run our lives.**

**Most of the time we are phoning it in."**

**-Mary Pipher**

## A Bit of Humor?

**A thief in Paris planned to steal some paintings from the Louvre. After careful planning, he got past security, stole the paintings and made it safely to his van. However, he was captured only two blocks away when his van ran out of gas.**

**When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such an obvious error, he replied, "Monsieur, that is the reason I stole the paintings. I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."**

## Nutrition Corner

**The newsletter *Environmental Nutrition* reports that India has one of the lowest rates of Alzheimer's Disease in the world. Researchers from the University of California are linking curcumin - the principle compound in the Indian spice turmeric - with protection against Alzheimer's. It seems that curcumin may inhibit the development of the plaque deposits in the brain. Cook with curcumin or consider curcumin tablets - and visit your local Indian restaurant more often.**

## Recent Research

Biological psychologist Kristin D'Anci of Tufts recently published an interesting article in the journal *Perceptual & Motor Skills*. The researchers found that even mild dehydration - the kind "some people experience in their daily lives from drinking insufficient amounts of water" - was associated with negative mood, fatigue and confusion. If you feel listless, unhappy, or experience brain fog, consider the possibility that mild dehydration could be one of the factors involved. Drink up!

## Stories of the Month

### "Our Birthright"

My brother Rip is 68 years old. Our father died at age 71. Our brother passed away at 71. And yet, another brother died at that same age. When Rip turned 68, he called me and we discussed a myriad of subjects, including his melancholy sense of time running out. He asked me, "What if I die at the same age as dad, Sam, and Bruce? That means I only have three years left." Knowing me to be his compassionate, loving, and optimistic brother, he was surprised by my response. I matter-of-factly said, "What makes you think you're going to live that long?"

I didn't say that in a mean-spirited way. My intention was to get him to understand that we have to live our lives fully each day no matter what our age or family history may be. Forrest Church served as the minister of All Souls Church in New York City for three decades. He reminds us that "all of our stories end in the middle, with unfinished business piled high." The realization of our impending deaths, be it in three months, three years, or three or more decades, can frighten us to our core. Church sees religion as the "human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die."

Of course Rip wants to live long enough to see his grandchildren grow, graduate high school and college, get married, and so on. Some people are that lucky. Others are not. It's largely the luck of the draw. You can't take it personally. When people develop terminal illnesses and ask Forrest Church, "What did I do to deserve this?" he answers, "Nothing." He points out that in order to experience the gift of life, we must embrace and express our undying love, and understand that death is our birthright.

Whatever time Rip has left, it's important that he lives well and loves well. I hope he doesn't spend his remaining time obsessing over how little time he may have left. Hmmm. I just turned 65. As usual, I better practice what I preach!

## "The Meaning of Life: Part II"

I don't have it all figured out. I must admit, sometimes I don't have a clue. It's been said that the unexamined life is not worth living. It's not that I haven't examined life, but being certain there are correct answers to those examination questions is another story.

After struggling for answers to important metaphysical questions such as the nature of God and the meaning of life, I have reached one conclusion. That is, I don't want to obsess over those questions. I don't know if there's a master plan, predetermination, or cosmic indifference. Edward R. Murrow once said (although I'm probably quoting him out of context) that "anyone who isn't confused really doesn't understand the situation."

What it gets down to for me is how I live my life each day and how I feel about my life. It gets down to how I love, how I treat people, and how I treat myself. R.H. Blyth once wrote, "We all know what is what, what to do, what not to do, but pretend we don't by means of asking questions about the meaning of life, the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul."

When the Indian government was about to expel Ram Dass from their country (visa problems), he knew time was of the essence. He had been sitting for years at the feet of his guru looking for The Answer. He begged the guru, who relented and handed him a mango. Ram Dass excitedly said to himself, "This is the mango!" He wasn't certain what to do with it. He didn't know if he should plant the seed or if the one piece would be enough. He hid it so he wouldn't have to share it. Finally, he ate the mango. Nothing happened. It was just a good mango.

### Closing Thoughts

We always hear about the ideal of being loved unconditionally. That would be nice. To me, an important question is, "Do you love yourself unconditionally?" Can you be compassionate, loving, and accepting of all of you? Can you be your best friend? Can you relentlessly encourage yourself and be there for you?

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