

# The Happiness Solution Newsletter ♦ 2010, Issue IV

## THE HAPPINESS SOLUTION



### Quotes of the Month

**"The probability of any of us being here is so small that you would think the mere fact of existence would keep us all in a contented dazzlement of surprise."**

**-Lewis Thomas**

**"In life as in dance, grace glides on blistered feet."**

**-Alice Abrams**

### A Bit of Humor?

A woman told a pharmacist she wanted to buy cyanide to poison her husband. The pharmacist told her, "I can't give you that. They'll throw both of us in jail. You cannot have any cyanide!" The woman reached in her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband in bed with the pharmacist's wife. The pharmacist looked at the picture and said, "Oh, you didn't tell me you had a prescription."

### Recent Research

By now, you're probably aware that many people have insufficient levels of Vitamin D. Consider asking your physician to check your blood level. Several new double-blind studies have found Vitamin D improves mood. I am a big advocate of Vitamin D supplementation. Not only does it help build healthy bones, it is being carefully investigated for its possible benefits with regard to protecting against MS and colon cancer.

But, back to Vitamin D improving mood. In the studies cited above, the Beck Depression Inventory and the Hamilton Rating Scale measured significant mood improvement in those using Vitamin D. Those receiving placebo did not realize any significant improvement in mood. If you are considering using Vitamin D supplements,

consider 2000 units daily. Vitamin D-3 (cholecalciferol) was used in the studies. If you are a vegetarian, you can use D-2 (ergocalciferol).

### Nutrition Corner

This fall and winter, use a heaping tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder in your cup of warm skim milk, soy milk, or almond milk. A recent study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that cocoa powder reduced inflammation connected to cardiac disease. Only half the people who get heart attacks have high cholesterol. The other proposed main mechanism related to heart attacks seems to be inflammation. Cocoa contains polyphenols, which are anti-inflammatory in nature.

### Story of the Month

#### "Just Another Day at the Ranch"

I'm on my way to deliver a lay sermon for summer services at the Unitarian Church. My topic would be the title of one of my books, *Seven Times Down, Eight Times Up: Landing on Your Feet in an Upside Down World*. Yesterday, my brother Rip wound up getting a quintuple (five) bypass. He was in intensive care, in pain, and not fully out of the woods. At the same time, my sister, Harriet, was in a different hospital getting a cardiac catheterization to determine whether she might need a pacemaker or bypass. Yup, just another day at the ranch.

I had already lost two brothers, my sister-in-law, and my mother in the preceding couple of years. In a few days, I'd get the biopsy result as to whether or not I had melanoma. I felt a little like the soldier in *Saving Private Ryan* that they were trying to get out alive because his siblings had already died in the war. As I drove to the church to give my talk, I didn't feel cursed or less fortunate than anyone else. These are the things that happen to everyone. Occasionally, they may come in bunches. Everyone will get their turn. When your turn comes, there will be pain and sorrow. That's part of it too. No escape. There's no getting around it. If we want the joy, the love, the ecstasy, the serenity, the excitement, the passion, the beauty, and the transcendent, we have to take the illnesses, rejections,

disappointments, traumas, and deaths. Try not to envy others who seemingly have it all. Their turn may be just around the corner.

I'm reminded of the story about the student who approaches the Zen Master and asks, "If I reach enlightenment, will I no longer be subject to emotional pain?" The Master replies, "That is not enlightenment; that is death."

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

Oscar Wilde said, "If you don't get everything you want, think of the things that you don't get that you don't want." It sounds strange, but when things are not breaking your way, try not to take it personally. The universe is manifesting itself. Try to maintain a sense of humor. Life is less about what happens to you than it is about what you make of what happens to you.

Life. It's full of such sadness and sorrow, sometimes I think it's better not to be born at all! But how many people do you meet in a lifetime who were that lucky?

-Yiddish saying

Paraphrasing Johann Wolfgang Van Goethe, we enjoy when we can and endure when we must. And then, we enjoy what we can again. And the cycle continues and exemplifies our innate capacity to bounce back and recover. I delivered the sermon on *Seven Times Down, Eight Times Up*. We may have our moments. We may get knocked down. But we always get up and get cooking again. We choose life.

### Closing Thoughts

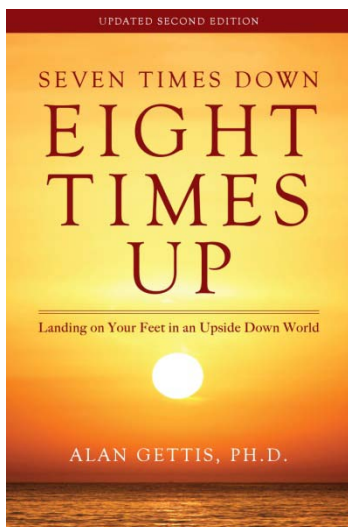
We made it through an ice age. Despite any and all threats, we have managed not to be an endangered species. Our DNA reeks of survival and resilience. We'll make it through the "end of the world" in December 2012. But, we could be doing better.

We are thought junkies. We continually fill our heads with fantasies, worst-case scenarios, worries, and other happiness-diminishing ideas. We're addicts. The news doesn't help. The monologue in our heads is carefully listened to by our entire being - physiological, psychological, and spiritual. Our muscles, bones, organs, cells, and immune systems are paying attention. So are our brain chemicals.

We need to quiet down, not believe all our thoughts, stop entertaining them, and start believing in and trusting ourselves. Get out of your own way. Lose your mind and come to your senses.

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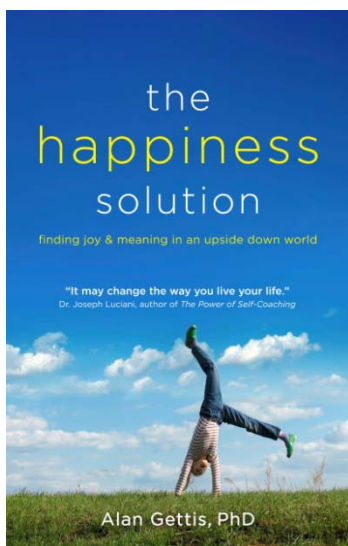
The holidays are coming. All profits from the sales of my books are donated to charity.



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