

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

October 2008

**THE
HAPPINESS
SOLUTION**



Quote of the Month

"Fear is the greatest threat to your happiness. Every negative emotion we experience has fear at its root. This includes the emotions of anger, guilt, loneliness, inadequacy, stress and depression. The strange thing is that even though we can be consumed by raw fear, most of the things we fear never actually happen; and if they do, the effect is seldom as severe as we anticipated."

-David Ambrose

A Bit of Humor?

For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting nutritional studies.

- 1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.**
- 2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.**
- 3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.**
- 4. The Italians drink a lot of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.**
- 5. The Germans drink a lot of beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.**

CONCLUSION:

Eat and drink what you like.

Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

Nutrition Corner

Sugar is sweet. Artificial sweeteners are another story. Here's the bitter truth. NutraSweet or aspartame or artificial sweeteners by any other name are not particularly healthy. And besides that, they don't work. While intended to reduce obesity, the percentage of overweight and morbidly obese in our country has increased every year since the sweeteners were introduced. As has recently been discovered, Splenda is not splendid. Artificial sweeteners have been implicated in a variety of disorders. I would take heed and avoid using sugar substitutes. Real sugar is only 16 calories per flat teaspoon. Learning to limit your sweet tooth will reduce your cravings and will alter your taste buds so that you'll be able to require less sweetness in foods. If you do want to sweeten something, consider going for the real thing - sugar - in reasonable amounts.

Recent Research

A small study found that people who spent money on others reported more happiness than if they spent the money on themselves. And employees were happier when they put their bonuses, regardless of the amount, toward gifts and charity. Spending as little as \$5 on others made a difference. Of course, there are many other ways to be generous without necessarily spending money. Being a kind and compassionate person will also increase your happiness.

Story of the Month

"Here's the Story"

You are a story. If you don't like your story, you better start rewriting it now. You don't want your not liking your story to be a central part of your story. Life presses hard against us and takes a toll. We are all marked. No one escapes problems, shame, guilt, losses, deaths and disappointments. Life happens and imprints deeply upon our psyche, soma, and spirit. Robert Holden's words are to the point:

The truth is, you can walk up to anyone, on any street, in any city, in any country, in any culture, and on any continent, and if you say, "I'm

so sorry to hear about your problem," their reply to you will most likely be, "Who told you?!" Unhappiness isn't so special! It doesn't make you unique - lonely, maybe, but not unique. We all know what pain is. We've all "suffered," and we're all ready to heal...aren't we?

Writing in the *American Psychologist*, Laura King and Joshua Hicks discuss the importance of our being able to let go of "what might have been." We need to disengage from our past losses and lost opportunities and commit passionately to current projects, goals, and relationships that are in the service of our most deeply held values. The pain we feel is in the holding on. Healing is mostly about letting go. Freedom is found when we choose to move on. Despite our being marked by life, we need to develop the wherewithal and capacity to see the silver lining. That is not being pollyanish. It is instead, cultivating a hallmark trait of maturity. Also, when we understand that there are no guarantees and have the grace to live the life we have been given with courage, enthusiasm, and gratitude, we can garner the strength, resiliency and wisdom to meet life's challenges as they press upon us.

The happy, complex person's palette is one that contains a rich array of color, and the mature artist, though genuinely marked by life, maintains an enthusiasm to put paint to the canvas of life in remarkable ways.
-Laura King & Joshua Hicks

Closing Thoughts

Take a day to restore your energy and regenerate. I'd suggest you change your habits for that day. Forget about watching the news, following the stock market, and reading the paper. Turn off the computer and the Blackberry. Go unplugged for the day. Meet a friend for lunch, go for a walk in a scenic area, take a nap, get a babysitter, rent a DVD, pray or meditate or do a bit of yoga. Browse in a bookstore, get a cup of tea or a cup of Joe, and don't be concerned with politics, administrative issues, or global warming. Visualize yourself taking a thin, straight pin and popping it in the side of your head and let all your stresses and worries whirl and spin out of the pinhole so that you're feeling relaxed and traveling lighter. You deserve a special day that's about you.

Please visit the website to see the latest changes:

<http://www.drgettis.com>

My best as always,
Alan Gettis

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