

# The Happiness Solution Newsletter ♦ 2010, Issue I



## Quotes of the Month

"Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance."  
-An Old Cowboy's Advice

"Since everything is none other than exactly as it is,  
one may well just break out in laughter."  
-Long Chen Pa

## A Bit of Humor?

A little old lady sold pretzels on a street corner for 25 cents each.

Everyday a young man would leave his office building at lunch time, and as he passed the pretzel stand, he would leave her a quarter, but never take a pretzel.

This went on for more than three years. The two of them never spoke. One day, as the young man passed the old lady's stand and left his quarter as usual, the pretzel lady spoke to him. Without blinking an eye, she said:

"They're 35 cents now."

## Nutrition Corner

In honor of Valentine's Day (Hallmark has done a great job!), let's talk a bit about heart health. Here are two suggestions to help reduce the risk of heart disease (other than exercising regularly, not smoking, and keeping your weight down).

- (1) Eat nuts! Studies have shown that people who eat nuts regularly are less likely to die of a heart attack. Nuts reduce inflammation, lower LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) and may increase HDL (the "good" cholesterol) and relax artery linings. Walnuts and almonds are particularly heart healthy. They are high in calories, so eat nuts in moderation if you are overweight.
- (2) Eat rainbow vegetable and fruit salads regularly. There is nothing that confers as many health benefits as the fibers and phytonutrients of fruits and veggies. Each color contains unique phytonutrients. Make a salad with something red, purple, yellow, orange, blue, white, and various shades of green. The more colors, the healthier it is for you in general and for your heart in particular.

### Recent Research

Keeping with the Valentine's Day theme, recent research has shown that pessimism raises your odds of dying of heart disease. Researchers tracked 97,000 women for about 10 years. All of them filled out a questionnaire to see if they agreed or disagreed with statements such as, "If something can go wrong for me, it will." Their test results classified them as optimists or pessimists.

The risk of dying of heart disease was 30% lower in optimists. Researchers adjusted for other factors such as smoking, exercise and weight, but the finding held up. Heart disease is the #1 killer of women. If you have a leaning toward pessimism, you might want to work on changing your attitude. I know a few books I can recommend!

### Stories of the Month

#### "Take a Mid-Week Break"

When I was a kid, it was difficult to find a doctor on a Wednesday. For some strange reason, their offices were closed. When I got a bit older, I asked a doctor about this. He explained to me that stress is a killer, literally and figuratively. He believed stress was a major contributor to the ailments that brought about 75 percent of the patients to his office. As I wondered what this had to do with my question, he finally delivered the explanation.

If you took Wednesday off, you would most likely never work more than three consecutive days. Because the effects of stress are cumulative (remember the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back), taking that mid-week day off insured that you had an opportunity to de-stress, assuming that your job is a stressful one.

He went on to say that it's the fourth consecutive work day that adds significant stress, and that the fifth straight work day "is the killer."

I realize that not everyone is in the position to be able to take Wednesday off. If you can't, can you modify it? Is it possible to take a half-day off? Or, how about simply doing whatever you can to lighten the load on Wednesdays, like scheduling fewer appointments, delegating certain tasks or allowing yourself more time to complete what's necessary to do. If you are unable to incorporate any of the above ideas for Wednesdays, perhaps you can at least talk to yourself in a relaxing way and make sure you use your breaks to unwind. Can you take a ten minute walk, or sit quietly and breathe deeply for a few minutes?

Wednesday turns out to be an important day for your mental and physical well-being. Honor it by doing what you can to restore yourself. Treat yourself nicely all the time, but treat yourself especially well on Wednesday.

## **"The Heart of the Matter"**

I find it meaningful to think of the "heart" as representing the essence or vital core of a person - the seat of the emotions. Many people have "lost heart" or have become discouraged. Some are "eating their hearts out" or are consumed by remorse or grief. Others have suffered deep disappointments and disillusionments - the "heartsick." People have little "heartaches" and major "heartbreaks." Some become "heartless" or withdrawn and apathetic, while others are chronically angry or "cruel hearted."

R.D. Laing, in his book *The Politics of Experience*, recognized that some schizophrenics may be better described as having broken (schiz) hearts (phrenos), rather than split (schiz) personalities (phrenos). The schizophrenic person may indeed be the brokenhearted, while the classical neurotic diagnosis might be reserved for the person with the wounded heart who tries to defend against further dispiriting events.

I find the research on death from all causes in general, and heart disease specifically, to be very enlightening. To feel loved or connected is in fact lifesaving. People who feel disconnected (lonely, isolated, depressed) have three to five times greater rates of death and disease than those with a sense of being

connected (a sense of belongingness, community, intimacy). So, in fact, there may be a strong correlation between physical well-being and emotional well-being.

Remember how the tin man got his heart? It really wasn't from the wizard.

He got connected. His support from the lion, Dorothy, and the scarecrow, and his reciprocating that support were key determinants in his being successful in his quest.

He learned to believe in himself and take risks that enabled him to get his heart.

A good formula for health and happiness is to be "good hearted" and get connected. And that's the heart of the matter.

### Closing Thoughts

Open your heart. Express your love. Give generously of yourself. Smiles and compliments and sincere interest cost you nothing, but yield great dividends. Tell those near and dear to you how much you love them. Hug them as if it might be the last time you ever do.

Check out the website: [www.drgettis.com](http://www.drgettis.com)

\*My latest book will be released nationally in April, but advance copies are available at [www.itsallpartofthedance.com](http://www.itsallpartofthedance.com).