

SWEET INSPIRATIONS

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Don't Wait to Tell Someone You Care

The other day a good friend told me that she received a phone call from someone she hadn't heard from in years. Her friend called her to tell her how much she meant to him in his career. As the phone call progressed, she learned that this friend had recently be diagnosed with Stage 4 Lung Cancer and didn't have long to live. So rather than feeling sorry for himself, he made a list of all the people in his life who he regarded as friends, mentors, and heroes; people who made a direct difference in his life. He then proceeded to call each person and reach out to say how much she or he meant to him. The conversations weren't morbid or depressing. There was gratitude, laughter, insights and more laughter and more gratitude. Where he could, these conversations took place in person. The rest were phone calls, long phone calls from hear to heart.

There is a lesson we can all learn from this series of phone calls. Don't wait to tell someone who means something to you just how much they mean to you. Take time to cultivate real actual relationships rather than virtual ones. When speaking always opt to say something in person rather than an email or text. Life is short and extremely precious.

None of us knows how long we will live here on planet Earth. Make each day precious. Be grateful for what you have, specifically the people in your life over the course of your life who have contributed to who you are today.



Stress & Happiness:

During the last week of April, I spoke at two professional conferences (WELCOA and AJHP). While in Orlando, I gave a presentation on the topic of Stress and Happiness. As you may have

noticed, there are scores of books on the market, and even more articles (moreover, even a hit song by Pharrell Williams) all on the topic of happiness. Here are some things I learned in putting this presentation together that may be of interest to you.

1. People cite “trust” as the biggest factor to happiness, above health and money, (from a stress perspective, trust is essential for safety, and without safety, you are in a state of fear).
2. From a Harvard Study on Happiness (over the course of 70+ years) it was discovered that positive social relationships were the single most important aspect of happiness. While young Millennials stated that money and fame were their primary directives in the pursuit of happiness, neither money nor fame ensures happiness. Rather the pursuit of both or either ultimately leads to unhappiness. No matter how many times we are told this, people have to figure this out for themselves.

Here is a link to this great TED talk:

https://www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness?language=en



3. There are two categories of happiness. The first, Hedonistic Happiness, as you might have guessed from the first few letters is short-term happiness usually generated from some outside sources (e.g., alcohol, chocolate, making love). Often these experiences act as a quick fix of euphoria, but nothing long lasting. The second type of happiness, Eudomonic Happiness, comes from a deep-seated sense of purpose or meaning in one’s life. In essence, making the world a better place to live.

Here is a link describing this in more detail:

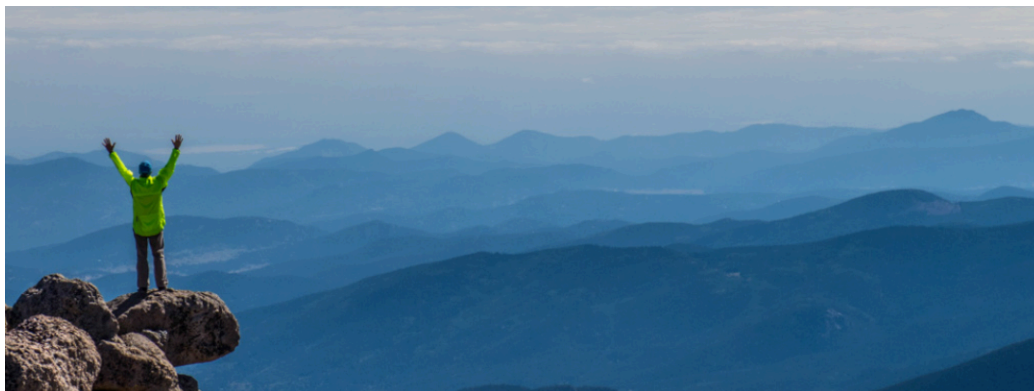
<http://www.counselingconnection.com/index.php/2010/08/30/happiness-and-positive-psychology/>

So, what is the key to happiness? Is it love? Is it meaning? Perhaps both of these and a whole lot more. I suspect more research will come out on this topic, but in the mean time, here are a few links of possible interest. Enjoy!

On the Topic of Resiliency

While at the WELCOA Conference, and again a week later at a Wellness Summit in Wyoming, I gave a presentation on the popular topic of Resiliency. You may be aware that resiliency is the

new “buzz word” in health and wellness circles, from Corporate America to the Armed Services. There are many takes on the term and if you were do a Google search, you would find that each expert seems to have his or her own take on what resiliency is, well beyond the ability to merely “bounce” back from stress. I often refer to resiliency as “health of the human spirit,” as expressed through several effective coping techniques or what I call, “muscles of the soul (e.g., patience, optimism, humor, forgiveness, intuition, creativity, and compassion to name a few). We are living in challenging times right now, and experts suggest that things will get more challenging in the months and years to come. As such, we will all need to start flexing these muscles.



Fall Mountain Retreat Celebrates 20th year in Vail, CO

Twenty years ago in a small mountain town, I put together a mind-body-spirit retreat for friends (and fans of my first best-selling book, *Stand Like Mountain, Flow Like Water*). In what has now become a traditional yearly event, I am happy to say that the 20th Fall Mountain Retreat will be held on Oct. 14-16 at the world renowned Sonnenalp Resort in Vail, Colorado. The Sonnenalp Resort has hosted us for several of these retreats, and being a 5-star resort, we are pampered quite nicely, particularly for a “relaxation retreat.” Because of my relationship with the Sonnenalp, we get an amazing rate on the hotel rooms, making the experience nothing less than magical. People come back year after year, from all around the country (and Canada)...I often joke that I am a supporting cast member in my own retreat. The Colorado Rockies is the main event. The theme this year is *Triumph of the Human Spirit*, and once again I have invited singer/songwriter Dan Sebranek to join me for a most magical experience in the Rocky Mountains this fall. Spaces are limited to 35 people. If interested, please let me know as I suspect it will fill quite quickly.



Global Warming & The Importance of a Healthy Immune System

If you have been paying attention to the news lately you are well aware of the newest disease to find it's way upon American shores: The Zika Virus, as featured this week on the cover of TIME magazine. Experts predicted decades ago that one of the effects of global warming would be an increase in new tropical diseases that would migrate to new geographical areas that have become more hospitable due to warmer temperatures. The same experts now suggest that we will continue to see new diseases appear in the coming years. While we may not be able to control the migration of diseases spread through mosquitos, one thing we can do is enhance the integrity of our immune systems, so that whatever pathogens we come in contact with are met with a strong resistence.

What factors enhance a strong immune system, you ask? Here are a couple:

- 1) Consume a healthier diet. Sugar is well known to compromise the immune system. And as you may have noticed, our foods today are loaded with sugar. Some people in the field of nutrition call sugar a drug, and given how the pleasures neurons light in in the brain when people who consume sugar are viewed during an MRI, this is not hyperbole.
- 2) Poor sleep also compromises the efficacy of your immune system. People today are not sleeping well for a variety of reasons, including our love affair with screen devices. Maintain healthy boundaries with the use of your technology (remember, technology is not bad, it depends how we use it).
- 3) Finally stress also compromises your immune system. Cortisol, the stress hormone can wreak havoc on your white blood cell count. Dedicate time each day to relax your heart and mind. Unplug from the world for 15-20 minutes and just focus on your breathing. Take time to clear you mind (mindfulness) so that you can navigate the course of each day successfully. There is no guarentee that these three things will prevent you from this wave of new diseases, but then again, it just might.



Stress & Lyme Disease:

Over the course of many months, I have had several friends share with me their plight with the challenge known as Lyme Disease. What was originally known as an acute problem due to a tick bite, is now known, by some, to be a chronic, debilitating disease. Thought to be a bacteria transmitted by insects, this parasite lingers in the body wreaking havoc and is now thought to be associated with many autoimmune diseases and illness associated with the nervous system: Rheumatoid Athritis, Restless Leg Syndrome, Chronic Fatigue, Multiple Sclerosis, and many,

many more. Some experts suggest that the majority of people in the US have Lyme Disease and don't even know it. And while the test to determine Lyme Disease offers many false negatives, these same experts suggest a second and third opinion. If you have a chronic disease that affects your musculo-skeletal system and/or your GI track, please consider seeing a Lyme Disease specialist. In the short time I have been immersed in the study of Lyme Disease, I have come to understand it is a very political disease and one that is very hard (but not impossible) to treat. There is also a great documentary film to see, if you haven't already, called, Under Our Skin.. Here is a link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRIZy-jg-5U>

Write Your Will: The Legacy of Prince's Death

As the world continues to mourn the loss of one more Rock Star, perhaps the real legacy of Prince, won't be the hit songs *Purple Rain* or *Red Corvette*, but the fact that he didn't leave a will. The future of his vast fortune will now, most likely, go into probate court, leaving an ugly mess for friends and family. If there is some good news about this, its that the rest of we "mere mortals" should act quickly to ensure that our friends and family members don't suffer the same fate and have our belongings end up in the hands of the state we live in rather than who might best benefit from our endowments or trusts. Having a will drawn up is not hard, and will save your family a LOT of grief, after you are gone. Statistics suggest that less than 25% of Americans have a will (including a living will, medical power of attorney, and pet care, etc.). While many people might feel uncomfortable thinking about life after they are gone, the amount of stress people go through when there IS no will is tremendous. Do yourself a favor and find a local lawyer to help you out with this essential part of your life. You can also start this process on line...

Here is a link to get you started:

<https://www.legalzoom.com/personal/estate-planning/last-will-and-testament-overview.html>



That is all the news that's fit to print. Hope to see you soon in my worldly travels. As always, thanks for making this a better world in which to live.

Best wishes and inner peace,

"Luke"

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