

Weekly Message Weekly Message



MERRY CHRISTMAS

This will be the last weekly message of 2006. Most of you will close your office or school this week to share time with your families. From American Dance/Drill Team, we wish each of you the happiest time of your lives as you finish 2006 and head into 2007.

Here are some thoughts for the day:



“You increase your joy by increasing the pure joy of others.”

Torkom Saraydarian (1917-1997) scholar and sacred music composer



“When we put ourselves in the other person’s place, we’re less likely to want to put them in their place.”

Farmer’s Digest



“An earnest purpose finds time, or makes time. It seizes on spare moments, and turns fragments into golden account.”

William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) cleric



“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”

Desomnd Tutu, cleric and civil rights leader



A friend sent me the passage below a few weeks ago. It is long, but it is a powerful message to each of us as we plan for the coming year. Please save it and take time to read it. It will change your life.

Have a fabulous Christmas with your families. Have a joyful new year, and be safe. We look forward to seeing and hearing from each of you in 2007, and as always, please *keep in touch*.

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Sincerely,

Joyce E. Pennington, Pres. CEO

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A Time In Your Life

A time comes in your life when you finally get it... When in the midst of all your fears and insanity you stop dead in your tracks, and somewhere the voice inside your head cries out - ENOUGH! Enough fighting and crying or struggling to hold on. And, like a child quieting down after a blind tantrum, your sobs begin to subside, you shudder once or twice, you blink back your tears, and through a mantle of wet lashes you begin to look at the world through new eyes.

This is your awakening. You realize that it's time to stop hoping and waiting for something to change or for happiness, safety and security to come galloping over the next horizon.

You come to terms with the fact that he is not Prince Charming and you are not Cinderella (or vice versa) and that in the real world there aren't always fairy tale endings (or beginnings for that matter), and that any guarantee of "happily ever after" must begin with you; and in process a sense of serenity is born of acceptance.

You awaken to the fact that you are not perfect and that not everyone will always love, appreciate or approve of who or what you are... and that's OK. (They are entitled to their own views and opinions.) And you learn the importance of loving and become a companion yourself; and in the process a sense of newfound confidence is born of self-approval. You stop complaining and blaming other people for the things they did to you (or didn't do for you) and you learn that the only thing you can really count on is the unexpected. You learn that people don't always say what they mean or mean what they say, and that not everyone will always be there for you; and that it's not so, you learn to stand on your own, and to take care of yourself; and in the process learn that in safety and security is born self-

reliance.

You stop judging and pointing fingers... and you begin to accept people for who they are-not their family, their spouses or their ancestors; You begin to overlook their shortcomings and human frailties; and in the process, a sense of peace and contentment is born of forgiveness. You realize that much of the way you view yourself and the world around you is as a result of all the messages and opinions that have been ingrained into your psyche; and that the expectations you project are often what you created.

You stop manufacturing excuses that it's "others" who miraculously stroll through life's fires unsinged. And embraced that those "others" now include you. And you begin to sift through all that you've been fed about how you should behave, how you should look, and how much you should weigh; what you should wear and where you should shop, and what you should drive, and where you should live, and what you should do for a living; who you should sleep with, who you should marry, and what you should expect of a marriage; the importance of having and raising children, or what you owe your parents.

You learn to open up to new worlds and different points of view. And you begin reassessing and redefining who you are and what you really stand for.

You learn the difference between wanting and needing and you begin to discard the doctrines and values you've outgrown, or should never have bought into to begin with; and in the process you learn to go with your instincts. You learn that it is truly in giving that we receive. And that there is power and glory in creating and contributing; and you stop maneuvering through life merely as a "consumer looking for your next fix.

You learn that principles such as honesty and integrity are not the outdated ideals of a bygone era, but the mortar that holds together the foundation upon which must build a life. You learn that you don't know everything, it's not your job to save the world . . . and that you can't teach a pig to sing. You learn to distinguish between guilt and responsibility, and the importance of setting boundaries, and learning to say "NO"! You learn that the only cross to bear is the one you choose to carry, and that martyrs get burned at the stake.

Then you learn about love; romantic love and familial love. You learn how to love, how much to give in love, when to stop giving, and when to walk away. You learn not to project your needs or your feelings into a relationship. You learn that you will not be more beautiful, more intelligent, more lovable or important because of the man, or woman on your arm, or the child that bears your name. You learn to look at relationships as they really are, and not as you would have them be. You stop trying to control people, situations and outcomes. You learn that just as people grow and change, so it is with love . . . and you learn that you don't have the right to demand love on your terms ... just to make you happy. And, you learn that alone does not mean lonely.

And you look in the mirror and come to terms with the fact that you will never be a size 5 or a perfect 10, never escape your receding hairline-and you stop trying to compete with the image inside your head and agonizing over how you "stack up." You also stop working so hard at putting your feelings aside, smoothing things over and ignoring your needs. You learn that feelings of entitlement are perfectly "OK". That it is your right to want things and to ask for the things that you want and sometimes it is necessary to make demands. You come to the realization that you deserve to be treated with love, kindness, sensitivity and respect; and you won't settle for less. And, you allow only the hands of a person with his or her touch and in the process you internalize the meaning of self-respect.

And you learn that your body really is your temple, and you begin to care for it and treat it with respect. You begin eating a balanced diet, drinking more water and taking more time to exercise. You learn that fatigue diminishes the spirit and can create doubt and fear. So you take more time to rest. And, just as food fuels the body, laughter fuels our soul. So you take more time to laugh and to play. You learn, that for the most part, in life you get what you believe you deserve ... and that much of life truly is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You learn that anything worth achieving is worth working for, and that wishing for something to happen is different from working toward making it happen.

More importantly, you learn that in order to achieve success you need direction, discipline and perseverance. You also learn that no one can do it all alone, and that it's OK to risk asking for help. You learn that the only thing you must truly fear is the great robber baron of all time. FEAR itself. You learn to step right into and through your fears because you know that whatever happens you can handle it, and to give in to fear is to give away

the right to live life on your terms. And you learn to fight for quality of life and not to squander it living under a cloud of impending doom. You learn that life isn't always fair, you don't always get what you think you deserve; and that sometimes bad things happen to unsuspecting, good people.

On these occasions you learn not to personalize things. You learn that God isn't punishing you or failing answer your prayers. It's just life happening. And you learn to deal with evil in its most primal state – the ego. You learn that negative feelings such as anger, envy resentment must be understood and redirected or they will suffocate the life out of you, and poison the universe that surrounds you. You learn to admit when you are wrong and to build bridges instead of walls. You learn to be thankful and to take comfort in many of the simple things we take for granted, things that millions of people upon the earth can only dream about: a full refrigerator, clean running water, a soft warm bed, a long hot shower.

Slowly, you begin to take responsibility for yourself by yourself; and you make yourself a promise to never betray yourself and to never, ever settle for less than your heart's desire. And you hang a wind chime outside your window so you can listen to the wind.

And you make it a point to keep smiling, keep trusting, and to stay open to every wonderful possibility. Finally, with courage in your heart, you take a stand; you take a deep breath, and you begin to design the life you want to live as best as you can, knowing it WILL BE the best.

~ Author Unknown ~

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