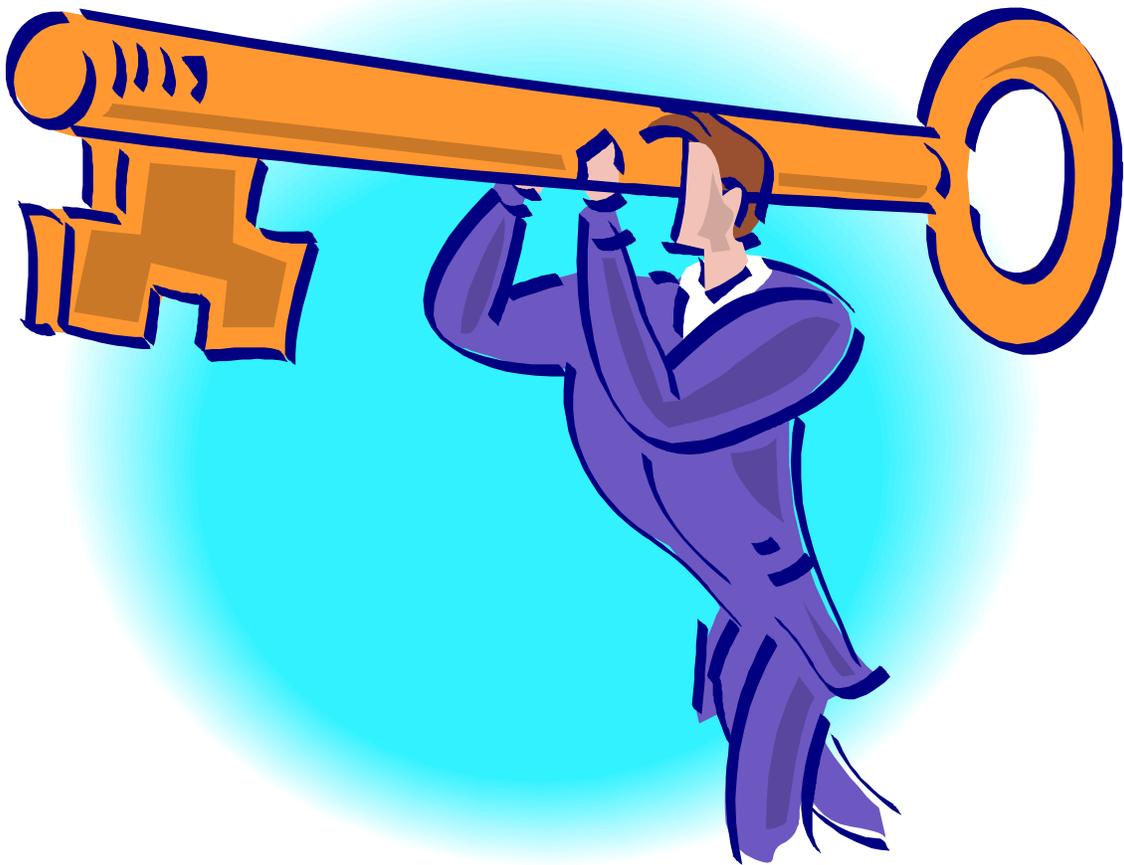


THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IN TWO WORDS

By Dr. Tracey Magrann

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**What kind of person
do you wish to be known as?**



Introduction: What is happiness?

Happiness: “A state of well-being and contentment.”

There are people who remain cheerful despite the most appalling of circumstances; therefore, *it is possible* to have a sense of well-being and contentment under any conditions... but how? There are two things that are common among all of these individuals: they live at a level of acceptance of their circumstances, and they are appreciative of their blessings in life.

The most fundamental thing to understand about acceptance of others is that you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. You can try to inspire, motivate, cajole, bribe, persuade, wheedle, and entice another person to change, but you cannot jump into their body and make them think, speak, and behave differently. You will suffer much aggravation and unhappiness until you realize this. However, you *can* choose how you are going to respond to what others do, and to what events befall you. Your happiness is within your own power, if you do not choose to give it away. Those who find themselves saying such things as “I’ll be so happy when...” and “I’d be happy if...” have already disempowered themselves, guaranteeing their own unhappiness *right now*.

Once a person is at a level of acceptance, a lot of misery disappears, but there is one more step required to elevate one’s mood to happiness. That step is appreciation. No matter what gifts, pleasures, treasures, and blessings one has in life, there will always be some who have more, and others who have less. Your appreciativeness, and therefore your happiness, is based on your perspective.

You can be happier today than you were yesterday.

Picture this: You are a person who is Loving, Accepting, Tolerant, Longsuffering, Forgiving, Merciful, Cheerful, Peaceful, Patient, Agreeable, Humble, Modest, Self-Confident with Self-Esteem, Understanding of others, Guiltless, Unselfish, Generous, Thoughtful, Considerate, Honest, Trustworthy, Humorous, Peace-Making, Helpful, Courageous, Trusting, Prompt, Hopeful, Faithful, Realistic, Appreciative, Self-Disciplined, a Problem-Solver; one who Admits own faults, is Respected, and is Respectful of others.

These attributes would make you a good neighbor, a good friend, a good spouse, a good parent, a good child, and a good co-worker. The people in your life would be happy to know you. All of these attributes can be obtained by understanding the key to each characteristic. A person who possesses these attributes empowers himself or herself to be able to find happiness in whatever situations life has to offer. Their quality of life would begin to improve immediately. You would be a blessing to those whose lives you touch.

It seems like an enormous amount of work to gain these 37 attributes, but there are actually only two things one needs to work on: Acceptance and Appreciation. With these two

qualities, one gains the other 37 character assets. **What kind of person do you wish to be known as?** Turning your flaws into assets (which translates into happiness) can be as easy as making a decision.... if you are not letting your personality be defined by the unhealthy emotions of anger or fear.

There are three basic emotions: fear, anger, and happiness. You cannot be happy when you are angry, and you cannot be happy when you are afraid. Therefore, the door to happiness is opened by removing anger and fear from your life.

Actually, anger is more cognitive than emotional. We THINK our way to anger. What is the difference between two people under the same circumstances, in which one gets angry and the other one doesn't? The answer is probably acceptance. Acceptance is gained by thinking things through. Therefore, if we condition ourselves to think differently, we can get rid of our temper.

The most common reason for anger is when someone does something you don't want them to do, or something happens which you don't want to have happen. **When an incident occurs that did not meet your expectations, then your expectations were not realistic. Therefore, when you get angry, it is YOUR fault, because your expectations were beyond what reality has shown.** When you realize this, you will reach a level of acceptance of these circumstances, which, by the way, are now in the past. Thinking your way to this conclusion goes a long way toward ridding yourself of angry thoughts, thereby paving the road to happiness.

Fear is also more cognitive than emotional. As with anger, we THINK our way to fear. What is the difference between two people under the same circumstances, in which one becomes fearful, and the other one doesn't? Again, the answer is probably acceptance. Remember, acceptance is gained by thinking things through, and if we condition ourselves to think differently about our fears, we can get rid of them.

An interesting thing about fear is that it is always regarding the future. When suffering with fear, one is focused on the future, and not living in the present. When this happens, you are choosing to lose your present time on earth, while trading it for fear of a future event that may or may not happen. The fact is, the only time we have on this earth is present time. Once this moment has passed, it is gone forever, fading into the past, which is a thing that can never be altered. How much time in your life have you lost to fear?

One thing that all fears have in common is the thought, "What if...?" If you choose to dwell on this, you may as well ponder it all the way through. What if your fear came true? What is the worst that could happen? Would you survive it? If not, perhaps your fear is justifiable. But, in most cases, fears are not about physically surviving an event; they are about coping with unpleasant circumstances that may arise in the future. Therefore, the only thing you need to ponder is how you will handle it. Again, acceptance is the key to reconditioning yourself to think differently.

Have you ever had unpleasant circumstances befall you in the past? Somehow, you survived to carry on another day. Why not spend this day evolving closer to a more

permanent state of happiness? **When you realize that you will find the strength to cope with whatever the future holds, you are letting go of fear, empowering yourself with a level of acceptance.**

Therefore, the key to removing anger and fear from your life is acceptance. However, acceptance is not the only ingredient to happiness; there is one more essential component: appreciation. Although there is tremendous relief that comes with achieving a level of acceptance, a little more energy is required to boost your emotions into a state of happiness. The best source of such positive energy can be found by having thoughts that reflect appreciation. Is there *anyone* in the world that would *love* to exchange his or her problems for yours? If so, you have reasons to be thankful. Ponder them frequently throughout the day. Write them down and carry them with you. That list will be the best weapon in your arsenal for combating anger and fear. **The more things you can find to be thankful for, the happier you will be.**

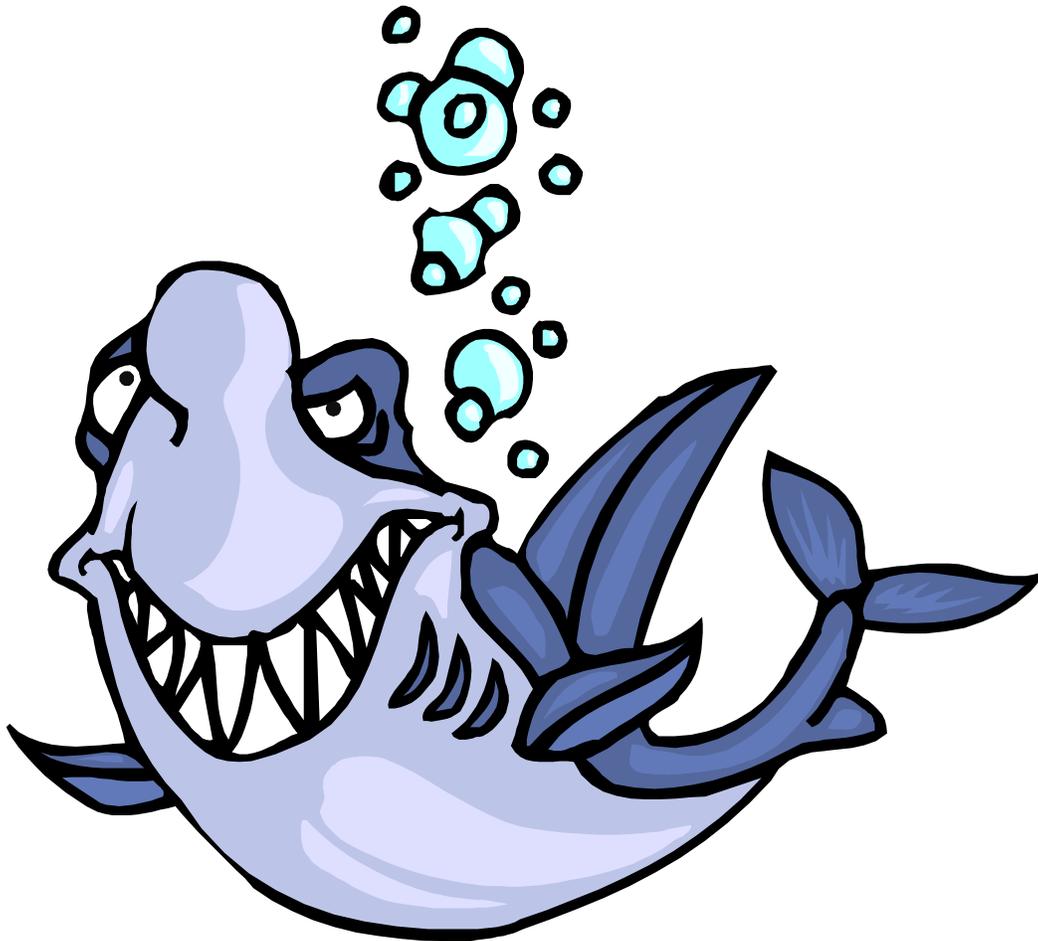
Without a doubt, the door to happiness is appreciation. Yet, if the door to happiness is appreciation, the key to this door is acceptance. The combination of acceptance and appreciation will unlock the fetters of fear and anger, freeing the victim to a world of joy.

Part I



Character Defects Removed With Two Words

Anger/sarcasm



Anger doesn't need to be eliminated, just managed.

Anger/sarcasm: “A feeling of strong displeasure” for people and events as they are. Sarcasm is “a contemptuous remark”, sometimes disguised as humor.

Anger is usually a response from another person doing what you don't want them to do. Sometimes anger is from a situation that you don't want, but usually, this is just frustration. Uncontrolled anger is verbal or physical venting of frustration. Controlled anger is an *urge* to verbally or physically express one's feelings of frustration, without actually doing so. The one thing that all forms of anger and frustration have in common is that you didn't get what you want. Venting angrily serves two purposes: either to make yourself feel better or to aggressively scare another person into accommodating your desires.

The expression of anger has consequences. Although it may make you feel better for the moment, you are putting a label on yourself that you have a temper. Do you know anybody at all who ENJOYS the company of a hot-tempered person? Choosing to keep this negative label upon yourself is choosing to be a less likable person. Allowing yourself to vent your anger is an expensive long-term consequence just to make yourself feel better for the moment.

As for hoping to intimidate the other person, a blustering display frequently backfires. Many people tune out your words once you begin yelling at them. Being yelled at triggers one's stress level, and the victim of such an outburst needs to address their own reaction to it. All of a sudden, they have their own negative energies to deal with, and they are less likely to be accommodating to what you want. If they do give you what you want because they are afraid of you, they may negate the change as soon as they are safely away from you.

Sometimes, the other person cannot change what you are yelling about anyway, because the offending event has just passed. Are you hoping to elicit a humble apology? Even if you got it, would that be sufficient to assuage your anger? You may not get what you are hoping for, if you maintain your anger.

On the other hand, the best way to disarm a person who is venting their anger at you is to apologize right away. It takes two to play tug-of-war. If you don't want to argue, just drop your end of the rope. You have nothing to lose but your “pride”. Remember, you can drop your pride without dropping your self-esteem. In the best scenario, if someone is yelling at you, see things from their perspective so that you can understand them and agree that they have a right to their anger, then tell them so. This usually disarms arguments promptly.

Beware of getting angry at someone who has power over you. Do you refrain from yelling at law officers, your customers, or your boss, yet feel free to vent hostility at your loved ones? Why? Do you think they are “safe” to yell at because they will eventually get over it? Life may seem to go on the same for you, but you will undoubtedly leave damage in the aftermath of your quake. The only reason to vent your anger at your loved ones is if you do not feel that their emotional welfare is of value to you.

When you are ready to get rid of the “anger” label, it is easier when you realize that **the**

root of your anger is that you want your own way. Ponder that for a while. “I want my own way!” may sound childish, but that is exactly what we are thinking every time we get angry, whether we vent it or not. If you can’t have what you want, the only happy option left is to want less. Want what you have.

Anger doesn’t need to be eliminated, just managed. Learn to manage your temper well, and you will be able to *act* instead of *react* to unpleasant situations.

**THE KEY TO MANAGING ANGER IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Bragging



**Until you can accept others with their weaknesses,
you cannot love yourself with your weaknesses.**

Bragging: “To boast about oneself with excessive pride, offensively pointing out or even exaggerating one’s own deeds and abilities as being important.”

Pride seems to be the underlying element of bragging, but upon closer scrutiny, low self-esteem is the actual causative agent. One who brags has a need for the applause of others, which indicates that their self-respect is insufficient. When one has inner confidence and esteem, there is no driving need to be seen as being more important or better than others. Self-esteem and humility go together naturally.

While the intention of the braggart is to win accolades, the very definition of bragging denotes the behavior as being offensive to others. The reason for this is simple: when someone is boasting about how they are, in some way, better than the rest, the listener is included in the derision. Therefore, nobody feels good about themselves while listening to another’s bragging. Only the braggart is delighted.

In order for self esteem to improve, one must learn to love and accept themselves and others the way they are. Competitive people have difficulty with this, because they measure everything and everyone in terms of “best” and “worst”. One who frequently uses these two terms can be far away from accepting others as they are. **Until you can accept others with their weaknesses, you cannot love yourself with your weaknesses.** Likewise, if you cannot accept your weaknesses, you cannot truly love others. For instance, if there is something that you do not like about yourself which causes you to not love yourself completely, do you feel the same way toward others who are likewise defective? If you are more forgiving of others than yourself, then you may be holding yourself to a higher standard, which is actually a symptom of pride.

Humility ensues from appreciation of the smallness of oneself and the grandeur of all creation. No one can really take credit for any of their blessings, for they are all gifts from God. Who made you smart enough to ace the test? Who made you fast enough to win the race? Who made you beautiful, or strong, or wise? Give credit where credit is due.

Another aspect of bragging is that the subject being boasted of is implied by the braggart as being important. Bragging reflects your values and priorities. If you brag about superficial and vain things, you are labeling yourself as a superficial and vain person. If you brag about your strength, athletic ability, intelligence, or even wisdom, are these things really more important than faith, self-esteem, or humility?

Applause is much sweeter when it is unsolicited.

**THE KEY TO BRAGGING IS SELF-ESTEEM.
THE KEYS TO SELF-ESTEEM ARE ACCEPTANCE AND HUMILITY.
THE KEYS TO HUMILITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Competitive



What you are competing for reveals your values.

Competitive: “Having rivalry, wanting to contest with and outmatch others; one of two or more trying to get what only one can have.”

The problem with competitiveness is that it always involves a winner and a loser. Therefore, everyone involved lives in fear, and their present happiness becomes suspended until the outcome of the event, and unfortunately, there is only one winner. Even then, the competitive winner immediately looks for the next level of competition, thereby postponing happiness even further. People who always need to win end up enjoying life less. If they lose they are disappointed, and if they win it's what they expected anyway. No achievement is sufficient, and failures are always disheartening.

People who want something to the point of distraction are in danger of doing anything to get it; sometimes they are even tempted to resort to unscrupulous behavior. For the sake of winning, people may risk their health, safety, reputations, career, home, and family. If you enter a contest that you expect to win but don't, you will be either angry, sad, or both. In any case, you'll be sitting a long way from happiness. If you knew in advance that you would lose a competition, would you prefer to find a graceful way to back out, rather than lose? Feeling the need to be better than others is not a sign of healthy self-esteem.

Many forms of competition involve economic rewards that are necessary to improve the winner's lifestyle. When this is the *only* motivation, poor self-esteem is *not* involved, and these forms of competition can be healthy. However, whether or not there are economic factors, ask yourself this question: Is it important for you to be publicly acknowledged as better than others in a particular way? If so, examine yourself to understand why that is so. Those who feel secure with their talents and abilities have no need for public acclaim; only those who are insecure want the publicity and accolades of being a winner.

The desire to enter a contest for the purpose of outmatching others seems to imply that you are not content with your status as it is right now. For those who want to shed this aspect of competitiveness from their shoulders, acceptance of themselves as they are is the main key. If your goal is to be unaffected by whether or not you win or lose, but to enjoy the game, you must keep that in mind.

Do you want to be better than average because of your pride, or because of your poor self-esteem? The majority of the world's population throughout the history of civilization is made up of people who are *not* applauded as being the best. The majority of the world is average. Should all of these average people be considered less worthwhile in value than those few who excel? **What you are competing for reveals your values.** Keep in mind that each and every person on the face of the earth is of infinite worth, just because of their humanity. This is why 911 personnel will rescue the loser of an event with as much efficiency as the winner.

**THE KEY TO COMPETITIVENESS IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Complaining



The best decision you will ever make in your life is the decision to stop complaining.

Complaining: “Expressing discontent” for people and situations as they are.

Nobody likes to listen to a complainer. Complaining may make you feel better, but it makes the listener feel worse. **The best decision you will ever make in your life is the decision to stop complaining.** It is one of the most annoying character defects a person can have, and one of the easiest to change overnight.

First, stop complaining about *anything* to *anybody* out loud. When you complain out loud, the listener suffers. Second, stop complaining within your thoughts. This can be a difficult habit to break, but if you stop complaining, you will quickly pave the road to happiness.

Try anything to help yourself break the habit of complaining. You might write God a tiny note, saying, “Thank you, God, for my blessings. Please help me appreciate EVERYTHING in my life, and help me to stop complaining about ANYTHING.” No matter where you store this little note, keep it in your thoughts, morning, noon, and night. At the end of the day, think about whether or not you did any complaining that day. If you can just remember what your note says, twice a day, you may be able to stop complaining the very next day!

When you catch yourself issuing a complaint, wither verbally or mentally, one of the best tricks to get you back on course is to take a deep breath, and say, “Oh, well. At least....” Filling in the blank after this little phrase will move you from a state of frustration towards a feeling of pacification immediately! It’s a great antidote to remember, and it is probably the best piece of advice to help rid yourself of this miserable character defect.

If you find that the complaints in your thoughts sound like you are feeling sorry for yourself (which they often are), try to imagine if there is any other person on the planet who would rather have your life than their own (even with all the things you are complaining about).

Acceptance of the circumstances that are in your life today, and appreciation of the things in your life, are the keys to happiness. When you have no complaints in your head, it indicates you have reached this happy state of Being.

THE KEYS TO STOP COMPLAINING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Controlling



People are over-controlling because they believe they know what is best for the other individual.

Over-Controlling: “To over-exercise domination, rule, or restraint.” Unwilling to allow others to do things their own way.

We all have a certain amount of control over our environment. This can allow us to enjoy a feeling of freedom as we exercise our options. However, sometimes we become enslaved by the very things we choose with our freedom. Becoming obsessed with the need to control everything in our lives is stressful enough, but when we seek to control the lives of others, we are impinging on their own God-given right to free agency.

People who control every little aspect in their lives are fulfilling a need within themselves. As long as what they are doing with their own lives is making them happy, there is no need for others to complain about it. The problem is when they step over the line and try to control the lives of another, when this makes the other person unhappy. Of course, this does not apply to parents who are using reasonable discretion with their underage children. Over-controlling behavior is mainly a character defect when it is directed at the life and actions of another independent adult.

People usually do this because they believe they know what is best for the other individual. Keep in mind, though, that there is a growth process that occurs when a person must suffer the consequences of a poor decision. One who is over-controlling of another person must think through their own motives. These motives are always based on fear. Fear is an emotion in which the present time is wasted worrying about events in the future which may or may not occur. If the event does not occur, you have worried needlessly. If the event does occur, you have worried twice!

To deal with these fears, first think through the worst case scenario of allowing the other person to choose for themselves. Then decide how you will handle this situation if it happens. If you have all of your concerns and their solutions mapped out in your mind, you are already prepared to deal with them, should they occur. This will empower you to allow others freedom to choose for themselves. **Acceptance of another’s individuality is the key to toning down your tendency to over-control other people’s lives.**

However, there exists a grey area, when one person’s choices cause another person to suffer the consequences along with them, and it’s even more unnerving when the thoughtless person is not bothered by the consequences as much as the controlling one! As a mild example, a controlling wife wants her husband to put his dirty clothes in the hamper. If she allowed him to suffer the consequences of his actions, there would eventually be dirty clothes all over the place. However, this probably would not bother the husband whatsoever, while greatly annoying the wife, to the point where she would rather pick up the clothes herself and complain loudly about it. If he understands his wife’s displeasure, yet continues in his behavior, and she is not willing to accept this annoyance about him, continuous conflict is inevitable. The root of such a conflict is a lack of compassion within the relationship.

A wife (or mother) in such a situation would have to be creative to find a set of consequences that would annoy the offender without annoying *her*. In this instance, she

might simply toss the stray clothes out of her sight and refuse to wash anything that is not in the hamper. It is not going to make her as happy as it would if he were compliant in the first place; after all, she still has to pick up his clothes to toss them in the closet, and she is still discomforted, knowing that they are not where they should be. However, she may satisfy herself with a certain glee that she will get her revenge on laundry day. This is passive-aggressive behavior from the wife, which is concealed anger vented indirectly.

Another example is a controlling husband who insists that his wife accurately account for every penny she spends. The fear behind his behavior is financial hardship from spending on things that are not of value to him. Perhaps his values are to save money for their retirement years, and her values are to buy nice things for the house. Assuming she is spending money on frivolous things, if he allowed her to suffer the consequences of her actions, there may eventually be financial insecurity. However, as long as the bills are paid, this probably would not bother the wife whatsoever, while greatly annoying the husband, who has to shoulder the responsibility of planning for the years when he can no longer work. If she understands her husband's displeasure, yet continues in her behavior, and he is not willing to accept this annoyance about her, continuous conflict is again inevitable. The root of this problem is a difference in values, combined with a lack of compassion regarding that issue.

Neither of the above situations is much of a step towards happiness. These examples are mild cases, but there are times when over-controlling can have a severely detrimental effect instead. While the controller's motive may simply be to protect his or her loved one from the unpleasant consequences of poor choices, over-controlling another person's life can have a *significantly harmful* effect on the very person being "protected".

As the controller removes all of the other person's choices, the victim never develops his sense of identity. Self-esteem never grows, and fear is instilled. The victim becomes unproductive, depressed, and remains inactive, fearful of making his own decisions because he has always been told what to do. While most other people are out making their own choices, thereby discovering their own interests, the victim of a controller spends all his or her time seeking unconditional acceptance wherever it can be found.

Over-controlling the lives of others is a reaction to fear. **Keep in mind that you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself.** Whether you are trying to live with an over-controlling person, or you are trying to give up being an over-controlling person, the root of this behavior is that *one person thinks they know what is best for the other*. No matter what side you are on, listen to the other person's opinion, and think through the problematic consequences that may ensue, and plan how *you* will handle them. After that, back off and allow the other person their individuality as best as you can. Total acceptance of another person, including their annoying behaviors, is the fastest path to serenity. The only thing keeping you from this is your own fear.

THE KEY TO OVERCOMING CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR IS ACCEPTANCE. ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Covetousness



**When we allow ourselves to desire things
with resentment, we become corroded
with our own melancholy.**

Covetousness: “To desire with envy the power, wealth, possessions, or relationships that belong to another.” Envy: “Painfulness or resentfulness of another’s advantages.”

Painful or resentful desires of another person’s situation or circumstance can add a great deal of unnecessary misery to one’s soul. While dreaming about things that someone else has, you miss all the comforts that you could be enjoying now. The present moment is all that we have. If we miss out on what life has to offer us now, we have lost today to the past.

Covetousness is no stranger to anyone. We have all looked around at the money, power, possessions, or relationships that belong to another. But **when we allow ourselves to desire these things with resentment, we become corroded with our own melancholy.**

It doesn’t take long for envy to turn into bitterness. This is what happens when you have lost your ability to appreciate what you have. There will always be those who have more than us, and those who have less. Where your circumstances fit on this scale depends on your perspective.

There are people who desire another’s Power. Having this power would fulfill an inner need. But are we completely without power to enjoy now?

There are people who desire another’s Wealth. Having this wealth would fulfill an inner need. But are we completely without money to enjoy now?

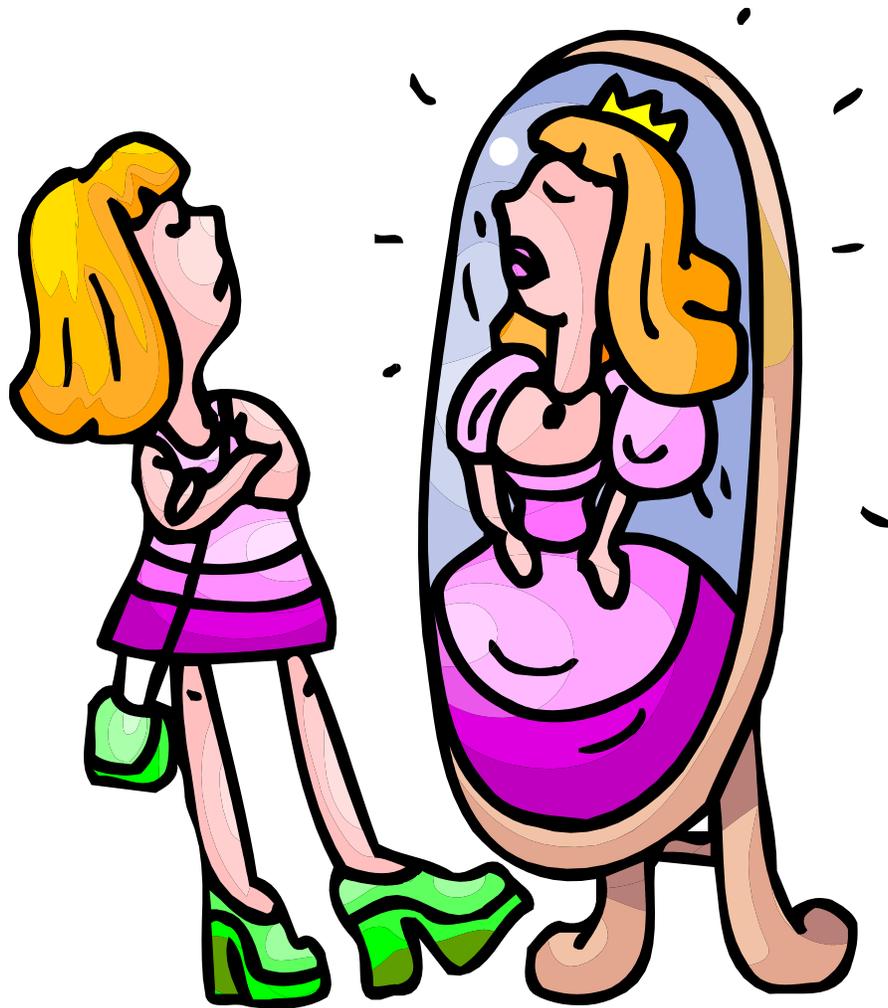
There are people who desire another’s Possessions. Having these possessions would fulfill an inner need. But are we completely without possessions to enjoy now?

There are people who desire another’s Relationship with someone. Having this relationship would fulfill an inner need. But are we completely without relationships to enjoy now?

The Tenth Commandment is, “Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor’s”. And the greatest Commandment of all is, “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. As described in 1 Corinthians 13:4, “Love does not envy”. Therefore, covetousness is a serious hindrance to our emotional and spiritual well-being. The sooner we accept the fact that we have what we have, and we are what we are, the sooner we can appreciate what we have, and the way things are for us. If there is anyone in the world who would *love* to trade his life for yours, be at peace today.

**THE KEYS TO COVETOUSNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Denial/Making Excuses



Only when one faces the truth, can it be dealt with.

Denial/Making excuses: “Refusal to admit the truth.” Refusing to think about, hear, or admit one’s faults. Justifying one’s own actions instead of questioning them for errors.

Being in denial is refusing to admit the truth. Often, the truth is not as obvious to one person as it is to another. However, many people are more than happy to point out when they perceive that someone is in denial. If a friend or relative relays such a message, a wise person will stop and examine themselves more closely. One who always errs on the side of questioning the quality of their *own* actions, will probably not go astray.

When a person is in denial, it serves a purpose for them. In the back of their mind, they are probably aware of the consequences of accepting the truth, and they find this too much to deal with. However, they will be facing another set of consequences by remaining in this artificial state of peace.

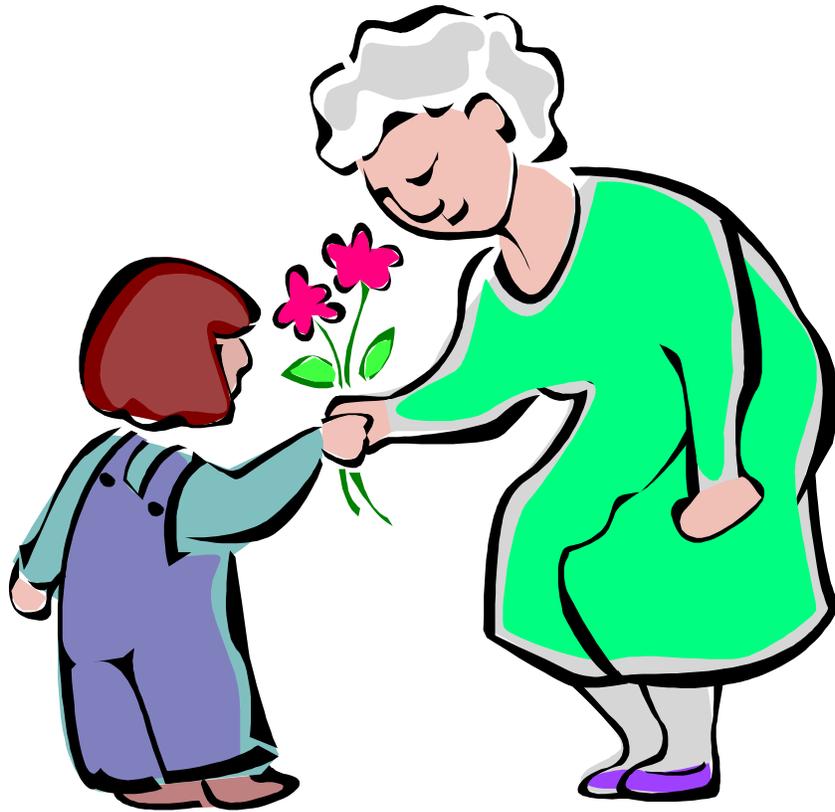
One sign of denial is manifested by making excuses. Rarely is there a troublesome situation that does not involve some factors added by all those involved. Can you honestly say that *nothing* you said or did contributed to the situation?

People can also be in denial as to the state of their relationships. If one person says there is a communication problem, *there is a communication problem*. If one person in a pair is unhappy with the relationship, no amount of defensiveness, making of excuses, or denial can lead to progress in resolving the issue.

There are always consequences to remaining in denial; some of them can be severe. Being defensive can cause relationships to be damaged for years. Responsibilities that go unheeded carry financial penalties and sometimes honesty and integrity are sacrificed in the process. **Only when one faces the truth, can it be dealt with.**

**THE KEY TO DENIAL IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Depression



To end depression overnight, stop feeling sorry for yourself and count your blessings instead.

Depression: “To be sunk to a lower position than normal; to be saddened and discouraged, marked by inactivity.”

Depression is your worst enemy.

When depression immobilizes you physically, and you can't get out of bed or do any normal daily activities, you need a jumpstart. The emotion that is causing the problem is fear. There are only two things to do about fear: succumb to it or face it. To give into it just postpones your life until the next day, while reinforcing the fear and depression. To face it will knock out most of the fear, sufficient enough to get yourself out of bed and do SOMETHING productive with your day. Remember, the hardest part about deciding to face immobilizing fear is deciding to get dressed and brush your teeth, without climbing back into bed. If you can decide to do that, you are going to feel better than you would if you stay in bed all day... again.

Some people need anti-depressant medicines to correct biochemical imbalances. If you suffer from severe, prolonged depression, see a doctor first. A positive attitude can override or underscore medicine. A positive attitude overrides medicine when it eventually replaces the medicine. It underscores medicine when it is used in conjunction with it. Simply taking medicine without developing a positive attitude will not give you long-term improvement.

Although there are many reasons for depression, they all have one thing in common: self-pity. This may sound harsh when the pity is justifiable, as in the case of severe, chronic pain. Yet there are people in the world that are suffering thus, but still show cheerfulness, a positive attitude, and general good humor. How do they do it? Their answer is always the same: They count their blessings.

To become aware of your blessings, you must start with a positive attitude. To have a positive attitude, you must change your thoughts. The first step in changing what you are thinking about is to think about what you are thinking about!

Your thoughts have a direct effect on your emotions. When you realize that you are not feeling well, write down your thoughts, and make a problem list out of them. Reducing thoughts to paper goes a long way to diminishing their emotional impact.

Look at each item on your list that is bothering you. Your goal is to get to a level of acceptance as fast as possible. Take note of how many of things there are on your list that you have no control over. **Remember, you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself.** When you move out of denial (wanting these things to not be as they are) and into acceptance (face the facts that are the reality of the situation), much of the extreme misery will evaporate. It takes one more step (appreciation) to get to happiness, but at least in the meantime, you can get to neutral and rest from the pain for a while.

Examine your thoughts for negativity. Sometimes a different perspective helps with negative thoughts. Have you ever met anyone who could always look on the bright side?

Try to imagine what they would be saying to you right now. After all, they're happy right now, and you are not. Maybe it will do some good to look at your life from their perspective.

If you find that your negative thoughts are of the type that are always putting yourself down, hire your own imaginary Defense Attorney, and keep him inside your mind. Perhaps this imaginary friend can help you change your thoughts about yourself. Imagine you are paying him big bucks to stick up for you. The next time you put yourself down, picture him jumping up, saying, "Objection!" Then imagine him telling the judge exactly why your negative thought about yourself is not true. Keep this up until the judge (you) says, "Sustained!"

Once you have realized what depressing thoughts you are feeding yourself all day, and after you have examined and challenged these thoughts, you are more prepared to cope with the things that are depressing you. Appreciation plays a key role in this coping process. You must now fill up your head with other, *healthy* thoughts. This might be a difficult muscle to exercise at first, but after you have developed a more positive attitude, you will be more willing and able to count your blessings.

Is there anyone on the planet, or who has ever lived in the history of the world, who would GLADLY trade his life for yours, including ALL of your problems? If so, that means there *is* a way to have your exact circumstances and still be happy. It's simply a matter of appreciation. To count your blessings, make a list of all the things that you have in your life to be thankful for. Make sure you have a lot of paper, because there is no reason why you can't use it all. Continue to add to the list for the rest of your life.

Electricity, indoor plumbing, telephones, cars, airplanes, household appliances, and computers, are just a few of the things that this generation takes for granted. Yet none of these things were available just one hundred years ago. Your grandfather's grandfather would have been thrilled to live with these conveniences. There are many people today that still don't have ANY of these things!

There are plenty of people in the world now, who live in daily fear that the government will knock on their door and take away their boys over the age of twelve to force them to join the military. Others take their lives in their hands every time they go to the market, navigating land mines and dodging bullets. Some stand in line for hours for a loaf of bread. Many people don't even have any food at all in their entire village. Even the wealthiest families in the world would love to trade their problems for yours.... if their problems include a terminally ill child.

Counting your blessings brings you up to a level of appreciation, and happiness is the result. **To end depression overnight, stop feeling sorry for yourself and count your blessings instead.**

**THE KEYS TO ENDING DEPRESSION ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Discouragement



“Oh, well, at least...” is a handy little phrase with an enormous amount of power to change your life.

Discouragement: “To be deprived of courage or confidence, feeling like one cannot do something that was previously desired.”

If depression is your worst enemy, then discouragement is its champion. Discouragement often comes from feeling overwhelmed. It implies that at one point, you felt that you *could* accomplish your desire, but something has happened to make you feel like your expectations are ruined. This leaves you with two options: you can carry on towards your goal despite the odds, or you can cope with the feeling of loss. Either course of action is appropriate. If you set a goal, based on a set of expectations, and came to find out additional information, it may be absolutely reasonable to feel dissuaded from your plan. However, if your goal is still possible with additional effort, your fear could be the only thing keeping you from success. In this case, addressing the core feeling (which is fear) is essential.

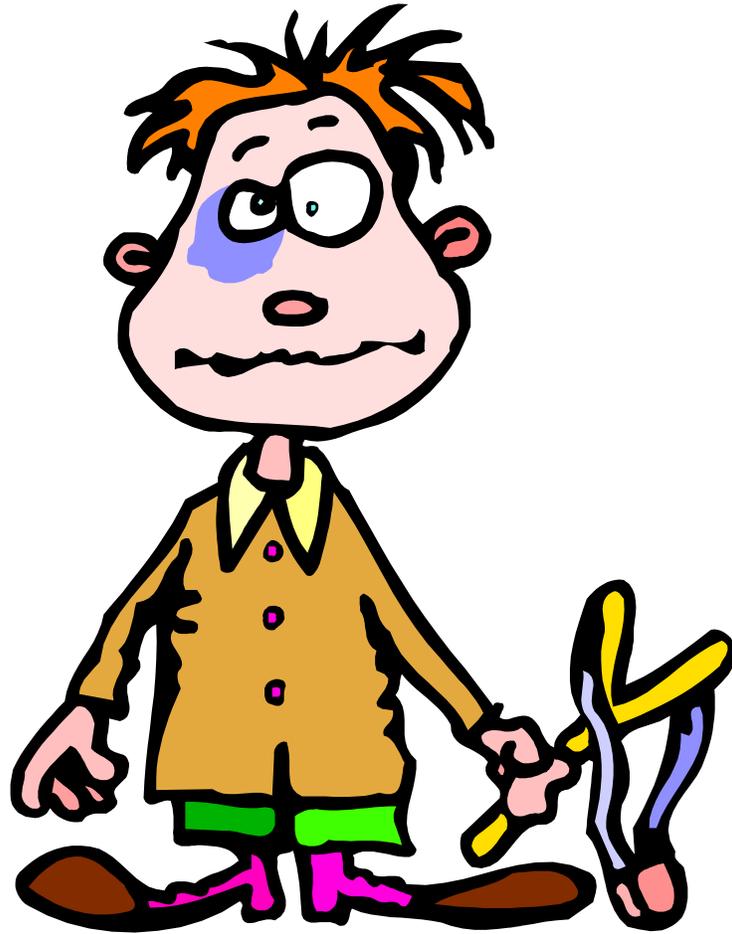
There are two simple sentences that can easily get your discouragement to a more manageable level. The first one is, **“Yes, I’m discouraged, but....”** **In this phrase, each of these four words plays an important role in lifting one’s spirits.** Saying “Yes, I’m discouraged” allows you to validate your feelings, steering you away from a state of denial. There is nothing wrong with feeling discouraged; it’s how you *cope* with the feeling that has an impact on your behavior. Then, the next word is pivotal to changing your mood. The word “but”, by definition, is the word that negates whatever precedes it in the sentence, and whatever follows the word “but” is the reality. Therefore, fill in the blank with what your plan is to cope with this feeling of loss.

The second sentence to lower discouragement is, **“Oh, well, at least...”** **This is a handy little phrase with an enormous amount of power to change your life.** It is an instant mood elevator. When you have the words to fill in the blank, you are already out of denial, increasing your courage, and you have mapped out a blueprint for your immediate happiness. It shows that you have accepted the disappointment, and are already looking on the bright side. It is an instant way to process emotional depression, lifting you beyond acceptance and into a level of appreciation. Therefore, the person is well served who makes a habit out of saying these phrases.

THE KEYS TO DISCOURAGEMENT ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Dishonesty/Deceptive



There is only one reason that people choose not to be honest: Fear.

Dishonesty/Deceptive: “Untrustworthy and deceitful” from fear of telling the truth.

There is only one reason that people choose not to be honest: Fear. Living in fear is no fun. The more lies we weave, the more difficult it is to keep track of them.

“Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.”
-- William Shakespeare

Some people make such a habit of lying that it becomes easy to lie and difficult to be honest. Dishonesty includes all kinds of “little white lies”, deceptions, and lies of omission.

Since the one thing all lies have in common is fear of honesty, the next time you feel compelled to lie about something, examine your motives. Why don't you want to tell the truth? The answer to that is where your fear is.

The problem with being even a little dishonest is that it diminishes our trustworthiness. For instance, when the phone rings, and you say to your friend, “If that's Jim, tell him I'm not here”. Not only are you asking someone else to lie for you, but you are also letting your friend know that you may use this same trick on him when you are with someone else. Your trustworthiness goes down a little in their eyes.

One way to increase self esteem overnight is by deciding to be honest from this point onward.

The key to honesty is acceptance of its consequences. Once you decide on this, you may think twice before doing anything else that has unpleasant penalties.

**THE KEY TO DISHONESTY IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Disrespectful



**If you don't allow rudeness to bother you,
no one will have the power to disrespect you.**

Disrespectful: “Impolite.” Blatant disregard for proper social behavior.

People can be disrespectful by accident, negligence, or on purpose. In any case, they are not the ones who are upset about the situation; others are bothered. Being disrespected is a perception in the eye of the beholder. Therefore, it falls upon you to deal with your own injured feelings after the event has occurred. Usually it is your dignity (hence, your pride) that feels wounded.

People who show disrespect by accident are the most easy to forgive. Still, the offended one usually must receive a witness of sincere humility and remorse from the reprobate before they will absolve them.

Negligent disrespect can be easy to forgive in a child, a foreigner to the culture, or in an otherwise lovable person. However, the offended one again must usually receive a sincere apology from the delinquent before they will forgive them, and with each negligent offense, there is less willingness to let bygones be bygones. Eventually, one just has to come to expect such nonchalant carelessness as part of that person’s character.

It causes the most distress when someone is purposefully disrespectful. In this case, there is usually a reason behind the perpetrator’s actions. There is probably some anger towards the authority that feels disrespected. The appalling person is probably expressing anger or frustration in a way that he feels will cause more damage. This allows him to vent his anger more fully, giving him more satisfaction. Or, he may be expressing his disagreement with social decorum in general. In either case, he does not feel that behaving with proper social etiquette is getting him the results he desires.

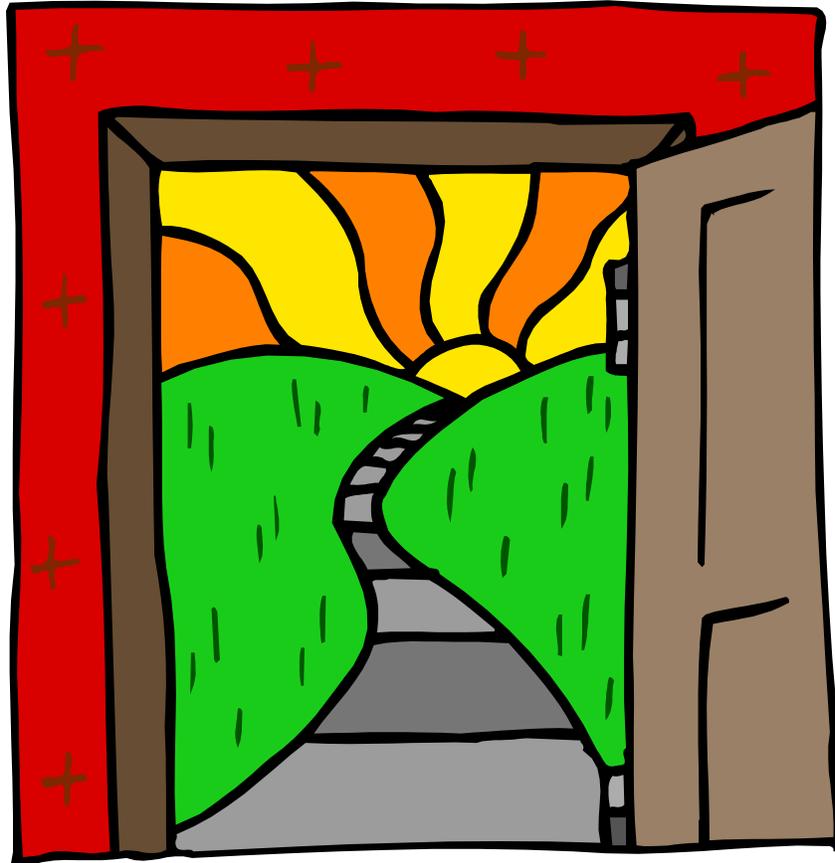
When you are the one who is purposely disrespecting others, the chances are, you are trying to get them to change something. In this, you are setting yourself up for disappointment, because you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. To prevent this frustration, acceptance of others as they are, including their way of doing things, is the key.

Although you can instruct a person on proper social behavior, inspire them to be motivated to strive for a higher standard, and you can even inflict consequences for disobedience, you still cannot change another person’s thoughts, words, and deeds. You have to find a way to cope with them as they are.

It’s best not to get offended in the first place. Some of the happiest people in the world never feel affronted by *anything*. The more sensitive you allow yourself to be to insults, the more your life will be spent in discontent. If you give everyone in the world the power to make you angry, just by insolence in their words or deeds, you will be vulnerable, indeed. **If you don’t allow rudeness to bother you, no one will have the power to disrespect you.**

**THE KEY TO DISRESPECT IS ACCEPTANCE
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Fearful



When you realize that you will find the strength to cope with whatever the future holds, you are letting go of fear, empowering yourself with a level of acceptance.

Fearful: “Anxiety or dread caused by expectation of danger”, may prevent appropriate actions; leads to doubt and second-guessing.

Fear is one of the biggest obstructions to happiness. It comes in many forms, by many ways, for many reasons, to many people. But one thing is always the same: fear is focused on the future. **When you live in the future, you lose the present to the past.**

The future is an ambiguous place. Even if your expectations of a future event are realistic, they may *or may not* be fulfilled. How much time life have you lost to fear?

One who lives in fear may not carry on in the present with appropriate actions. They may choose for themselves and others not to fully enjoy life today. Fear tends to lead to self-doubt and second-guessing. Once this cycle repeats itself a few times, the fearful person may withdraw entirely from taking any action at all.

The best way to alleviate fear is to have a contingency plan in the event that your fear comes true. **What is the worst that can happen?** In most cases, fear is not about physically surviving an event; they are about coping with unpleasant circumstances that may arise in the future. **What will you do to cope with the situation?** Make a plan today to deal with it tomorrow, if the need arises. One of the best phrases to use to face fear is to say, “*Next* time, I’m going to...” This phrase is very empowering because you are telling yourself that you expect that your fear will come true, and that you have a plan to handle it. When there is no more you can do about it *now*, it’s time to let your focus return to the *present* moment.

Even if the core of your fear is death, you can still make plans to deal with it. After all, you may not die from what you are afraid of, but there are a thousand other things that could occur to end your life unexpectedly. It *could* happen. What can you do to be ready for it? Do you want to leave behind a will? Are your affairs in order? Do you have written instructions that you have reviewed with those you will leave behind? Do you feel reasonably prepared to meet your Maker? If you said “no” to any of these things, maybe you really *don’t* think you may die tomorrow. In that case, you have to look more closely at what your *real* fear is.

As stated in the Introduction, fear is more cognitive than emotional; we THINK our way to fear. What is the difference between two people under the same circumstances, in which one becomes fearful, and the other one doesn’t? The answer is probably acceptance. Remember, acceptance is gained by thinking things through, and if we condition ourselves to think differently about our fears, we can get rid of them.

Somehow, you survived unpleasant circumstances in the past. Why not spend this day evolving closer to a more permanent state of happiness? **When you realize that you will find the strength to cope with whatever the future holds, you are letting go of fear, empowering yourself with a level of acceptance.**

THE KEY TO FEAR IS ACCEPTANCE.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Gossiping



Just because an incident is true does not mean that it is fair game to publicize.

Gossiping: “Revealing personal or sensational facts about a person who is not present; delight in hearsay of another’s shortcomings or misfortunes.”

There are two ways to participate in gossip; actively, and passively. The one actively participating in gossip is the one who is speaking, and the one who is passively participating in gossip is the one who is listening. All of us have fallen into each of these categories at one time or another.

The ninth of the Ten Commandments is this: “Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor”. And since the greatest commandment of all is, “Love thy neighbor as thyself”, it is good to review, from time to time, the definition of the word “love”, as stated in 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7. Love ...is kind; love does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly...thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity...”

People are less offended by saying to them what you think, face to face, than they are if they find out you’ve been speaking about them behind their back. However, most people who gossip would never say these things directly to the person about whom they are speaking. The question is, why not? Nothing is ever spoken in private. Whether in this life or the next, all things you have ever said will be revealed. There will be an unpleasant accounting for all ill-spoken words, eventually. The best piece of advice on this subject is the one you probably heard from your parents: “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.”

Socrates was widely known for his wisdom in ancient Greece. There is a story about him explaining about his “Triple Filter Test” for gossip. He said that the first filter is Truth. Make sure that what you are about to say (or hear) is *absolutely* true. Do not participate in third-party hearsay, which is frequently distinguished by the phrase “He said she said...” The second filter is the filter of Goodness. Do not say (or listen to) bad things about people. The third filter is the filter of Usefulness. Is what you about to say or hear going to be useful to you? It was his philosophy that if what you are about to say (or hear) is neither True nor Good nor even Useful, then why speak of it at all?

It is not gossip to say honorable, praiseworthy things of one who is not present. A flawed character is revealed in the one who reveals facts about someone who would wish to keep the matter private. Usually gossip involves talking about another person’s shortcomings or misfortunes, but it also includes revealing something that is true, but unpleasant for the one being spoken of. **Just because an incident is true does not mean that it is fair game to publicize.** The prime consideration should be for the feelings of the one who is the subject of the conversation. How will they feel if they heard what you said?

This also goes for “hearsay”. Hearsay is when one person tells you something that someone else told them. This is not legally admissible in a court of law, nor should it be admissible anywhere else, either. The reason is simple. Second-hand conversations are not as accurate as the original conversation, and the facts may well be distorted, or even completely untrue.

The emotion that all forms of gossip have in common is the element of delight, in both the

speaker and the listener. Sometimes the gossipers mask their delight in “horror” or “sympathy”, but these are not truly the underlying emotions. If the absent person would not want this talk about such things when they are not present, then those who participate are guilty of gossip.

If you find yourself unexpectedly listening to a conversation that has turned to gossip, you are faced with a decision. Even though you don’t want to hear it, if you politely listen, adding a non-verbal signals to go ahead, it gives the gossipier encouragement to continue, and you will now be tangled in the same web. If you do not want to passively participate in gossip, you must make that clear, in no uncertain terms. When you choose the latter course of action, you will also have before you a “teaching moment”, if you gently let them know that you do not wish to talk about others behind their back, because you want to respect their feelings. Sometimes, being an example to others may inspire them to do likewise. The one who was gossiping may even look at you with renewed trust and respect, knowing that their own private matters would be safe with you, and that you would likewise defend them when they are not present.

Think of the consequences, if the person in question finds out what you have said about them. If you might regret what you have said, you better swallow your words *before* you say them, so you don’t have to eat them later!

The key to losing the desire to gossip is acceptance of other people, just as they are. If you can understand how they think, and what they feel, it is easier to sympathize with them. With sympathetic concern for others comes a measure of appreciation for their feelings. It starts by being thoughtful.

**THE KEYS TO GOSSIP ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Greed/Avarice



Without appreciation for things that are already possessed, a greedy person will never be happy.

Greed/Avarice: “Selfish desire beyond reason to acquire things in excess of necessity.”

Greed is one of the Seven Deadly Sins, and is therefore considered a dangerous vice; it is also a huge obstacle to happiness. Greedy people are never happy for long, for by definition, they are not satisfied with what they have, and always seek to have more. Their focus is on the future, so they lose their present to the past. But happiness is a present-tense emotion and state of being.

The greedy person bases their emotional security on things of the world which are in excess of necessity. For some, this unhealthy desire may start in childhood. For others it comes later. There is frequently a constant feeling of not having enough, and this drives a person to want to accumulate things that will provide a temporary sense of satisfaction. Unfortunately, this contentment is always short lived, and as long as a person seeks for fulfillment in exterior things, their interior will remain empty.

Selfishness is the hallmark of this defect. The goal of greed is self-satisfaction, with very little, if any, concern for the satisfaction and well-being of others. When one has become entwined with this vice, it leaves little room for compassion, service, and true love.

Lack of acceptance of things as they are is the main feature of greed. While having a lifestyle wherein all of life’s necessities are met, an unquenchable inner need always exists to get to the next level of possessions, status, wealth, power, control, etc. Without inner peace, this soul is in a constant state of desire.

Without appreciation for things that are already possessed, a greedy person will never be happy. Since happiness is an emotion of the present moment, greed can be greatly tempered by increasing one’s appreciation of what is already there. According to World Facts statistics, almost 50% of the world’s 6 billion people live on just two dollars a day. Yet, many of these people find happiness and joy in their everyday life. Thus, it helps to remove greed by developing a humble appreciation of the fact that most other people in the world are not so well off, and would love to have just half of what you already have.

**THE KEYS TO GREED ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Guilt



Forgive yourself: when you knew better, you did better.

Guilt: “Having committed a breach of conduct, crime, or offense, and therefore having a responsibility for the wrongdoing.”

There are four steps in the repentance process, and each one is important. The first step to overcoming guilt is to admit that you have committed a crime, offense, or breach of conduct.

The second step is to stop doing the offending behavior. Without this step, there is no sense in continuing, because there can be no *earning* of forgiveness. However, everyone can forgive anyone, anytime, regardless of whether or not remorse is present. In fact, forgiving an unrepentant soul is a very spiritually mature thing to do.

The third step is restitution. It is very important to put all the necessary time, effort, patience, and humility into this procedure. Depending on the offense, this process could take from minutes to years. The idea is to make up for what you have done wrong. Fix it, replace it, pay for it, but do not put anything more on the shoulders of the offended one. If a trust issue was the violation, it could take years to rebuild the trust, even if the people involved forgive you, but that is the price tag for that offense.

The fourth step is to ask forgiveness. Ask it of the one(s) you offended, and ask forgiveness of God. This should be sufficient to clear your conscious. After this, it is important to **forgive yourself**: You’ve always done what you thought was best, but **when you knew better, you did better**.

There are those who will not forgive a trespass of another, even when the offender has completed these steps. No amount of restitution will suffice for them. Try not to be one of these people, for they cling to bitterness, and therefore, misery. Acceptance of others, including their shortcomings and errors, is essential to unconditional love, and the peace of mind and happiness that comes with it. No one is perfect, and very few people live their entire life without offending someone.

It is just as wrong to steal a nickel as it is to steal a million dollars; and it is just as right to forgive a serious offense as it is to forgive a minor one, especially if the offender follows the above steps with humility. They may never be able to restore things as they were, but appreciating their efforts goes a long way to softening your heart and healing your own wounds.

**THE KEYS TO GUILT ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Hypocrisy



Pointing out the errors of another just causes that many more character defects in yourself.

Hypocrisy: “Pretending to be what one is not, pretending to believe what one does not, as evidenced by one’s behavior.”

Hypocritical actions are present in one who is divided in their loyalties. They seek public approval while succumbing to private temptations. Unfortunately, loyalty is something that cannot be divided, for it will cease to exist.

They know the difference between right and wrong, but they are not ready to choose the right. Succumbing to the temptation gives immediate satisfaction, and resisting it causes some discomfort. At the same time, they are not willing to accept the consequences of their private actions, so they attempt to cover them up with their public words and deeds. However, nothing stays private for very long, and once these personal things become known to others, the ambiguous soul is labeled a hypocrite. At that point, his beliefs and pretenses are all discredited, and it takes years of consistent behavior to restore credibility.

One becomes hypocritical when one values approval more than honesty, and is not ready to embrace the consequences of the hidden actions. Fear is the motivating factor behind all dishonesty and deception. When a person feels that he cannot cope with the consequences of honesty, he seeks to hide his true behavior and feelings.

Honesty and acceptance of the consequences of one’s behavior are the keys to removing one’s own hypocrisy. When you have self-confidence, you can trust yourself to be able to deal with the penalties of your unpopular choices. Fear is the major roadblock to honesty, and it can only be removed by facing it. The first step is to realistically think through the dilemmas that may occur from being honest. The second step is to generate a plan of action ahead of time to deal with what you are afraid is going to happen. Once you are armed with a plan, you have already gone a long way towards removing the fear.

Accepting all of the hypocritical behaviors of others is the only road to your own happiness. **The alternatives to acceptance of their behavior, such as complaining, intolerance, anger, and pointing out their errors (needing to be right), just causes that many more character defects in yourself.** Besides, you can’t change other people; you can only change how you react to them.

Actually, hypocrisy is a useful clue in understanding the internal struggling of a person. When you stop to consider that this individual knows right from wrong, but is too weak to stop or even admit to his weakness, who among us has never been in a parallel situation? Appreciation of who the total person is, beyond their faults, is a way to help you to accept this defect in others, and to want to remove it in yourself.

**THE KEYS TO HYPOCRISY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Impatience



**Those who are impatient are
living their life in the future tense.**

Impatience: “Annoyance because of delay or opposition.”

We can be impatient with ourselves, other people, or events. The one thing they have in common is that patience is a function of time. **Those who are impatient are living their life in the future tense.** The problem with this is that the only time we *have* is the present. We cannot move time along any faster than it will go.

When we feel impatient with other people, we feel frustrated that they are not keeping the same pace with us. This is usually because they do not understand the issue in the same way we do. That can be for two reasons: either they are not *able* to understand the situation (e.g. their intelligence or education is not the same), or they *do not yet* understand the situation (e.g. you have not described it clearly enough for them). In either case, communication is the key, and since you are the one that understands, and they do not, it falls upon *you* to find a more effective way to communicate. People always respond better to patience than to anger. It’s hard to even pay attention to what an impatient person is saying when you are dealing with your own inner frustration that is being triggered by their edgy words and gestures. Once you accept the fact that you are the one that has not found a way to communicate on their level, you may find some inner reserve of strength to perceive where the lack of understanding can be bridged. On the other hand, this realization may cause you to be impatient with yourself.

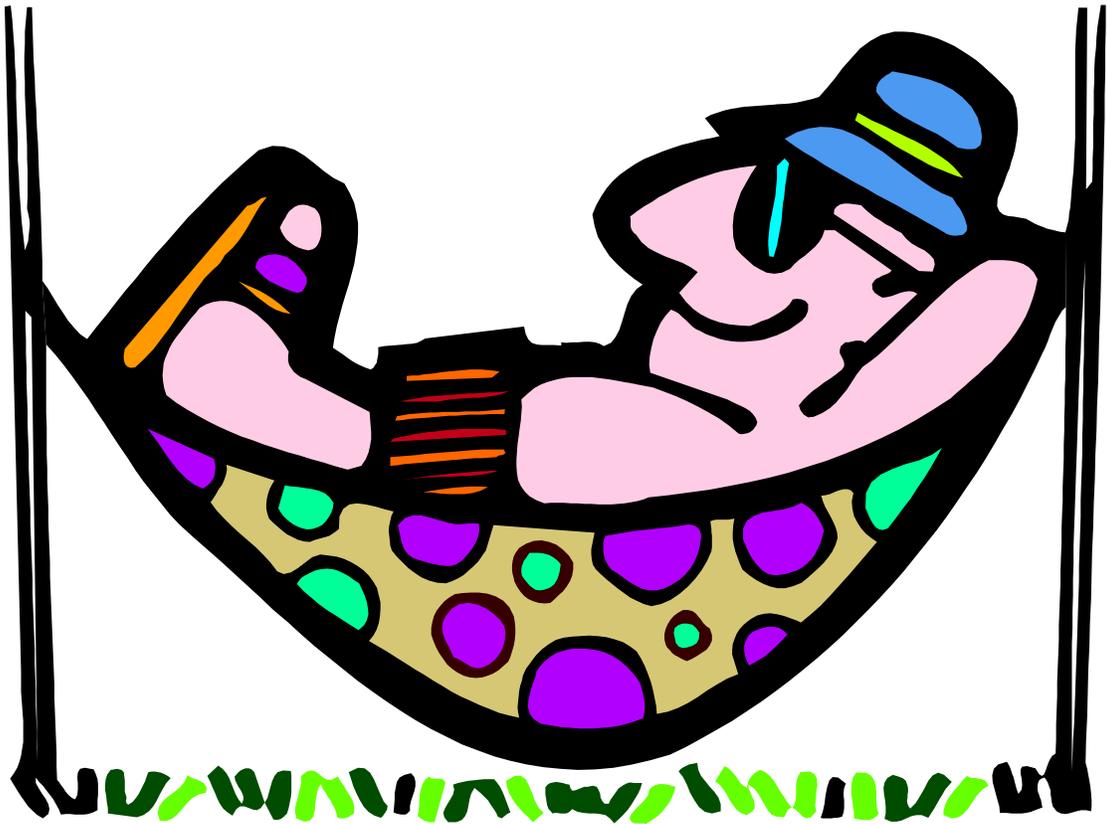
When we feel impatient with ourselves, our expectations are beyond what reality has shown at the moment. Why are you impatient with your own progress right now? Have you demonstrated more proficiency in the past? If so, perhaps your error lies in thinking that you are never allowed to fall below your capabilities. Whatever your best efforts were today *are* your best efforts today. Contentment will return when you accept that you can’t always do your best at all times.

When we feel impatient with events, the only way not to waste our present time is to use it to prepare for the upcoming situation. Once you have made a list of what you need to do to be ready, and do what can be done today, there’s no reason to worry about tomorrow. Get some sleep, and let tomorrow take care of itself. This will free you to enjoy the rest of today.

The path to patience lies in accepting yourself and others as they are, and accepting that you have prepared for future events, as much as possible, today. Add to this appreciation for yourself and others as they are, and appreciation of your blessings of today, and you will find yourself a more patient person today than you were yesterday. The only thing left is to be patient with your own progress towards patience! Patience is a journey, not a destination. Very few people perfect this attribute in their lifetime. Striving for it is more than enough.

**THE KEYS TO IMPATIENCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Laziness



The key to changing your own laziness is to spend time thinking about how the consequences will affect you.

Laziness: “Disliking activity or exertion; not rigorous or strict.”

Laziness implies *having the ability*, but not using it because it requires *too much effort to be worthwhile*. Thus, **the reason behind laziness is that the result is not worth the effort right now**. To the lazy person, there are no negative costs *at the present moment* that outweigh the amount of effort required. In most cases, the lazy one is not bothered by his actions (or lack thereof). It is usually others that are bothered. For this reason, someone else may tend to bail them out of the consequences by doing the job for them so that it gets done.

Sometimes, the only penalty of a person’s laziness is being nagged by someone else. In this case, if he still does not change, it means he would rather put up with the nagging than exert himself. At some pivotal point, he may get up and do the activity. Whatever occurred at that decisive moment gives the clue as to what amount of motivation will be required for all such occasions in the future.

Laziness can also mean lack of strictness. For example, not everyone saves and properly files every important receipt. Not everyone exercises every day. Not everyone performs all the proper maintenance on their cars in a timely manner. Since all of these things are universally agreed to be reasonable exertions, those who don’t do them may admit to some degree of laziness. Even though these illustrations can have significant consequences, it is still not enough to motivate some people to apply themselves more strictly to their completion.

When the penalties of lazy behavior are expected to be significant, the *fear* of having to deal with them does not set in soon enough. That means the lazy person is not spending any time contemplating exactly what he will *feel* like when the time arrives to cope with the consequences of his inactivity. Therefore, **the key to changing your own laziness is to spend time thinking about how the consequences will affect you**. If you think it through and still don’t feel like doing it, then you simply don’t want to, and it’s time to admit that you would rather accept the consequences instead. This attitude will continue until the consequences are *more immediate* and more severe.

There is some overlapping between laziness, procrastination, and depression. However, laziness implies lack of fear, procrastination involves overwhelming fear, and depression is overwhelming fear to the point of complete withdrawal from life. Therefore, laziness is not an accurate label to place on a depressed person. A truly lazy person has virtually no fear. He lives in the present moment, which is normally a good thing, but he ignores the fact that the present moment *is* the proper time to prevent future unpleasant consequences.

The lazy person either does not realize, or care, that his inactivity can cause other people extra work and tension. This is to be expected, since lack of thoughtfulness is the problem in the first place. When you have a lazy person in your life, you can try to inspire them, you can try to instill fear in them, you can try to get them to think of how their actions will affect them as well as yourself, and you can try to cause more immediate and more severe penalties for their behavior. However, if this still produces no results, you must remember

that you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. At that point, acceptance of them as they are is the only key to your own peace of mind. Since you now *know* they will not exert themselves, be ready to implement your own preparations to prevent the negative fallout from affecting you. You can decide either to keep them in your life or not, but trying to change them will only add to your grief.

To rid yourself of your own laziness, *you must accept the task* as something that you agree should be done. Then, focus on the effect that your inactivity of today will have on you (and on others), tomorrow. Think about the peace of mind that will be yours when you complete the task. When you put aside your present comfort to perform an unpleasant duty, you will immediately add integrity to your character, and the completion of this job will ultimately lead to your own happiness.

THE KEY TO LAZINESS IS ACCEPTANCE.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Mistrustful



Other people do not have any more power over you than what you allow.

Mistrustful: “Suspicious; having no trust or confidence.”

Children are not born mistrustful; something must happen to them along the way. Everyone has felt disappointed in someone at some time in their life. When it happens often, or in significant ways, one can start to lose trust and confidence in humanity in general. Although such experiences can allow a person to develop reasonable misgivings in certain situations, these past occurrences imprint upon some people so severely that they become suspicious and mistrustful of everyone.

There is a flaw in this extreme way of thinking; in fact, each new person is an individual, and cannot be classified according to superficial judgments. Stereotyping people is an extremely inaccurate way to view the world. The study of statistics demonstrates this nicely. When you roll a six-sided die, you have a one-in-six chance of getting a “five”. However, on the next roll, you do not have any worse of a chance of getting another “five”. The odds are still six-to-one. Similarly, when a woman gives birth to three male children in a row, she still only has a fifty-fifty chance of giving birth to a female child the next time. This is also true about the trustworthiness of people. **Just because the past ten people you have met turned out to be untrustworthy, this has no bearing on whether or not the next one is.**

Also, even a previously untrustworthy person can change. Although someone who has breached a trust several times in the past, *if* he goes through the four stages of repentance (see Forgiveness), and seems to demonstrate sincere remorse, it would be a compassionate thing to at least not be openly mistrustful, giving them a chance to *earn* back the trust that was lost. One who does not allow trust to re-grow in a truly repentant person is in danger of being considered an unforgiving person. On the other hand, the amount of restitution necessary to make up for wrong-doing is largely in the hands of the victim. The offender has to accept that there may be long-term consequences of his actions, even if he has actually become trustworthy now.

Trust, understandably, has to be earned a little at a time. Important responsibilities are not expected to be given to those who have not been tested in lesser ways. But the decision to pass suspicious expectations onto everyone can actually cause a problem that might not have otherwise occurred. When an innocent person is treated with suspicion, they tend to think that the suspicious person is untrustworthy...why else would anyone think ill of them with no reason? Now there are two mistrustful people in an equation where there should be none. Problems will not be far behind.

Trust covers a wide range. You can trust a stranger to give you correct directions at a gas station, without trusting them to baby-sit your child. Some parents can trust their child to be home by curfew, but they do not trust them with spending money wisely. It's not likely that anyone on earth is completely trustworthy in every possible way. The question is, *what* don't you trust about someone? When the stakes are too high, it is a wise thing to be doubtful. But in smaller cases, what are you afraid of?

People who cling to being mistrustful do so out of fear. They feel unsafe in trusting others.

To overcome this fear, one merely has to think about what unfortunate things there are that might come from trusting this person. Then think about how you would handle this situation, should it occur. Even those who have suffered through painful experiences have still survived it. There is some truth to the saying, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger”. Give yourself more credit for your own coping skills. **Other people do not have any more power over you than what you allow.**

When you have a mistrustful person in your life, the best way to get along with them is to understand why they feel that way, and do what you can to allay their fears. The rest is up to them. Accepting all the characteristics in all individuals is the key element in your own happiness. **Trying to change another person will only cause both of you grief.**

Acceptance of whatever situation you may find yourself facing, and realizing that you *can* handle it, is the key to letting go of fear. When you let go of unreasonable fear, and go forward with confidence in allowing new people into your life, knowing you can deal with whatever happens, you cut the fetters of mistrust. When you let yourself trust someone, albeit little by little, it opens the door to more relationships which might result in rich benefits for all. There is no such thing as courage without fear. One who has courage accepts that he has fear, but goes forward anyway. Thus, by embracing the fear, it is conquered. When you do not let fear control your actions, you pave the way to happiness.

THE KEY TO MISTRUST IS ACCEPTANCE.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Presumptuous



**Permission that is taken for granted
is not really permission.**

Presumptuous: “To take upon oneself without permission, to take for granted, assuming, taking liberties, overstepping due boundaries.”

Permission that is taken for granted is not really permission. The root of being presumptuous is to assume that your actions are fine with a particular person. Whether or not you are right about your assumptions, you are still being presumptuous unless the other person has specifically granted you ongoing permission to do such things without their constant consent.

This is a common problem at work, in classrooms, on committees, or wherever else more than one person is involved in a group effort. It is also common in friendships and relationships at home, because it is easy to assume that you can predict how another person will feel when you believe you know them. However, people usually do not realize they are being presumptuous until after trouble has ensued.

Presumptuousness is caused by overstepping due boundaries. In this, the boundary line needs to be made perfectly clear, and this is primarily the responsibility of the authority figure. Authority comes through specific channels. If authority is granted unto one to carry out details on the behalf of the superior, there may still be misunderstandings, but the authority figure has to take some responsibility for not making the boundaries clear. If the higher-ranking individual *assumed* that that their underling would understand how to do everything properly, any disappointment that ensues goes on the head of the one who made the inaccurate assumption. After all, “assumption” and “presumption” basically mean the same thing. Therefore, when presumptuousness is present, *at least two people were in error*; the offender and the victim both have some accountability.

Whether or not the presumptuous one actually has this as a character defect depends largely on the intentions and motivations behind the act. Sometimes, the presumptuous person is just trying to make things simpler, and does not take heed of the etiquette of another. The presumptuous person with goodly intentions is merely unaware or thoughtless of the other person’s perspective. However, there are those who see an advantage of taking liberties, and do so for self-serving reasons. This is the true defect in virtue. Acceptance and appreciation of what you have is an element in the presumptuous person who seeks self-gratification.

The road to happiness is paved by accepting the annoying behavior of others and working *with* it. It is also necessary to accept the unpleasant situations which arise and coping with them as well.

THE KEY TO PRESUMPTUOUSNESS IS ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Pride



**It is great to feel special about who you are,
as long as you do not cause others pain in the process.**

Pride: “Excessively high opinion of oneself, justifying self-respect, haughty behavior; excessive, unjustifiable display”. Includes boasting; feeling of being better than others.

Be proud of your country, take pride in your achievements, have pride in your children... but how much pride is too much? **It is great to feel special about who you are, as long as you do not cause others pain in the process.** Self-esteem without humility often borders on feeling superior. Since superiority is a relative term, it necessitates that others are inferior. Most people would agree that pride becomes a character defect when it implies that one person is valued more than another.

Certain people are blessed with some attributes, knowledge, talents, and skills that are more evolved than others, but if one person begins to esteem himself more highly than another, he may fall victim to arrogant pride. The difference between healthy self-esteem and haughty pride is humility. When we humbly recognize that each of us has both gifts and challenges, we can begin to realize that we all are part of one large puzzle, each piece of which is essential to complete the entire picture.

Pride interferes with our desire to examine our own flaws, and instead, we scrutinize the defects in others. This causes a roadblock in our ability to love others who do not measure up to our standards. In the Bible, 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, tells us that “love is not puffed up”. If the greatest commandment of all is, “Love thy neighbor as thyself”, then pride that vaunts itself must go.

After all, when one person has gained a measure of skill, talent, attribute, or circumstance that is better than average, they earn with it an equal measure of responsibility to provide loving care, comfort, encouragement, and instruction to those who have less.

This can backfire in such cases where one person insists that they are older and wiser, and therefore, their opinions are to be accepted without question. It is not helpful when one’s “teachings” are causing another person to feel bad about himself. **The idea is to promote self-esteem in others, not to take away from it.**

Those who continue to flaunt their “superiority” may be covering up deeper feelings of insecurity. A display of pride carries with it a need for acknowledgement from others. However, a braggart is shunned by all, and is considered to have a defect in his character.

Having inordinate pride in oneself has yet another pitfall: it makes that soul vulnerable to loss of self-esteem if anything should ever happen to the element that is the foundation for the pride. For instance, if a man is proud of his athletic physique, and is thereafter debilitated in a terrible accident, his self-identity will be thrown into utter chaos until he discovers his true value within.

Beware of your knowledge; for you may think yourself wise, and you may fall prey to bragging, seeking to advance your honor and glory, and wishing to be renowned, admired, and sought after for your advice. Make sure your wisdom is truly inspired by the Holy

Spirit at all times, for you may stray from His path and wind up relying on your own wisdom without realizing it.

If one is *enjoying* the status of being placed on a pedestal to be admired or respected, he may be taking in stride the consequences of having his every word, deed, and circumstance scrutinized by his public. For instance, a self-proclaimed beauty queen can be dethroned by a single pimple. A man who touts honesty as his platform can lose his entire reputation with a single white lie. A guru of wisdom can topple off his mountain with one ill-conceived piece of advice. Remember, “Pride goeth before the fall”.

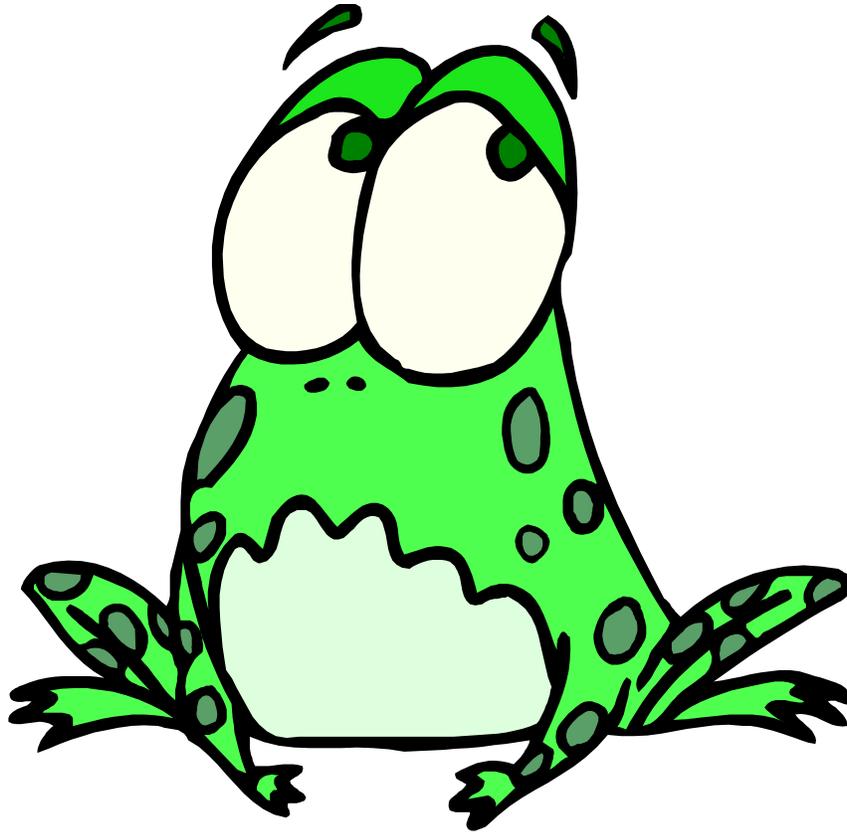
True, deep, abiding, *healthy* pride in oneself will manifest as quiet humility.

When you encounter a person who annoys you with his boasting, the best way to regain your own serenity is to understand why he needs to persist in this behavior, and the key word is “need”. These characters are in such a state of discomfort with themselves that they seek for praise and approval from others. Their self-esteem requires it. Frequently, the core of their need is to be *right*. What harm will it do to you to concede to this aspect of their personality? If you are finding this a difficult thing to do, you must beware of your own tendency to need to be right!

When *you* are the one that is struggling to overcome a defective level of pride, acceptance is still the key word. **Understand that no one is perfect, including yourself.** Although the proud soul may excel in one area, everyone has flaws. And even those who rise to the top did not get there without help. Anyone who believes in God would agree that Divine Intercession cannot be discounted, and none of us are greater than our Creator. Furthermore, no Child of God is valued more than another in His eyes, nor should they be to each other. When one truly loves his neighbor, he will not seek to elevate himself above them. Accepting and appreciating people as they are is a prerequisite to unconditional love.

**THE KEY TO OVERCOMING PRIDE IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Regretful



**Remember, as soon as you feel the sorrow of regret,
you are no longer the same person that you were
when you made the mistake.**

Regretful: “Full of sorrow for something done in the past.”

There’s no question about it; regrets are painful. The pain that issues from regret is often debilitating and can block a person from continuing forward with a healthy perspective.

However, being regretful is one of the most useful negative attributes a person can have. The key is to remove the pain associated with it, and then use the sorrowful memories to launch forward into a life of healthier choices.

Acceptance is essential in the first step of recovering from such sorrow. Many people remain stuck in their pain because they relive the memory by fantasizing about how they wish they had reacted, and pondering on how things would have turned out better. This is the same as being stuck in the denial phase of grief. Processing the pain of regret is the same as going through the stages of grief:

Stage One: Panicking Fear/ Denial

Stage Two: Anger

Stage Three: Bargaining / Sorrowful Fear

Stage Four: Depression

Stage Five: Acceptance

Until you admit that your action was regrettable, stop blaming yourself, accept the consequences, and decided that you have suffered enough depression to allow yourself to be forgiven, you cannot move into the stage of acceptance. Yet, acceptance is where the pain subsides and the healing begins.

As in the stages of grief, the reflective soul may even be able to visualize one more step:

Stage Six: Appreciation

The second step in recovering from the pain of regret is appreciation. While acceptance merely removes the pain, appreciation restores a measure of happiness. When you can ponder what good actually came out of having made a regrettable mistake, you can begin to actually appreciate having made it. **Remember, as soon as you feel the sorrow of regret, you are no longer the same person that you were when you made the mistake.**

Therefore, if the regret has sufficiently motivated you not to repeat the same behavior, it is time to admit that the experience has shaped and molded your character, improving your personality, and it is time to forgive yourself and move on.

THE KEY TO ENDING THE PAIN OF REGRETFULNESS IS ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Resentment



**Trying to change other people
is what causes your resentment.**

Resentment: “Annoyance or indignation”, possibly leading to sulking or vindictiveness; re-living old hurts.

When someone does something that is annoying, there can be many reactions to it. One such response is indignation. Keep in mind that you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. What the other person has just said or done is now a past event. How you choose to deal with it now is in the present tense.

Indignation usually involves an element of pride in the offended person. Remember, choosing to lower your pride does not mean you are lowering your self-esteem. You can hang on to the resentment until you feel proper recompense has been made (with sufficient humility), but you will be sacrificing your peace of mind in the meantime. In many cases, the satisfaction of receiving an admission of offense, or a humble apology, never comes. Acceptance of the person as they are is the key to getting on with life.

If you expect such annoying behavior from certain individuals, chances are, it will not cause you to feel resentment and indignation. Resentment comes when you are offended by one in whom you did not expect such behavior. In this case, *your expectations were wrong!* You are the one that held that individual to a higher standard of behavior, which was then proven inaccurate. It is time now to reassess your thoughts about this person. Acceptance of the fact that this annoyance has occurred is essential to get out of denial.

There is always a reason for the behavior of others. If you can figure it out, it helps you to understand why they say and do these things. Perhaps there is a temporary stress in his or her life that has caused this unusual reaction. Or, perhaps the character of the individual is changing in an undesirable direction. If so, you can expect such annoying behavior from now on.

In any case, you must decide if you want your life to remain in contact with theirs. If you decide you no longer want contact with them because their behavior is not appropriate for you to be around, simply leave. If you remain with them despite this, it means that *there is something in it for you*. There is something that is benefiting you more by staying and coping with this behavior than by severing ties. This is often the case where one person is being financially supported by the other.

In such cases, it behooves you to find a way to cope with the other’s annoying behaviors in your life without having to live in emotional turmoil inside your mind. The fastest path to peace is to *accept the fact that the other person is just that way*. **Trying to change them is what causes your grief.** Although you can’t change them, you *can* change your expectations about them, setting your sites lower, as reality has demonstrated.

When you choose resentment instead, it frequently either leads to anger or to sulking. The anger can be suppressed or vented. Neither one leads to happiness. If anger is internalized, it can turn into sulking. This is a feeling of self-pity combined with resentment. For those who are suffering with the depression that self-pity brings, the missing element that is essential to happiness is lack of appreciation for the blessings in life.

Sometimes resentment escalates to vindictiveness (“vicious, spiteful revenge”). Not only do they fume over the situation, they scheme to get even. They feel that if they can inflict the same damage to their offender, the score will become even, they will then be at peace, and be able to look back on their retaliation with satisfaction and even glee. This one thinks he is knocking the offender down to a normal level, but he is actually joining the offender at a lower than normal level. **What effect do actions like this have on the soul, when the victim becomes the offender?** How would “vindictive” look on your resume?

Re-living old hurts is another way of keeping yourself in misery. If happiness is your goal, then acceptance and forgiveness must come into play. The sooner you get over past offenses, either by forgiveness or acceptance, the sooner you can be happy and in a state of peace.

**THE KEY TO RESENTMENT IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Self-Centered



**Self-centeredness hinders appreciation.
Thus, one becomes vulnerable to unhappiness.**

Self-Centered: “Concerned with only what you want.” What you want is more important than what others want.

Being self-centered is natural and normal for a child. But before a child turns two, he already begins his struggle for independence. It starts with their insistence to feed themselves with a spoon, and becomes more obvious after they begin to speak. It may peak during the teenage years, but it doesn't stop there. For some, it becomes worse. Self-centeredness that turns into selfishness can easily become greed, which is one small step from the wickedness of doing ill deeds.

Young adults become responsible for providing for themselves, and later on, for their own families. The “survival of the fittest” cliché comes into play early on as they compete with peers for their own niche in society. Whatever insecurities a person has will foster an attitude of self-centeredness, and therefore selfishness, unless and until they feel like their survival needs have been met. Only then can a person begin to look around themselves to see what they can do for other people.

For some, this thoughtfulness begins to manifest during childhood. An occasional child will start sharing his possessions with his friends at a very early age. Somehow, he has learned that other people have feelings, too, and he becomes concerned about what other people want. As he matures, what begins with the give-and-take of a mutual friendship can blossom into selfless, compassionate service for strangers without expectation of recompense.

It's never too late to start. When a person no longer lives in fear of what others may take away from him, he can look at those around him with the eyes of love. Past experiences of going without certain things can actually be the refining fire to mold a person into selflessness. After suffering through hardships one can either become bitter with life or compassionate for others. Deciding to let bygones be bygones and opting for a sympathetic approach to one's fellow man is the surer path to happiness.

When an adult reaches this level of enlightenment, he may have trouble making the adjustment initially. Even though he seeks to be a thoughtful person, thinking of how everything will affect him often keeps his thoughts on his own concerns, rather than pondering on what he could do for his neighbor. **Self-centeredness takes away from acceptance of others as they are, and hinders appreciation. Thus, one becomes vulnerable to unhappiness.**

To take the first step away from this pitfall, try to imagine what another person is thinking at any given time. Make an effort to figure out what would make them feel better, and see what you can do to contribute to that. *Be careful not to expect any gratitude or even acknowledgement for your thoughtfulness.* The idea is to get your thoughts entirely off of yourself for a while.

When you practice getting another person's point of view, you will gain insight into who they really are. This insight alone is invaluable. Understanding other people, and why they

act as they do, helps you to accept them as they are. Hopefully, you can even learn to appreciate them as they are, as well. Just remember, you cannot change another person. You can only change yourself. **Although you cannot alter how another person treats you, you *can* decide how you will treat them in return.**

The perfect way to treat others is detailed in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

Love suffers long, *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, does not seek her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

THE KEY TO REMOVING SELF-CENTEREDNESS IS ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Self-Pity



Acceptance of your present circumstances is the key to getting out of misery, but then appreciation must be added before you start feeling happy again.

Self-Pity: “Feeling sorrow and regret for oneself.” Usually involves reviewing old miseries and blaming others for one’s troubles.

Feeling sorry for yourself is one of the main factors which underlie clinical depression. Many of the thoughts that go through the head of one who is depressed also involve reviewing old miseries. Frequently, there is blame involved, either for oneself or others. None of these thoughts does anything to make a person happy.

“Lose yourself in the service of others, and you will find yourself” (Matthew 10:39). This is good advice. When you look around you at others who have less, you may realize how many blessings you already have that you are not enjoying. As long as you focus on what you want that you don’t have, you are choosing a pessimistic attitude that will guarantee sorrow. **Acceptance of your present circumstances is the key to getting out of misery, but then appreciation must be added before you start feeling happy again.**

It is difficult to lift another out of depression brought on from self-pity. They must want to do it on their own. One thing you can try is to ask them to help someone in need. Be specific in your request, setting a time and place that is convenient for them, and start with something that is easy for them to do, but will cause great appreciation from the one served. If they still refuse to leave their cares behind for a short time, they must continue to be unhappy. Most people who are involved in self-pity do not realize it at first. For this reason, when you feel unhappy, look for it inside yourself as well.

Also, beware of the tendency to blame others for your trouble, for this makes you feel like a victim. Accepting the role of a victim takes your power away from you. Power comes from having control over your life. Having control over your life comes, not from being able to control others (that is not possible), but from being able to control your reaction to others.

When you are able to accept other people as they are, and circumstances as they are, you will be ready to work on being appreciative. Being able to give thanks for what you have is the fastest track out of the depression that comes from self-pity. **One of the fastest, easiest, ways to eliminating self-pity instantly is to say to yourself, “Oh, well, at least...”, and fill in the blank.** This simple trick is amazing...give it a try!

**THE KEYS TO SELF-PITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Spoiled



**The more spoiled you are, the less you realize it.
A truly appreciative person *cannot be* spoiled.**

Spoiled: “Having been indulged, pampered, or treated with excessive attention which is unnecessary for one’s age and ability; to rob, damage, seriously injure, ruin, and impair the quality or effect of”.

It’s great to feel spoiled! But when you ask a person if they *are* spoiled, many people say no. The thing that makes the difference is appreciation. Those who are appreciative of what they already have will often *feel* spoiled, even if they have little. Those who do not appreciate what they have will feel nothing but lack, even if they have much more than others. Being spoiled is a matter of perception. The interesting thing is, **the more spoiled you are, the less you realize it.** This is because **a truly appreciative person cannot be spoiled.**

The reason for this is because the definition of “spoiled” includes a specific description of characteristic results. These outcomes include damage, injury, ruin, or impairment of quality of the subject. Therefore, even when a person is lavished with blessings, as long as he or she is humbly appreciative for them, there is little danger of his or her character becoming ruined or impaired. Note that humility plays a key role in appreciation. When one goes out into the world with their blessings using humility, that single soul can have a great impact of benevolence upon humanity.

The opposite of spoiled is appreciation. One test to determine whether or not someone is spoiled is to take away the things that make them happy, and see if they are still happy with just the memory of having had them. If they become unhappy, as evidenced by depression, anger, or pouting, then they are spoiled. Many spoiled people use this behavior deliberately, in order to break the heart and spirit of their benefactor, causing them to give in to what is being withheld. To continue to spoil such a person is to continue to teach them that their happiness is contingent upon certain things. To believe that exterior conditions are required for happiness is a very disempowering idea, and encouraging such an unhealthy attitude will ultimately lead them to one disappointment in life after another.

The reason for this is simple. Spoiling someone (by causing them to have things which they do not appreciate, but they would be unhappy without), ultimately will lead to the spoiled person’s inability to cope with life without you, which destines them to unhappiness in the long run. After realizing this, if you continue to spoil this person it indicates that *you have an unhealthy need to keep that person dependant upon you* and looking to you for assistance. You may hope that they will eventually appreciate you and love you for who you are instead of for what you provide, but based on their current behavior, this expectation is unrealistic.

Spoiling a person, by definition, is caused after they have been indulged and pampered with help and attention that is in excess of their need, considering their age and ability. Some people spoil others because they feel they can earn love and acceptance. Others unwittingly seek for their spoiled one to be dependent on them, so they can feel needed. Loneliness is a motivating factor in either of these two scenarios. People who are self confident, independent, and not lacking in quality relationships seldom feel the need to

spoil others. People who earned their way to luxury by talent, skill, educations, and hard work frequently demonstrate good self esteem.

On the other hand, one who has been given everything that was desired, who is not taught to give heed to what their benefactor went through to be able to give them those things, makes for a person who will expect to have their every desire fulfilled by someone else's diligence.

Although the spoiler only desires their loved ones to be happy, their misguided efforts will undoubtedly turn them into an unhappy people. For instance, if the spoiler ever runs out of money, time, or ability to continue their extravagant devotions, their loved one will feel shocked, bewildered, disappointed, depressed, and ultimately, angry. This anger will be immediately directed toward the spoiler. A spoiled person who is also angry will quickly learn all the catch phrases that manipulate their provider into returning to their previous state of excess: "You don't love me" usually tops the list, followed by "If you don't help me, I'll get someone else", and "I won't need you anymore". Eventually, disappointment is inevitable, both for the spoiler and spoiled.

There are things that can offset this likely chain reaction. If the seeds of appreciation and humility are sowed and cultivated at the same time this lavishing is bestowed, it will ultimately lead to a much better outcome. How much effort have you put into teaching your loved ones the value of selfless acts of service? Charity starts at home.

When an unhappy person first realizes that they *are* spoiled, and desires to change their attitude, the first step toward appreciation is acceptance. If you can accept your circumstances as they are, you are at least being realistic. Many people spend their time fantasizing about the way they wish things were, and therefore become unhappy and dissatisfied with the present. Once there is an understanding of the reality of the situation, the door to appreciation is accessible.

When a person can be humbly grateful for the many blessings in his or her life, happiness invariably ensues.

THE KEYS TO NOT BEING SPOILED ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Trouble-Maker



Appreciate the reasons behind a trouble-maker's desire to be annoying.

Trouble-Maker: “One who seeks to cause mental or spiritual disturbance and agitation, causing worry, affliction, inconveniences, annoyances, and distress.”

People who cause worry, distress, and agitation may not realize that they are considered by others to be trouble-makers. Therefore, we each must examine ourselves to see if this defect lies within us.

Have you ever caused another to be disturbed? Have you said or done anything that you knew would make them worry? Have you ever knowingly inconvenienced someone? Have you ever done something you knew would be annoying? If so, you have been a trouble-maker.

If you knew your actions would cause these emotions, you probably just didn't care. Some people even delight in triggering these grievances. Examine your motives in each case. What was in it for you? The answer to that outlines your weakness.

Sometimes, a person enjoys being the center of attention, even if it is negative attention. Others feel a boost in self-esteem when they bring another person down. Often, the problem is in feeling that what you want is more important than what others want. In most occasions, lack of appreciation for the victim is the culprit.

It's easier to recognize a trouble-maker in someone other than yourself. When you have such a one in your life, remember, you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. It's best to change how you act, instead of react, to their behavior. **Appreciate the reasons behind their desire to be annoying.** Loneliness, social awkwardness, self-centeredness, and low self-esteem are difficult to overcome, and we have all had to deal with these issues in ourselves at some point in our lives. Accept that flaw in them, but use your awareness of it to warn yourself not to do anything that gives them fuel to fan.

THE KEYS TO TROUBLE-MAKING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Procrastination



You can even eat a whole elephant.... One bite at a time!

Procrastination: “Putting off what should be done” due to fear or laziness.

Procrastination is usually a fear response to feeling overwhelmed. One of the reasons may be that what has to be done *has to be done*. Another reason is that the task is unpleasant. And the third reason is that the chore is overwhelming in its magnitude. There may also be fear from time pressure involved.

Some people simply do not like to be told what to do, and will rebel even at doing something that they agree should be done. This is more indicative of a control issue. As long as they know the consequences of their actions (or lack thereof), they would rather deal with them, than give in to conformity.

Other people simply will not do anything unpleasant, even despite significant penalties that may result from ignoring their duties. They usually lack appreciation of the luxuries they have in life; perhaps they seldom turn their thoughts towards others who have less than they do. **They also may be in denial as to the severity of the consequences of their procrastination**, and expect that someone or something will bail them out of trouble. In some cases, these expectations are realistic, for they have been rescued in the past from dilemmas which have resulted from their procrastination.

Chores can become overwhelming in enormity when they have been put off for so long, that there are more and more things to do to accomplish the job. An example of this is when a closet that needs to be organized eventually overflows into the room, which becomes cluttered, necessitating use of the garage space, which wasn't enough to begin with! Now you feel like you can't clean the closet until you clean the room, and there's no place to relocate the things there until the garage is emptied.

When time pressure is applied (Mother's coming to visit!), the procrastinator does not respond logically, because the fear intensifies. The logical response is to get to work, yet fear disables us like a deer in a spotlight. Although the underlying emotion may be depression, the procrastinator may go about his more pleasant activities as usual. This kind of behavior can be greatly annoying to any others who are involved in the consequences of putting off the job.

If a person comes to accept that his final decision is that he *really just doesn't want to do it*, then he should also decide that he is not going to do it, ever. It's better to be honest about this up front, so others can stop hoping or expecting the job to get done. At this point, it's up to the others to live with it or do it themselves. The dawdler has snipped the string of procrastination, because *he is no longer putting off* what should be done; he has *decided not to do* what should be done. This adds honesty to his character, but if he still admits that the task *should* be done, then he needs to accept the full consequences of his decision.

When one has chosen to improve his problem of procrastination, he may find the solution simpler than he imagined. One of the mistaken assumptions people have is that they have to do the *most* that they can do in a given time period. However, the exact opposite is true. To face a chore that has been procrastinated, **you only have to do the least amount that**

you can do, and yet feel good about having made an effort.

If you tackle a difficult job with mighty effort until you are tired, you will find it difficult to ever getting around to doing such a thing again. Your memories of the effort will fatigue you before you ever give it another shot. You will feel worn out just *thinking* about doing the next difficult task. However, if you put the *minimum* amount of effort in a small time period, such as five minutes, you will feel that you can certainly do that, easily. This tends to remove the overwhelming feeling quickly. **A series of almost effortless five-minute tasks can accomplish the same amount of work as a twelve-hour heroic endeavor. You can even eat a whole elephant.... One bite at a time!**

If you decide just to work for five minutes, *do not work longer than that, even if you feel like it*. Some people catch the momentum once they start, and then they wind up doing hours of work. This may sound like a good thing, but it backfires in the long run. The next time they need to do a large task, they remember that *last* time, they only *meant* to do five minutes, but it turned into hours, so from now on, they may procrastinate any more five-minute chores.

Procrastination, for whatever reason, always has consequences, for it involves putting off what should be done. To overcome it, one has to have acceptance of the need to do it, or acceptance of the consequences of putting it off... again.

THE KEYS TO PROCRASTINATION ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Unforgiving



When we are *unwilling* to let go of resentment,
we are holding the offender to a
higher standard than ourselves.

Unforgiving: “Unwilling to let go of resentment for old offenses, not allowing room for error or weaknesses.”

Matthew 6:14 says, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” **There is no such thing as being *unable* to forgive.** When we are *unwilling* to let go of resentment, we are holding the offender to a higher standard than ourselves. After all, who, among us, has never done anything offensive? Transgressions can be done either deliberately or by accident. In either situation, the wrongdoer was in error and/or weak. “Let he who is without sin among you cast the first stone” John 8:7.

It is easy to forgiving the reprobate who was delinquent by accident, especially if they show forth meekness and humility. However, withholding your forgiveness until you are sufficiently appeased can have dire consequences on your happiness in the meanwhile. Grudges that seem to be huge and justifiable today can melt away with time. Considering the likelihood of personal progress throughout all eternity, choosing to remain resentful may bar the door to healing of an otherwise worthwhile relationship, especially if the offender or the victim dies without warning.

How was your relationship with the last person to whom you bid farewell, either in person or over the phone? Was there anything left unsaid, unfinished? You never know when you are saying your last goodbye.

Frequently, the children of aged parents keep this in mind, as do the loved ones of those who are seriously ill. However, most parents assume they will never have to bury their child. Older siblings expect they will not outlive their younger ones. Young people especially tend to have a feeling of immortality. No unhealthy young person expects to die this week. Yet, it happens.

Although an unexpected death is often perceived as a tragedy for the victim, there are longer-term tragic consequences for those who are left behind with unsaid words. There are many families who are left floundering after the death of a relative whose last wishes were never known, or whose Last Will and Rites went unwritten. Worse than this, many people suffer for years because they have unresolved anger from or towards one who has passed on. Others carry a burden of guilt, feeling they have lost the opportunity for confession to the one who has died.

Unresolved past issues within your relationships with others are causing both of you some damage today. There is little doubt that two souls in the next life can quickly heal their old, earthly wounds. The difficulty is when the Veil separates the two for a time. That means that this earth life is the best place and time for two people to heal such wounds.

What’s stopping you? Pride? Fear? Anger? Thoughtlessness? Pride has to be swallowed, fear has to be faced, anger has to be resolved, and thoughtlessness has to be accounted for at some point, either in this life or the next. How would you feel to find out that your words were the last ones that person ever heard before they died?

The people who are left on earth are not the only ones who suffer from unresolved issues in

relationships. There is every reason to believe that our personalities go with us to the spirit world. Imagine being the one who has died unexpectedly. You may then find yourself willing to forgive or ask forgiveness, but suffer without the means of delivering your message to the living.

Countless souls may remain emotionally stuck in this condition until they are reunited with those fellows who cannot hear the words they have said. This can be especially true when the earth-bound soul is the one who has a change of heart, and the soul who has crossed over cannot express their acknowledgement.

In either case, two people on earth are in the best position to always keep their differences resolved. The offended one should, ideally, be saying, “No big deal”, or “Oh, well, at least...”, while the wrongdoer should be humble and apologetic, after being understanding of the other person’s feelings. There is usually some error in both parties.

Swallow the pride, quench the anger, face the fear, and think it through. If you work on accepting people as they are, and appreciating their existence in your life, you are taking the initiative to improve your relationships. Actually, we can learn from people who cause us problems. How else can we learn the virtues embodied in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13, such as patience, forgiveness, mercy, kindness, and longsuffering, unless we are exposed to such adverse conditions? When you can thank God for each and every person in your life, you are mastering life itself.

Acceptance and appreciation are the keys to happy relationships. Remember, you never know when you are saying your last goodbye.

**THE KEYS TO FORGIVENESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Vanity



The problem with vanity is that when their exterior loses its polish, their happiness depletes.

Vanity: “Undue pride or conceit in oneself or one’s appearance. Something that is idle, worthless, of no real value, empty, useless, or futile.”

Vanity can be for one’s appearance, or for oneself. Some people are preoccupied by the way they look. Their exterior is very important to them, for they seek the approval of others regarding their appearance. This may have to do with the values of their associates, with whom they agree. When a person is more concerned with their hair, make-up, nails, clothes, shoes, and cars than they are with their personality, their self-esteem becomes based on these external things. **The problem is that when their exterior loses its polish, their happiness depletes.**

Vanity can also manifest by placing *undue* importance on one’s achievements, successes, education, strength, speed, agility, and other things that are more accurately defined as blessings rather than just dues. A certain amount of pride is healthy, but undue pride is vanity. The dividing line between the two may be humility because of appreciation. Vanity is vanquished when one can look upon oneself with appreciation of the others in life that contributed to the present success.

Conceit is present when one thinks of oneself as being better than others. Such people value achievements rather than valuing each human life as supremely important. If that were true, then God would love people who are successful more than those who are not. Yet this is invalid, since he loves the sinner and the saint with equal measure. The conceited person cannot grasp this concept. To assist one in this understanding, consider the 911 emergency systems, and how each individual is rescued with the same diligence and effort, without ever being asked about their social or monetary status, their religion, criminal background, their beauty, or possessions. Emergency health care providers understand the value of each individual life, regardless of his or her circumstances.

Of course, vain people usually do not recognize themselves as such, because their superficial values are ingrained, perhaps from their upbringing. When you examine each of your values, ask yourself; is this something that is of no eternal consequence? If not, then place much less emphasis on it. Acceptance of yourself and other people as they are, and valuing them for being fellow members of the human race, is one of the few really important things in life, and has great eternal significance.

A woman who lived near a hospital once invited a badly deformed, impoverished man to stay with her while he underwent his medical treatments. She found him to be cheerful, helpful, and never once complained about his plight. Later, she visited her friend’s florist shop and saw some beautiful flowers planted in a rusty pail. Her friend explained that she thought these flowers were so lovely that they wouldn’t mind waiting for a while in the old pail until there was room to transplant them into front garden. She laughed when she heard that, for she thought of the old man, and how he didn’t mind waiting in that unattractive body until it was his turn to be transplanted into God’s garden in heaven.

**THE KEYS TO VANITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Grief



Grief is usually a reaction to a change that involves a feeling of loss. Whatever length of time it takes *you* to grieve over the loss of a loved one is normal for *you*.

A Word About Grief: “Acutely suffering over a loss of someone or something vitally important”.

Grief is not a character defect, but it is discussed here because one of the few times when it is normal to be unhappy is during a grieving process. Note that grieving is a *process*, and therefore has stages. Those who are grieving for an abnormally long time may be stuck in one of the stages. This can lead to new problems in our life that influence our emotional, physical, and social well-being. Grieving can be confusing when it involves feelings that seem to conflict, such as fear and anger, or sadness and relief.

Grief is usually a reaction to a change that involves a feeling of loss. The intensity of grief depends on what we perceive the impact on our life will be from the loss.

Common events that cause grief include:

Loss of a loved one after death, divorce, or break-up (separation anxiety; feeling lonely that you can no longer share your joys and sorrows with them, thinking that you need them, and fear they won't be there to help you). It also includes deaths by miscarriage, abortion, and stillbirth.

Finding out your own death is imminent (fear that others can't get along without you, fear that you will miss out on some earthly experiences, fear that you will not be going on to a better place after death).

Finding out that you or your loved one is suffering, or will suffer soon with chronic or fatal illness (fear and sorrow for suffering, fear of necessities not being provided)

Stages of Grief

Everyone grieves in his or her own way. However, grieving processes frequently have some stages in common. Children tend to progress through these stages more quickly than adults. Although these stages are written in this order, they may not be experienced in this order. It is also common to go through some of the stages more than once. Sometimes an event will trigger a reoccurrence of certain stages. Some of these stages may be skipped altogether. For example, you may come to a level of acceptance without going through denial, anger, or bargaining.

Instead of stages, grieving may also be classified as emotional phases reflected by one's lifestyle activity. In this perspective, the lifestyle will start with a period of inactivity, followed by a period of disorganization, and finally progress to re-organization as the person learns to cope with the significant change and loss that has occurred.

Stage One: Panicking Fear/ Denial

This stage is one of complete lack of acceptance; thinking that you cannot possibly tolerate the situation. Fear at the level of panic is usually from the initial shock. Most people don't have enough energy to stay in a state of panic for very long, so they tend to move into the numbness of denial. There is one thing good about this stage: it helps the person get on with the practical necessities of the moment. But if denial continues for too long, problems could arise. Behaviors that are typical of this stage include wandering around aimlessly, being forgetful, lack of concentration, and not being able to finish any projects. Although nothing may appear to be wrong, physical symptoms of stress may begin to manifest.

Stage Two: Anger

This usually involves the blaming of someone for causing this situation, and emotional outbursts are common. Targets of this anger can be towards a perpetrator, the victim, yourself, or God. Children may blame their parents. When a grieving person asks, "Why me?" it is a sign of anger toward God or Fate, or some other Power that appears to have "chosen" them, for a reason. It's easy to get stuck in this stage by persistently thinking that "this situation could have been avoided if..." Some people stay in this stage only briefly, and some skip anger altogether. This is easier to do if the event was somewhat expected to occur.

Stage Three: Bargaining / Sorrowful Fear

Before you come to the full realization that you will, indeed, have to deal with this situation and survive it somehow, you may find yourself bargaining, either with yourself, another person, or with God. Humility now mixes into the equation. Feelings of guilt may rise to the surface as you reflect on what you should have done.

People who bargain with themselves say, "I'll never do that again". People who bargain with God usually promise to be a better person. People may promise to change their behavior as they bargain with a spouse who has suddenly announced they want a divorce.

Stage Four: Depression

"What's the use?" and "I don't care anymore" can be the hallmark phrases of depression. Concentration falters, activities cease, and interest in life fades. Emotional, physical, and spiritual progress comes to a halt. Common behaviors include episodes of crying, excessive sleep, and withdrawal. The purpose of life seems insignificant. Activities that brought pleasure previously are now pointless.

Some people start to feel guilty, and some think they are being punished. If any issues in the relationship were left unresolved, or any words went unsaid, the grief is all the more exquisite. This phase sets in with the realization that the situation is not going to change, and you don't think you can deal with it.

Stage Five: Acceptance

The grief process is as individual as the person, and as varied as the circumstances. But one thing that tends to be universal is that of feeling better when a level of acceptance is achieved.

Acceptance is reached when all the anger is let go, and the fears are being faced with courage. When grief has progressed to acceptance, re-organization and balance begins to return to life. Good memories begin to replace the sadness. Hope begins to emerge. Sleeping patterns and daily activities return to normal. New plans are made for the future and new goals are set. The person can begin to move forward in life.

Those are the classic stages of grief, but let's not stop there... Here's a new thought:

Stage Six: Appreciation

Look again at the definition of grief: "Grief is acutely suffering over a loss of someone or something vitally important". How can we *possibly* get to a level of *appreciation* for the loss of someone or something vitally important to us? Perhaps we should redefine our ideas about *what is vitally important*.

The dictionary definition of vital is "critical, essential, or significant". There are few things in life that are truly critical and essential for living. However, the loss of a loved one can be significant. The stage of acceptance is reached as we realize that we are still living, even though they have departed. At this point, it is helpful to focus on being appreciative of having had them in your life. As you ponder on what you learned from them, how they shaped and molded your character, and the joy they brought into your life, you are honoring their memory.

Grief as a character defect

Grief is not limited to coping with a death or separation. It can occur with any situation involving loss or change. In this sense, we may experience a grieving process in our everyday problems. Your vulnerability to grief depends on the types of things you value. Some people are thrown into a state of grief over a flat tire, a bounced check, a lost treasure, a missed plane, a soiled carpet, a shattered window, or even a broken fingernail. Are these things really worth grieving over? You may want to reinvest in a new set of values.

An example of a grief process over an everyday dilemma is when you drop and break an expensive or rare fragile item:

Denial is your first reaction ("No way! This can't be!").

Anger soon follows ("Why me?")

Bargaining is next ("Oh, please, God, help me!")

Depression starts to sink in ("What am I going to do? Oh, I give up")

Acceptance eventually occurs ("Oh, well. I'd better get it cleaned up and get ready to take the heat for this")

Appreciation leads to a happier state ("At least it was nice while we had it!")

We frequently go through relatively trivial trials. Cars don't always start, checks sometimes bounce, robberies occur, keys are locked inside cars, expensive items are broken, clothes get stained, paint gets scratched, accidents happen. All of these situations may involve the same emotions seen in grief.

Whatever length of time it takes *you* to grieve over the loss of a loved one is normal for *you*. But when it comes to "grieving" over simple, everyday incidents such as the above examples, it behooves you to get to a level of acceptance quickly, so you can begin to cope with the problem. Remember; only after acceptance is achieved can the real work of coping begin.

**THE KEYS TO GRIEF ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Part II



Character Assets Gained With Two Words

Accepting



**It helps a great deal to compare your situation
to one that is worse.**

Accepting (People and Events): “To receive willingly, as is.”

Acceptance cannot be a virtue unless you are faced with an undesirable situation that you wish would be different. However, to accept other people the way they are means you do not try to change the way they behave, even though you don't approve of it. To accept situations the way they are means that you understand that you are facing reality, and are ready to deal with it. Much time and effort is wasted by dreaming of changing a word or deed that has already past. This time is better spent making plans on how to cope with the present situation.

Trying to change other people is the cause of most of the heartaches in relationships. Although all of us want to be accepted and appreciated for who we are, we don't always show this same respect to our own family, co-workers, and neighbors. Most of this nasty game involves a “battle of the wills”. When a person does not accept another person's behavior, they are imposing their own will upon the other. In a few cases, this is proper, such as when a parent enforces the house rules, or when one is escaping from violence or abusive situations. But most other situations are not as dire, yet there are many who lose track of their perspective and place too great an emphasis on doing things their own way.

It is particularly difficult when your way of doing something really *is* the best, most efficient, most logical way of getting the job done. However, since you cannot change other people, the best you can do is try to *inspire* them to change themselves. Beyond that, it is time to let go, and allow them to “learn the hard way”. After all, wisdom is gained only with experience, and free agency is a necessary ingredient.

Lack of acceptance of present situations is usually a fear reaction. When you get unpleasant news, the grief process goes into effect, although on a small scale. To pass through even tiny amounts of grief, such that is seen in the hundreds of daily trials we all experience, we must first process the initial denial, anger, fear, and depression, before we enter into acceptance, wherein happiness is found. **The faster you can accept the reality has already happened, the faster you will get out of denial. The faster you can accept that you cannot have your own way this time, the faster your anger will dissipate. The faster you implement a plan to cope with the way things are now, the faster your fear will calm down. The faster you can compare yourself with others who have it worse than you, and appreciate your blessings, the faster you can evacuate the depression.**

Although all of the stages involve emotions, *all of the solutions are thoughts*. Think through the facts: this situation has happened, and therefore is an unpleasant reality, I cannot have my own way this time, I can think of a plan to cope with this, and “Oh, well, at least...it could be worse”. The faster you say these things to yourself, the faster you will be at a level of acceptance where your stability will return. Congratulations! You have just empowered yourself to be able to handle whatever happens today, without aggravating your relationships by trying to change people who don't want to change.

To illustrate how often things happen on a daily basis that require acceptance, consider again just this one common scenario, as mentioned in the section on Grief: You finish

typing a lengthy, detailed document on your computer, and before you can save it, your computer crashes. You try everything, but cannot restore your work.

- 1) DENIAL: “Oh, no! This can’t be!”
- 2) ANGER: “You stupid computer!”
- 3) FEAR: “What am I going to do? This report is due tomorrow, and it’s going to take hours to retype it!”
- 4) DEPRESSION: “Why does this always happen to me? I can’t do anything right!”
- 5) ACCEPTANCE: “Oh, well. I may as well get started on it. If I can’t finish it on time, I’ll just have to catch the heat from the boss.”
- 6) APPRECIATION: “At least I didn’t lose all the other documents stored in my computer. Next time, I’ll save my documents frequently as I’m still working on them, so I’ll never make *that* mistake again.”

The first four phases of emotion are inevitable, but how quickly you can get to the fifth phase of grief determines how quickly you can start to be productive and constructively solve the problem. If you resist acceptance of this situation, you sacrifice your happiness.

Saying, “Oh, well....” with a heavy sigh is one of the fastest ways to get to a level of acceptance. Just being able to say those two little words means four things: 1) You are no longer in denial. 2) You may be frustrated, but realize that you’re just not going to get your own way this time, because the event has already occurred. 3) You may be worried, but you feel so helpless to change the situation. 4) You feel depressed, but you realize that there is nothing left to do but deal with the problem. Hopefully, those two little words can move you right through the worst stages of grief. However, just being accepting of an unpleasant situation is only enough to get you out of misery and into neutral. In order to go from neutral to happiness, you need to add appreciation.

In order to get from acceptance to appreciation, you have to be able to count your blessings. One of the fastest ways to do this is to say, “At least...” and fill in the blank. **It helps a great deal to compare your situation to one that is worse.** Finding something redeemable in the situation is also beneficial. Therefore, combining these power words **by saying, “Oh well. At least...” you are gaining acceptance and appreciation in merely the length of time it took to complete the sentence!**

The word “but” is another one of the most powerful words in the world. It can be used to your advantage or disadvantage. **The function of the word “but” is to negate everything that preceded it in the sentence. Therefore, what is really going on in the mind of the speaker is what follows the word “but”.** This can be used to your advantage as being a step toward happiness by expressing your disappointments first, then saying the word “but...” and then filling in the blank. By the end of the sentence, your mood will be higher than it was at the beginning. Used in such a way, this simple word can quickly put you on the path to acceptance and appreciation.

However, using this same word in reverse can magnify your misery. If you list the positive idea first and then use the word “but”, followed by a negative idea, you have just made a

statement on where your mental attitude is really at.

All things considered, it is in your own best interest to **try not to want anything too much**. When you find that you *really, really want* something, you open yourself up to a high risk of anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, worry, impatience, and other forms of unhappiness.

**THE KEY TO BEING ACCEPTING IS, OF COURSE, ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Admits own faults



One of the biggest problems in admitting your own faults is the tendency to want to share the blame.

Admits own faults: One who recognizes flaws in his behavior, acknowledges them, and takes responsibility for their consequences.

As seen in this definition, the admission of one's own faults is a process. This process cannot even begin unless the individual recognizes each flaw in his own behavior. Many people are quick to point out the flaws in other people. If you find yourself doing that, you can mark that down as YOUR first flaw! You cannot change another person; you can only change yourself. Therefore, this segment is devoted to those who want to improve *themselves* by admitting their *own* faults.

For those who have more than one defect, it may be helpful to write down what you consider to be flaws, and then prioritize them by severity. This list will not necessarily be easy to work on in that order, but at least it keeps your mind on what you consider to be your worst flaw. It doesn't matter which of the items on the list you whittle away at first, as long as your efforts to cross them out are persistent and consistent.

There are obstacles in acknowledging your own faults. **One of the biggest problems is the tendency to want to share the blame.** Many people are more than happy to admit their fault, as long as the other party admits theirs as well. If this doesn't happen, many people become stubborn, and refuse to work on their own behavior. This obstacle frequently occurs when you think that your poor behavior is brought on by another person's actions. Just because someone else wants to play tug of war with you, doesn't mean you have to play. Drop the rope. If you let yourself get reeled into a mutual battle, you may find yourself unwilling to improve your responses in the next scenario. After you get away from war, try thinking over the entire conversation as though it were a written transcript. Be careful not to dwell on the errors made by the other person; the purpose is to look at how you reacted to what they said and did. When you feel more level-headed, you can probably think of ways you could have responded more appropriately for each and every errant phrase spoken by the other person.

Once you become well aware of your faults, and admit that each one is *solely* caused by your own error, your next step is to take responsibility for their consequences. It is not a character attribute to freely admit your faults while you continue them without remorse. Admitting your faults becomes a virtue when you are working on preventing the same mistakes over and over again.

Just when you think your list of faults is complete, ask around for another opinion...you will surely find people who will happily help you expound on your list!

**THE KEY TO ADMITTING ONE'S OWN FAULTS IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Agreeable



People like what they talk about and what they do and it is always satisfying to find harmonious fellows.

Agreeable: “To be pleasant and in harmony” with others, able to enjoy what they want to do or talk about.

Everyone loves to be around agreeable people. However, it is not a virtue to be agreeable to those whose behaviors are repulsive to your own moral standards, so choose your associations wisely. This is natural within your own circle of friends, but may be challenging when it comes to relatives, co-workers, neighbors, and other relationships which you cannot exchange.

Acceptance of their personality *as it is* may be the key issue. In order to be pleasant and in harmony with others (within your chosen values), you may need to focus your efforts on understanding how they think and feel. If they are excited about something that bores you, then it is your lack of interest that interferes with your own happiness. If you want to *enjoy* yourself while listening to such conversations, and going with them on such activities, try to fan your interest. Make every attempt to understand them, and listen with empathy and compassion.

People like what they talk about and what they do and it is always satisfying to find harmonious fellows. When another person actively participates in one’s own discussion by asking questions about the details and points of clarification, it is especially gratifying. Remembering some details about what was said, and asking about it in future conversations can elevate your own popularity, making your company eagerly sought after by one and all.

There are plenty of parents who are not overly excited about watching their children show off in the swimming pool (over and over again), or playing video games with their teenager. There are plenty of wives who are not interested in the sporting events their husbands watch on TV. There are plenty of young people who are not interested in listening to stories of the past from their older relatives. Yet, the ones with the healthiest relationships participate in the excitement of others anyway.

Not every neighbor on your street is going to have the same interests you do. Not every co-worker is going to have the same priorities you do. Not every relative is going to enjoy the same activities you do. Still, if you don’t want to be unhappy while you live, work, and otherwise coexist with others, you have to learn to love them as they are. That is where appreciation plays a major role. When you stop wishing that other people would change, and that every individual is unique and entitled to their own opinions, you can learn to appreciate them for who they are.

**THE KEY TO BEING AGREEABLE IS ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Altruistic



In an altruistic perspective,
doing good deeds for others is its own reward.

Altruistic: “Unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others; behavior that is not beneficial to or may be harmful to itself but that benefits others.”

Altruism is the opposite of egoism. An altruistic person feels a sensitive desire to further the pleasures and alleviate the pains of other people. **In their perspective, doing good deeds for others is its own reward.**

Being altruistic is the final stage in the process of emotional and moral development. Initially, one is good because one depends on external rewards. Then, one is good in order to avoid punishment. Next, one is good for social approval. Later, one is good out of concern for social order or community stability (one might refrain from cheating on an income tax return because chaos would result if everyone cheated). At the highest stage of moral development, individuals choose right actions because these satisfy their own ideals of justice. Altruistic people seek to benefit others whether or not their efforts are noticed or appreciated.

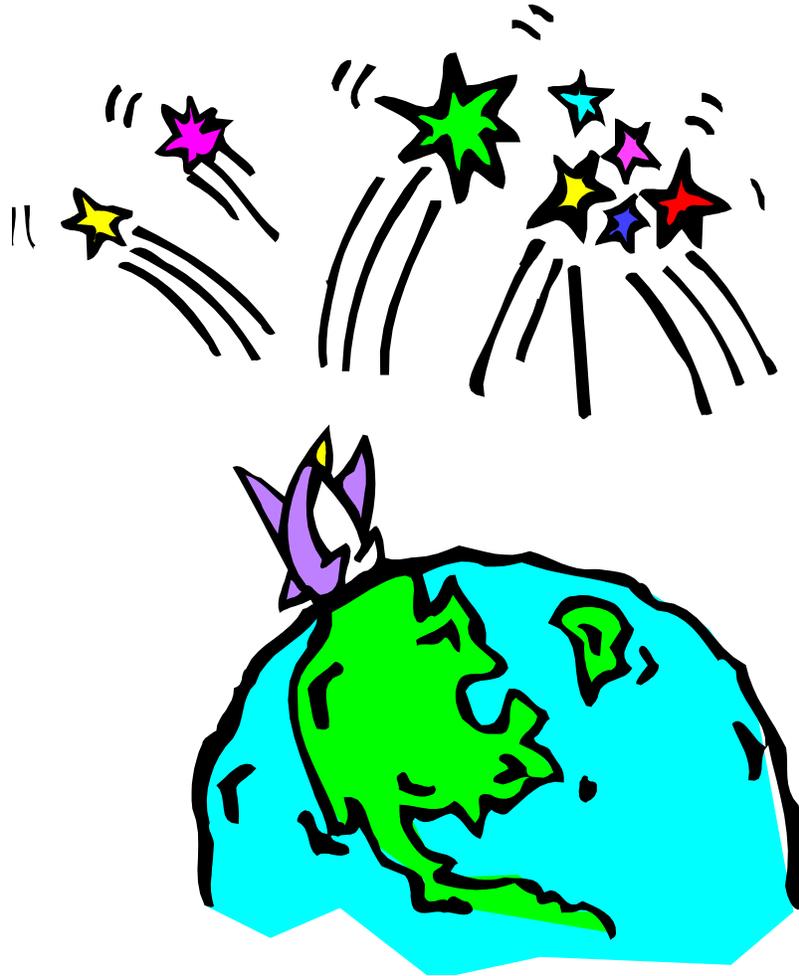
These stages begin in infancy. Children learn either to trust or mistrust that others will care for their basic needs, including nourishment, warmth, cleanliness, and physical contact. They learn either to be self sufficient, competent, and productive, or to feel inferior, doubt their own abilities, and think they are unable to do anything well. Adolescents get involved with critical reflection on their own values and beliefs. Young adults seek to form strong friendships, love, and companionship. With maturity, a higher value is placed on productivity and generating ideas. As emotional development continues, one tends to evaluating one's contributions in life, and relishing one's positive relationships. With death in mind, some persons sift through their values and redefine what is really important in life, relying on the wisdom gained from experiences with others. People in this stage tend to be more loving, caring and tolerant of others. As self-confidence is secured, ego striving tends to fall to the wayside as being trivial.

As individuals progress through these stages of development, they can better appreciate the different perspectives of others. Such understanding is essential for developing tolerance of those who have various perspectives and values. This acceptance makes it easier to work toward compromises with others. With acceptance, tolerance, and empathy based on similar life experiences, the desire to relieve the suffering of others begins to occur naturally.

Since altruism is difficult to maintain when one's emotional needs are not met, some amount of regression to lower levels of morality can be expected under stressful conditions. These crises may be the result of having to reorganize one's priorities. But even under stress, those who lose themselves in the service of others find themselves in a world of inner peace.

**THE KEYS TO ALTRUISM ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Appreciative



**The majority of the world would love
to trade their problems for yours.**

Appreciative: “To be aware of and grateful for things of value.”

The opposite of appreciation is spoiled. One test to determine whether or not someone is spoiled is to take away the things that make them happy, and see if they are still happy with just the memory of having had them. If they become unhappy, as evidenced by depression, anger, or pouting, then they are spoiled. To believe that exterior conditions are required for happiness is a very disempowering idea, and encouraging such an unhealthy attitude will ultimately lead to one disappointment in life after another.

Being unappreciative of the things that you would be unhappy without ultimately will lead to inability to cope with everyday life. To appreciate something is to assign proper and due value to it. The first step towards this is the most difficult: to be aware of the things of value that are already in your life. The second step will follow more easily: to be thankful for those things. Making a written list of the things that are truly valuable in your life will leave you with a concrete reminder that is easily accessible at any time. The very act of generating this list will increase your happiness. You may want to keep a copy of it in your wallet and add to it frequently.

Becoming aware of things in your life that are of value takes a little pondering, but it may be the most important step you ever take in your life, because your overall happiness and sense of well-being absolutely depends on it.

People who compare themselves to others who have more are unhappy with their present moment. People who compare themselves to others who have less have unlocked the door to happiness by using appreciation as the key.

Since lack of appreciation comes from comparing one’s own situation to others who have it better, there needs to be an enlargement in awareness of the situation of others who have less than you. Within this awakening, pearls of great price may be found. One of the ways to recognize your blessings in life is to compare what you have, not with your friends, relatives, co-workers, or next door neighbors, but to the rest of the world.

According to World Facts statistics:

Half the people in the world live on less than two dollars a day

1.3 billion people (21%) live on less than one dollar a day.

1.3 billion people (21%) have no clean water.

3 billion (half of the world) have no access to sanitation.

2 billion (1/3 of the world) have no electricity.

Almost two million children die of poverty each year.

About 790 million people are chronically undernourished, almost two-thirds of whom reside in Asia and the Pacific.

The following information is from an organization called “The Green Decade” at the following website: <http://www.greendecade.org/aboutus.html>

If you have food, clothes, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you are sorrowful because you don't know what to do with your life, you are better off than those who didn't live long enough to ponder such questions.

If you are alive seven days from now, you are better off than the million who won't survive the week.

If you can read, you are better educated than over 1/3 of the people in the world.

If you have never been engaged in war, imprisoned, and tortured, you are better off than 20 million people who are suffering these things right now.

If you can practice your religion without being arrested, tortured, or killed, you are better off than almost half of the people in the world.

If you find yourself stuck in traffic; you are better off than more than half of the people in the world who do not own a car.

If your car breaks down, leaving you stranded miles from home, you are better off than the man in the wheelchair who would love to take that walk.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a jar, you are in the top 8% of the world's richest people.

If you are having a hard day at work, you are better off than the 8 million Americans who are unemployed.

If you are sorry that your fun weekend is over and you have to go back to work, you are better off than the single parents who have to work twelve hours a day, seven days a week to feed their children.

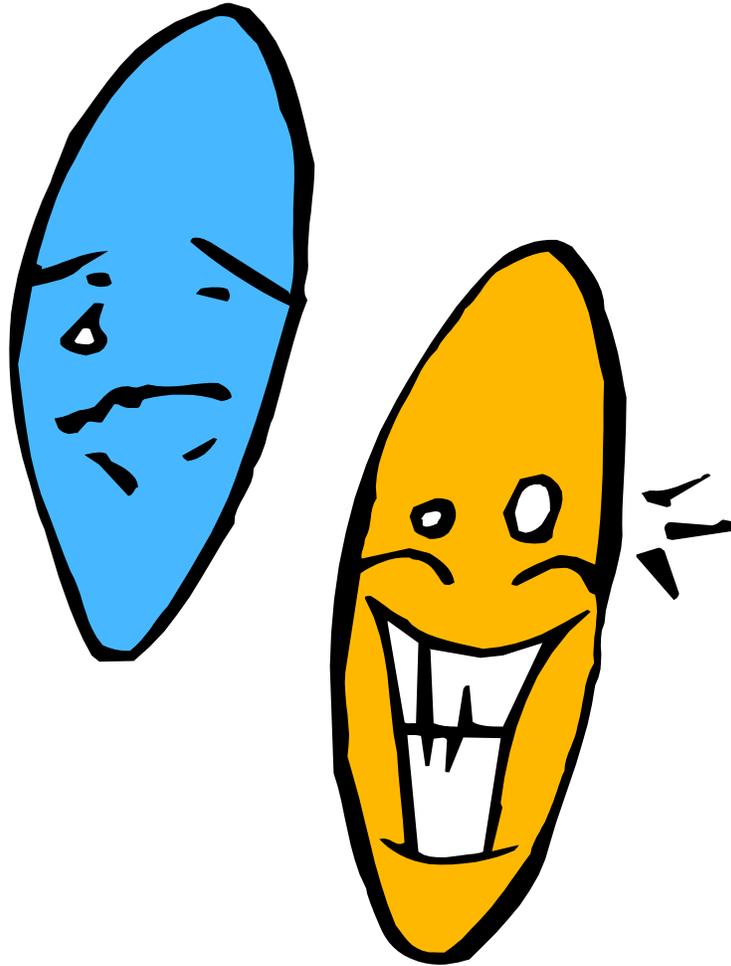
If you are depressed over a bad relationship, you are better off than the person who has never known what it's like to be loved a day in their life.

If you are depressed over a new gray hair in the mirror, you are better off than the cancer victim who would love to have your gray hair.

Once you are aware of all the things in your life that are of value, it is easy to be thankful for them. Don't forget to tell others frequently how much you appreciate them, and why. The next time you feel unhappy, think about the fact that **the majority of the world would love to trade their problems for yours.** If you still feel unhappy, self-pity is probably the culprit, and appreciation can unlock those fetters.

**THE KEY TO APPRECIATION IS TO VALUE EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Positive Attitude



**Our thought process is frequently
what causes our feelings.**

Positive Attitude

Positive: Active and effective in function, real, confident, being higher than negative.

Attitude: Mental position or feeling regarding a fact or state.

Feelings are not something we decide to have. However, thoughts are in our control. When you feel sad, you feel sad. When you feel happy, you feel happy. When you feel angry, you feel angry. When you feel afraid, you feel afraid. Those are the basic four categories of feelings; the rest of our mental processes are thoughts. The definition of mental attitude involves both thoughts (our “position”) and our feelings regarding the situation at hand. One’s “position regarding the present situation” implies that there is a thought process that leads to how one perceives one’s condition. It is this perception that then determines one’s feelings regarding one’s present state of being. Therefore, **our thought process is frequently what causes our feelings.**

Again by definition, a positive mental attitude is one that is based on thoughts which are “active and effective in function, realistic, and confident”.

The first element in this description is “active”. Nature has several laws that relate to this. A law of physics states that “A body in motion tends to stay in motion, and a body at rest tends to stay at rest”. The laws of medicine prove that muscles will only increase in power and strength with muscular activity. A law of psychology is that “If you keep doing what you’ve been doing, you’re going to keep getting what you’ve been getting”. The common denominator in all of these laws of nature is that *change requires activity*. Therefore, changing one’s attitude from negative to positive involves active effort.

The second element in the description of a positive attitude is “effective in function”. The word effective means that there is a creation of a desired result. In order for something to be effective, there must first be a desired outcome in mind. To function means to operate with a specific purpose. Therefore, thoughts that are effective in function are thoughts which *work* toward a *goal*, in this case, a positive attitude.

The third element of a positive attitude is “realism”. Thoughts which are not realistic can have a strong impact on your mental attitude. When one’s expectations exceed reality, disappointment is inevitable. Acceptance of the reality of the situation is crucial. Once this is achieved, a plan of action is needed in order to reduce the fear and anxiety. Only in this way can one cope with an unpleasant circumstance with a positive attitude. Until acceptance is achieved, a lot of time will be wasted on wishing that the situation was different than it *is*. Deciding how you are going to cope with things as they are is what will allow you to get on with your day, sleep well at night, and look forward to the future.

The final element of a positive attitude is “confidence”. The root word of confidence is “confide”, the definition of which is “to have faith and trust”. Confidence itself means “trust, reliance, self-assuredness; a state of trust or intimacy”. Therefore, the fundamental issue in confidence is trust. The person you must trust first is yourself. After you have seen and understood the way your current situation is, accepted it, and designed and implemented a plan of action to cope with it, **you must be ready to trust yourself to**

handle whatever happens in your life. You've handled every other situation in your life so far; trust yourself that you have gained more and more wisdom with each unpleasant episode you have encountered, and apply your wisdom to your present and future events to the best of your ability.

If you make some errors in judgment, think about Babe Ruth. Although he is well known for being the "Home Run King", it is less well known that he also held the record for the most strike-outs. But instead of letting discouragement reduce him into inactivity, he got up and swung the bat one more time. With each swing, he gathered his confidence, envisioned a realistic plan, had a desired outcome, and he exerted all of his strength. This embodies all the elements of a positive attitude.

Thoughts which are confident, realistic, and active and effective in function tend to not be negative. Therefore, the emotion that follows them will be either positive or, at worst, neutral. To elevate a neutral mood to one of being positive is accomplished most easily by adding appreciation to the equation.

To appreciate something is to assign proper and due value to it. The first step towards this is the most difficult: **Be aware of the things of value that are already in your life.** The second step will follow more easily: **to be thankful for those things.** Making a written list of the things that are truly valuable in your life will leave you with a concrete reminder that is easily accessible at any time. The very act of generating this list will increase your positive mental attitude. You may want to keep a copy of it in your wallet and add to it frequently.

Remember, thoughts precede the feelings. If you want a positive attitude, make sure your thoughts are active and effective in function, realistic, and confident. Then add plenty of appreciation.

THE KEYS TO A POSITIVE ATTITUDE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Benevolent



Being benevolent consists of thoughts *and* actions.

Benevolent: Having a charitable nature, having goodwill and love toward humanity, mercifulness and leniency in judging others, showing unselfish interest in the welfare of others; feeling and acting generously, acting kindly, and giving aid to the poor.

According to these definitions, benevolence consists of *having* good intentions and *acting* on them. Therefore, **being benevolent consists of thoughts and actions.** Benevolent thoughts tend to occur when a person has sympathy or empathy for others. The difference between these two is that empathy can really only come when one has actually experienced a similar event in one's life, and therefore, there is direct knowledge about how the other feels. Sympathy comes when one can look upon another's sufferings and feel compassionate towards their situation. In either case, benevolence proceeds from *appreciation* of the worth of all souls.

Benevolence may be best illustrated in the 911 emergency call systems. When anyone at all calls 911, the rescuers do not discriminate. The operator does not ask the color, religion, or nationality of the victim. No questions are asked about political views, criminal record, or financial status. Adults are rescued with the same diligence as a child. Each person in need is cared for with all the expertise available to the most skilled of healthcare providers. Everyone associated with rescue organizations recognize that every soul is priceless. Therein is demonstrated absolute appreciation for human life.

For one to have goodwill and love towards all humanity, and for one to be merciful and lenient in judging others, there must be a highly developed sense of tolerance and acceptance towards every single member of the human race. Tolerance and mercy may be especially challenging to develop, for they always involve an initial irritation. In order to be tolerant, the other's behavior has to annoy you. In this case, acceptance is paramount. In order to be merciful, you have to first be offended, or witness to an offence. Here, forgiveness is essential.

Having such kindly feelings is only the first step in true benevolence. The second step involves action. When true benevolence is present, the level of compassion tends to motivate an action to lift the other's burden. In order to *show* unselfish interest in the welfare of others, one must be *aware* of the situation, *feel* compassion, *desire* to ease the burden, have *no desire to benefit* from it personally, and then *do* something about it. Generosity, acts of kindness, and giving aid to the poor are the hallmarks of benevolence.

**THE KEYS TO BENEVOLENCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Charisma



**A great leader is a servant of the people,
having proper humility
balanced with dignified self-esteem.**

Charisma: A personal quality of leadership arousing popular loyalty and enthusiasm.

The main point about charisma is that it involves the approval of others...many others. You cannot choose charisma for yourself; it has to be assigned to you by other people. The secondary point about charisma is that it involves leadership. Since people will only enthusiastically follow a leader that they approve of, the secondary point refers back to the primary one.

The best leader is a good follower of the people. In order to lead a people in the way they want to go, one must understand the thoughts, feelings, and desires of the crowd, and seek for what they all agree is in their best interest. Therefore, a charismatic person must not be selfish; his intent must be to improve the quality of circumstances for others, even if it involves some sacrifice at his own expense. Usually such sacrifices relate to the leader's time, energy, and money, and in the case of leaders of large organizations, it typically involves his persistent hard work to the point of fatigue.

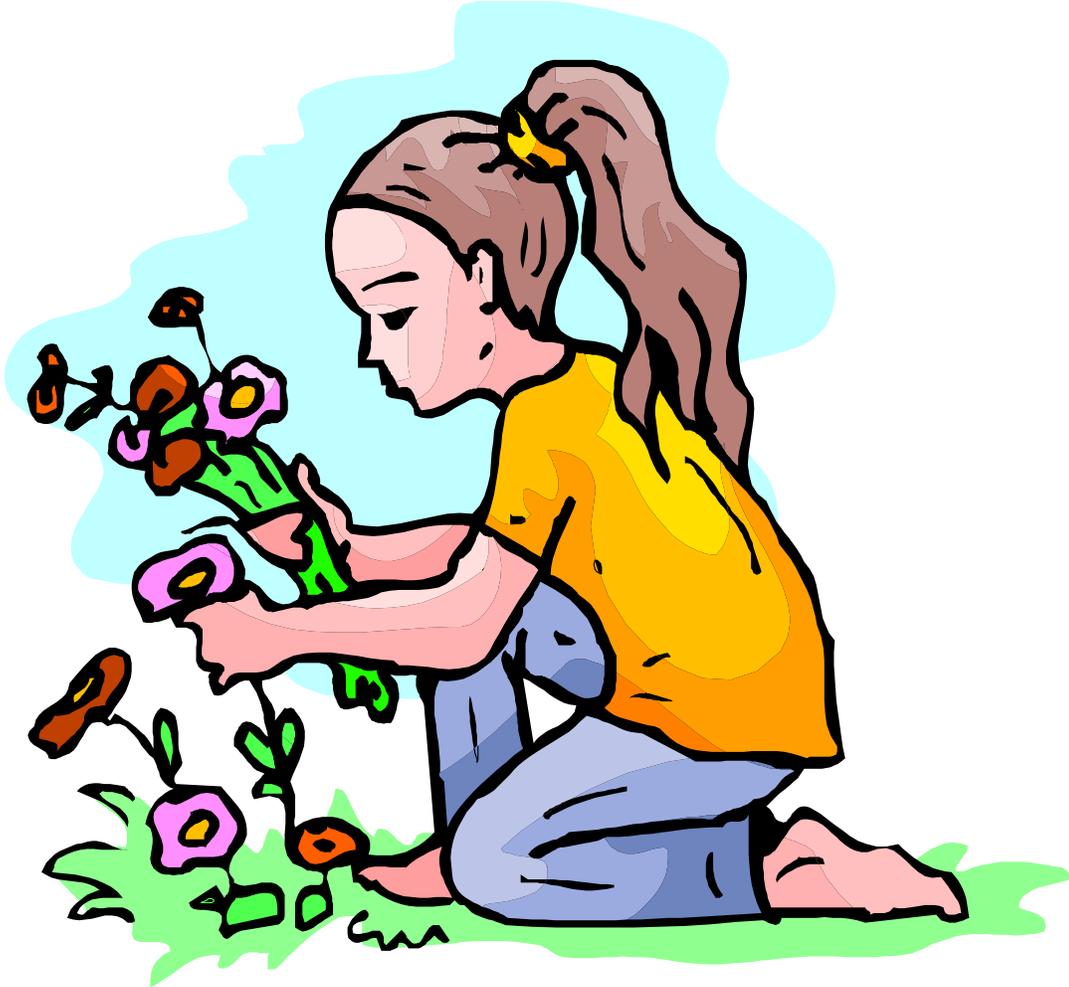
One thing that followers are mistrustful of is a leader who has too much pride in himself, for pride can quickly lead to the abandonment of the best interest of the people, in exchange for self-gratification. On the other hand, a humble leader frequently seeks support and approval from those he leads. Therefore, he constantly keeps in close contact with the desires of those he serves. **A great leader is a servant of the people**, having proper humility balanced with dignified self-esteem.

The people must feel that they are understood and accepted the way they are. They see someone as being charismatic who knows them, loves them, and by serving them, the leader shows that he appreciates the people. Although excellent leadership also involves a gift of wisdom, acceptance and appreciation of the people he serves are the elements that make a beloved leader, one to whom charisma is readily assigned.

Charisma is a beneficial virtue, not only for leaders of large organizations, but for small ones as well. This can include structured facilities such as church positions, small volunteer events, book clubs, crafts societies, unions, women's guilds, men's lodges, or even unstructured units such as one's own social circle. A charismatic host or hostess goes out of their way to make people feel comfortable and provided for. The same is true for a charismatic friend, co-worker, classmate, and neighbor. In each case, the elements of charisma are the same: acceptance and appreciation of others.

**THE KEYS TO CHARISMA ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Chastity



Chastity is commonly thought of as relating to sexuality, but it means pure and virtuous in thought as well.

Chastity: Virtuous, pure in thought, modest; celibate or innocent of unlawful sexual intercourse. Chasten: An attempt to purify. Pure: unmixed with any other matter; free from what violates, weakens, or pollutes.

From the definitions of all the words derived from the word “chastity”, the root word of chastity is “Pure”. Purity is free from what violates, weakens, or pollutes. Why would anyone who desires chastity as a virtue do something to violate, weaken, or pollute themselves? Perhaps because they either do not anticipate such to be the consequence, or they allow it in exchange for satisfaction of an even stronger emotion; self-esteem is frequently the culprit.

Chastity is commonly thought of as relating to sexuality, but it means pure and virtuous in thought as well. Many times, errors in judgment are what cause impurities to enter our mind. For example, when we choose to see movies that contain violent content, we may not realize the impact it has upon our subconscious until we see unpleasant scenes in our dreams at night. Plastering our walls with posters portraying physical beauty likewise makes an indelible impression upon our psyche.

When we start to associate self-esteem with physical beauty, and physical beauty with physical pleasure, we are ignoring the greater part of our humanity. True self-esteem comes from within, and is based on acceptance and appreciation of oneself as a worthwhile, lovable human being. Only after you learn to love yourself can you really, truly, love another.

**THE KEYS TO CHASTITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Cheerful



The first step to changing what you are thinking about is to *think* about what you are thinking about.

Cheerful: “Having or showing a pleasant state of mind, heart, or spirit, involving animation, gaiety, hospitable entertainment, gladdening of others, encouragement, the giving of hope, courage, and comfort.”

A person “full of cheer” is, by definition, providing cheer to others. If you are not doing this, perhaps that is why you are not feeling cheerful yourself. “Lose yourself in the service of others, and you will find yourself”. Yet, you cannot give what you do not have.

Cheerfulness begins with your thoughts. If you are not happy, you are probably not thinking happy thoughts. **The first step to changing what you are thinking about is to *think about what you are thinking about.*** What thoughts can you think of, that would create a pleasant state of mind for yourself? What actions can you think of doing that would cause you to be animated, happy, or entertaining? What words can you say that would gladden others, encourage them, and give them hope, courage, or comfort? Are you thinking, doing, and saying these things? Write down your ideas on a daily or weekly basis, and make a strategy to carry them out. Just planning for them will begin the process of cheering yourself up.

What thoughts do you have that are not cheerful?

Loneliness: What advice would you give to someone who is lonely?

Anger toward someone: This includes gossip, for you are being critical of someone else’s actions. Anger stems from wanting another person to behave differently, but you cannot change another person; you can only change yourself.

Worry and Fear: These are emotions that rob you of the present moment, causing you to dwell on a future event that may or may not happen. Why not hope for the best, and plan for the worst, and then let tomorrow take care of itself? If the event does not occur, you have worried needlessly. If the event does occur, you have worried twice!

What thoughts do you have that are cheerful?

Imagination of dreams, whether fanciful or realistic

Happy or funny memories

Accomplishments and Achievements

What are you looking forward to doing today? Tomorrow? Next year?

Joy and pride in children/grandchildren

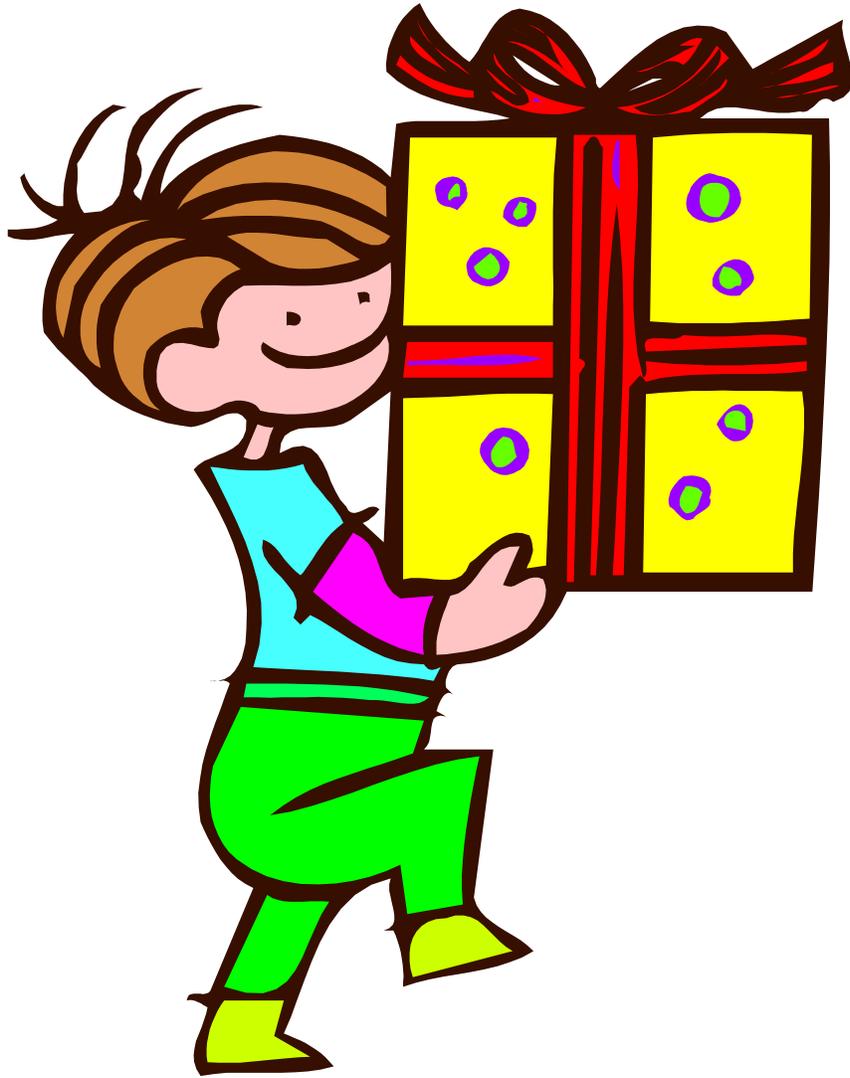
Things that you find curious, interesting, or awe-inspiring

Sharing good times with good friends

Although acceptance of things as they are is necessary in order to eliminate most misery, appreciation of things as they are is the most important ingredient of cheerfulness. You can look up to see others who have more than you, or you can look down to see others that have less than you. Which way do you spend most of your time looking? If there is anyone on the face of the planet (in the history of the world) who could be cheerful after trading their life for yours, try to see your life from their perspective.

**THE KEYS TO CHEERFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Compassionate



True compassion is not complete until it takes action.

Compassionate: “Having sympathetic feelings, pity, and showing mercy”

Being compassionate involves two states: feelings and actions. One does not need to have personally experienced particular sorrows in order to feel sympathy for those who are tormented by them. Everyone understands what it is like to be at least a little bit hungry and thirsty. One can become acquainted with feeling of grief, even if it has only been caused by the loss of a small pet during childhood. Indeed, almost all of us are familiar with fear, anger, doubt, pain, grief, hunger and thirst, illness, and lack of money. With this basic, rudimentary understanding of emotions, anyone can develop compassion for others who suffer from more grievous portions of distress.

True compassion is not complete until it takes action. How can one truly feel sympathy and pity for someone right in their path without at least showing some kindness during the moment at hand? The definition of compassion involves showing mercy, and mercy is an action word. The word “service” is frequently a close companion following the word “compassionate”. Blessings come from showing compassion, sympathy, and mercy. Not only is the state of the victim improved, but the benefactor as well.

The first step in being compassionate is to be *aware* of those within your sphere of influence who are in need of such blessings. Many kind-hearted people miss out on performing many acts of kindness because they are unaware of the needs of others.

Someone who is remarkably compassionate does not merely come to the aid of those who knock on their door; they actively seek out others in need throughout the world. What distinguishes such noteworthy individuals is their appreciation for the value of each soul. The extraordinary philanthropists think of the term “family” as broader than bloodlines, and encompassing all humanity. Add courage and motivation to such love, and much suffering can be alleviated.

**THE KEY TO COMPASSION IS APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Courageous



You cannot be courageous unless you are afraid.

Courageous: “One who proceeds despite fear or despair.”

Being fearless is not the same thing as having courage. **You cannot be courageous unless you are afraid.** This may provide some comfort to the quivering soul in times of duress. When a person is fearless in the presence of real danger, one must question their judgment! A courageous person, when faced with fear, analyzes the situation logically, acknowledges the danger, weighs the consequences of failure, decides that the desired outcome is of significant value, and proceeds with reasonable caution.

Although the thought process of becoming courageous is logical, the fear element may or may not be rational. It is reasonable to be afraid of driving on the freeway, but some people are afraid of things that are of no real danger, such as harmless insects and snakes. Yet, when a fearful person decides to proceed to face his fear, he has captured the coward inside and transformed him into a courageous person, even if he is still quaking in his boots after the fact. By doing so, one can achieve a great deal of satisfaction and increase self-esteem and personal pride. Once the fear of that type of situation dissipates completely, he is no longer really courageous on that issue. Only the memory is left of having been courageous for the duration of the fear.

There are many types of fear that commonly plague individuals. Students fear tests, non-graduates fear returning to school at an older age, insecure people are afraid of leaving a bad relationship to go off on their own, job-seekers fear rejection, those who are unemployed worry about how to keep up with their bills. Other common worries are fear of rejection, failure, disappointment, responsibility, and criticism. But with courage, one can make a plan of action to cope with any contingency.

Acceptance of your own fear is essential. You must learn to embrace your fears instead of pushing them away. When you examine your reasons for your fears and acknowledge that they are *realistic*, but they are standing between you and something else you value more highly, you are then ready to implement a plan of action to carry you toward your goal. If you decide that your fears are unrealistic, you may wish to shed them so they do not interfere with the quality of your life.

In any case, remember that fear is an emotion of future tense. One is never afraid of the past or present; *fear is anxiety about a future event that may or may not even occur.*

**THE KEY TO COURAGE IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Courteous



Courtesy is in the perspective of the recipient.

Courteous: “Civil, polite, marked by respect for others.”

The term “civil” refers to what is commonly accepted in society as being appropriate. One must be careful to be courteous, civil, polite, and respectful in thoughts as well as words and deeds, for one’s body language and tone of voice can easily reveal duplicity.

Courtesy is in the perspective of the recipient. The purpose of showing courtesy is so the other will sense your sincerity. If the addressee has reason to feel that you are not genuine, your gestures will have no effect. Not only must the tone of voice be congruent with the words, but the body language as well. Offering someone a limp handshake and avoiding eye contact while saying “Nice to meet you” is an obvious indication that you are *not* glad to meet them. Sighs and yawns may be perceived as boredom. Standing with arms folded across your chest does not convey an attitude of openness, and can work against someone whose confidence you are trying to win.

Some people are openly discourteous. This may be an act of rebellion and passive hostility. There is a complete lack of respect for the other individual, and lack of fear of any significant repercussions. At least this type of individual is being more honest about his own feelings than the person who falsely parades as a comrade, when there is no substance therein.

In order to *feel* earnestly courteous, civil, polite and respectful, open-mindedness towards the other is essential, and acceptance of them is the key. If part of you wants to change the other person’s behavior, your lack of acceptance of them the way they are may be revealed, and your gestures of respect will not be respected in return. People frequently sense when they are being met with insincerity, and they will not respond to you as you had hoped. However, one who warmly accepts another person, inside and outwardly, will naturally be known as a courteous human being.

THE KEYS TO BEING COURTEOUS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Dependable



People who are dependable are given more responsibility, more money, and more freedom than those who are not.

Dependable: “Someone that something is determined by, based on, or contingent upon; having the quality or state of being which is influenced, determined, or conditioned by another.”

Being dependable is a valuable asset. **People who are dependable are given more responsibility, more money, and more freedom than those who are not.** There are three reasons for this: the dependability of a person determines outcomes of events, dependable people influence the course of events, and dependable people condition the state of events. Therefore, power, authority, and freedom are in the hands of people who are consistently dependable.

Dependability is something that must be consistent in all aspects of life. Just as a woman cannot be a little bit pregnant, a person cannot be just a little bit dependable. Whenever the outcome of an event is based on your actions, you have the opportunity to be dependable. Whether the assignment you have accepted involves bringing the refreshments to a social gathering or bringing the statistics, charts, and graphs to an important business meeting, others will be affected if you neglect your responsibility.

Interestingly, one who is dependable is frequently taken for granted, so it helps if you get your own satisfaction in a job well done, without requiring applause from others. In addition, the disappointment from others is sharp when even one task is not performed properly without a decent excuse. When even one such incident occurs, the label of “dependable” now has a question mark after it in the minds of your fellows, and it will understandably take years to be reinstated into complete trust again. The reason for this is simple: when you accept a task, whether small or large, and the task must be done properly, the one in charge will have to double-check your progress well before the deadline, so that in case you fall through again, there is still time for someone else to complete the assignment.

The importance of the course, outcome, and condition of an event being acceptable is in the perception of those who are affected by your part in the event. Undependable people are likely out of touch with this fact, and do not put much weight on their responsibility because they are heedless of how their lack of action affects others. Therefore, a dependable person shows an appreciation for the feelings of others. Before agreeing to a task, the dependable person must also accept the responsibility of its completion. To do this, he or she must be aware of the requirements involved for success, and be willing and able to perform dutifully. Those who take upon themselves, whether they realize it or not, more than they can do, are at high risk of falling away from reliability. Therefore a highly dependable person will carefully consider a matter before embarking on it, and will keep the lines of communication open with all significant others along the way.

**THE KEYS TO DEPENDABILITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Empathy/Sympathy



Just the thought that someone cares is enough to relieve a great deal of loneliness and despair.

Empathy: “Experiencing the feelings of another as one’s own, or the capacity to do so.” Sympathy: “A relationship between persons or things wherein whatever affects one similarly affects the other; harmony of interests and aims.”

Be careful when you say, “I know how you feel.” It is difficult to know how another person feels about something unless you have had the same experience. When you use that phrase too loosely, you may get an annoyed response of, “How can *you* know how *I* feel? Unless you have a reasonable explanation, your words of comfort will turn into a wall between the two of you.

The difference between empathy and sympathy is experience. When you have had a similar experience, you have empathy as you remember what it felt like. When you have not had such an experience, you can still have sympathy by viewing the situation from your perspective, and, having a harmony of interests and aims with the other, you understand how you would feel if it happened to you. In that way, you feel that what has affected your friend has also affected you.

Both empathy and sympathy are prerequisites to compassion and acts of kindness because they motivate action toward relieving the suffering of others.

Empathy and sympathy first require acceptance of the other person as they are. If you have experienced their circumstances, but handled the emotions of it differently, you cannot have empathy until you understand that their personality is unique, and therefore, the effect of their circumstances is different for them than it was for you.

Appreciation is also an important element in empathy and sympathy. If you cannot appreciate your circumstances as being more pleasant than theirs, you cannot be very sympathetic of them. Being judgmental of other people’s decisions and actions interferes with sympathy, because it fosters the thought that the other person got what they deserved.

Whether or not a person brought upon himself his own miseries, when a kind soul shows sympathy to him in his distress, he is uplifted even before anything else is done to improve his plight. **Just the thought that someone cares is enough to relieve a great deal of loneliness and despair.** When the person who shows sympathy is witness to this emotional transformation, both souls are edified, even while they are commiserating.

THE KEYS TO EMPATHY/SYMPATHY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Encouraging



The point of encouraging someone is to help them to make progress and grow from a lower position to a higher one.

Encouraging: “To inspire with courage and hope; stimulate, incite, foster.

Inspire: “To exert an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on.”

Incite: “To arouse to action.”

Foster: “To receive, afford, and share a parental type of care, even with no legal or blood ties; to nurture; to promote the growth or development of.”

An encouraging person is one who first sees others who need courage and hope. They take on a parental type of care, though there may be no legal or social obligations to do so. They nurture and promote the growth and development of others by influencing them to be more animated and lively, arousing them to action.

The first step in the process of becoming an encouraging person is to be aware of those who need encouragement. There are frequent opportunities in everyone’s path to notice those who are either afraid or discouraged. Those in such need can be found at home, work, school, church, down the street, at the bus stop, or even in a brief encounter in a grocery store line.

Then, there needs to be an inner movement of compassion with a desire to take on a role of nurturing. **The point of encouraging someone is to help them to make progress and grow from a lower position to a higher one.** In order to do this, the one who encourages needs to be on stable ground themselves. It is hard to encourage someone when you are living in fear; it is like trying to pull someone out of quicksand when you are standing in it, too.

The attempts to encourage someone must exert an influence on the person. This is where acceptance of the other becomes important. An individual is not easily influenced by someone he does not respect and admire, and people do not attach these labels to those who do not understand them. Once a discouraged person senses true concern from someone who loves them as they are, they are more likely to respond to their influences.

In order to be successful, this influence must result in an increase in energy and motivation within the supplicant. This will be evident when the discouraged person shows an increase in physical movement, body language, and fluctuations in tone of voice, as well as a noticeable improvement in positive vocabulary.

To have this level of effect on people, one must be fully aware of the blessings in life, regardless of circumstances. In addition, this appreciation must be articulated in a convincing way so that the discouraged person can relate to the good things life has to offer. The most encouraging people in the world have unfortunately suffered and overcome a great deal of sorrows and difficulties. It usually takes a while for discouraging circumstances to abate, but encouragement bridges the gap for the duration, allowing the depressed individual to return to a state of hope and joy in life *today*.

**THE KEYS TO ENCOURAGEMENT ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Enemies, Having No



Complete and humble restitution greatly disempowers others to use the past against you.

Enemy: “One who attacks or tries to harm another”

Being attacked or harmed is frequently a matter of perspective. Are there people in your life whom you perceive as being your enemies because they are trying to attack or harm you? Take your power back. That will leave them helpless to hurt you.

If you are in physical danger, by all means, get to safety as fast as possible. But outside of actual war situations, most people who are considered as “enemies” are merely competitors, covetous of what you have. There will always be those who gossip and spread rumors in an effort to undermine another’s peace of mind, success, achievements, or reputation. Some of these reports may have a basis in fact; others may not be true at all. However, the truth exists, and it is recorded by Eternal Beings.

If you consider someone your enemy because of their efforts to point out your hidden wrongdoings, perhaps the best approach may be to admit your past errors, demonstrate your remorse, and pay the consequences. **Complete and humble restitution greatly disempowers others to use the past against you.**

Once you have a clear conscious, there are still bound to be those jealous few who want you to have less pride, reduced popularity, fewer customers, not as much support, a smaller territory, etc. These people are not content to let you be as you are. Don’t get caught in the same trap. Allowing others to act the way they want to will be easier than trying to get them to behave according to your standards. It takes a lot less aggravation to accept others as they are than it does to try to change them, and besides, you cannot change other people; you can only change yourself by how you respond to them.

Abraham Lincoln said that the best way to conquer your enemies is to make friends out of them. Accepting people as they are and trying to see things from their viewpoint is the first step in disarming your opponents. It takes two to play tug of war; if you find yourself embroiled in an inconsequential battle, drop the rope. Focus on tending to your own business, and live and let live. Do not use the term “enemy” too loosely. Remember, people that you have been thinking of as enemies are probably just competitive or jealous. Is it really worth the fear and stress you get by thinking of them as enemies?

**THE KEY TO HAVING NO ENEMIES IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Faithful



**Devout faithfulness cannot be faulted; it stands forever
as a monument to one's virtue.**

Faithful: “Sense of loyalty and duty; having belief and trust.”

(1 Corinthians 13:7) Love believeth all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Being loyal involves a committed sense of duty towards someone or something. But you can't really have a sense of loyalty and duty unless you also have belief and trust; therefore, being faithful requires all of these elements. However, the pivotal word in the definition of faithful is “trust”.

Trust takes time to develop because it is commonly based on another's behavior which has been predictable for a long time. Once a person or institution has an established reputation, it can be trusted by others who have no direct contact with the creator, because people can trust in the reputation.

Belief is the precursor to trust. Before a belief can be established, there must be some knowledge gained and thought applied. Then, *belief is a decision*. Once a decision has been made that you believe in something, you make a second decision to trust it to behave as you expect.

With belief and trust, faith is already present, but being “faithful” is an action word. To add faithfulness to your list of virtues, **you have to show and demonstrate your belief and trust, as well as your sense of loyalty and duty**. Since only God is perfect, the only *safe* faithfulness is toward Him. Yet, there are also many other wonderful things and people in life that are good to believe in and trust in, even knowing that when you put your faith and trust in anyone or anything that is imperfect, there will always be a possibility that you will be disappointed. After all, faith is not the sure knowledge of something. It is the hope that an unseen thing is true.

Faith, like a plant, has to be nurtured. There will always be stormy winds, blistering heat, numbing cold, and threatening pests. Faith also has to be sheltered and protected against such daily elements. It also has to be fed and watered. If any aspect of your faith is not being cared for in a proper balance, your faith, belief, and trust might fail, even if the object of your faith remains forever worthy.

Faithfulness in anything other than God is unpredictable. The faithfulness of others is not in your control, but whether or not you choose to be faithful is in your own hands. When you make a decision to believe in someone, trust them, and be loyal to them, and this decision came after having investigated them with wisdom, then you must trust yourself to be able to cope with the disappointment and consequences in the event that your imperfect hero behaves below your standard.

Some people excel in their own faithfulness by demonstrating loyalty and commitment towards someone who has been disloyal to them. In this case, the initial trust may have been misplaced, but **devout faithfulness cannot be faulted; it stands forever as a monument to one's virtue**.

In order to believe and trust in someone or something, one must first accept it completely. Faith that is divided is easily overthrown. Those who are exemplary in faithfulness have made a decision to completely accept who and what they believe in, including the flaws and weakness that are inherent to mortal existence. In focusing on the eternal perspective, they see such events as temporary storms to weather.

Since faith requires effort in adversity, faithfulness reflects self-esteem and confidence. There is a wholesome pride in being committed and loyal to a worthy decision made in the past. By living with an attitude of acceptance of your beliefs and acceptance of your ability to cope with the frailties of others, you empower yourself with faith.

Those who choose to live in faithfulness carry with them an inner serenity and peace that quells the storms of life. Their inner strength creates their own shade in the heat, and their inner warmth keeps away external chills. They become their own source of happiness.

**THE KEY TO FAITHFULNESS IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Felicitous



A felicitous person knows when to put their own concerns out of their mind while they are showing their interest in you.

Felicitous: “Suitably pleasant and delightful in expression”

Those who are known for their felicity seem to be pleasant and enjoyable company in all social situations. But do you really think that they are cheerful inside and out, 100% of the time? With these people, you may never know what trials and struggles they are dealing with while they are socializing with you, because they almost never complain. **They know when to put their own concerns out of their mind while they are showing their interest in you.**

Have you ever said “Hello, how are you?” to a person who actually *tells* you in detail how they are (usually nothing pleasant)? Pretty soon, you don’t look forward to their company, and seek to avoid conversation with them. We all have our ups and downs. We all need our inner circle of confidants with whom we can vent our stress. But in social situations, the felicitous one puts their troubles aside and tends to the well-being of others. For this reason, their companionship is sought by many.

Being thoughtful of the welfare of others has a lot to do with this virtue. One who takes the role of host or hostess upon themselves has already taken the first step to felicity. The planner of a social event has already set their mind to the task of providing an experience which is enjoyable to all of the guests. But a truly felicitous person goes beyond the sense of duty, and carries their thoughtful care and concern for others into all aspects of their daily life. It is easy to be suitably pleasant and delightful for a short period during a special occasion, but those with outstanding virtue treat everyone, everywhere, with the same compassion and thoughtfulness.

Acceptance of the troublesome circumstances in your own life is essential to be able to set your own concerns aside during the times you have to interact with others. If you are distracted by your own thoughts, you cannot listen to others. You may find you are talking about yourself, and if you’re talking, you are not listening. Listening is the most important way to get to know others. The felicitous person has discovered how to ask questions of others that gets them to want to share their inner selves. The speaker also needs a sense of reassurance that what they say will be accepted by the listener. No one wants to continue a conversation with someone who they feel is condemning them. The felicitous person is supportive and encouraging to all others.

Appreciation for the blessings in your own life is also helpful in order to be encouraging to others. When you can listen to their troubles and concerns with complete acceptance of their perspective, and then gently point out the blessings they already have that they are not appreciating, you can at least be a source of encouragement.

**THE KEY TO FELICITY IS ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Forgiving



None of us are exempt from human error.

Forgiving: “To give up resentment, allowing room for error or weakness in another, granting relief.”

To be a forgiving person, it is essential to be compassionate about the errors and weaknesses in others. People who have been forgiven of many things can easily go on to become very forgiving people themselves, if they also have humility and appreciation. Once a person recognizes the severity of the consequences that their ill actions have caused others, true remorse can take place. When the burden of guilt is removed by forgiveness, the offender now has a clear understanding of what it is like to be weak or in error, having offended, and being forgiven. With this humility, compassion can grow.

People who are of a forgiving nature can relate to the saying, “There, but for the grace of God, go I”. Once there is sympathy for the weaknesses of an offender, pity can give way to granting relief. However, *self*-pity harbors resentment, which is the major obstacle to forgiveness.

It is easy to forgive a person who conveys sorrow and regret for their offenses, and who approaches with a humble apology. However, a higher order of spirituality is expressed when one can forgive a person who has not shown any sign of reticence. Yet, we are specifically admonished by the scriptures in Matthew 5:46, to love those who do not love us in return: “For if ye only love them which love you, what reward have ye?”

Acceptance of others the way they are, including their weakness and errors, is the first step to being forgiving. It is also important to remember your appreciation for having been forgiven of your own past wrongdoings. **None of us are exempt from human error**, even deliberate ones.

We are each on a different rung of our ladder of development. Given enough time to mature, we all eventually seem to progress. However, an individual’s progress can be hindered if a significant person in his life retains a negative label on his character. Often, influential people can actually change another person’s personality by putting positive labels on them before they are deserved. In such cases, the unworthy person gradually grows into the virtue because he believes in the judgment of the significant other.

People who strive to release themselves from the resentment of grudges are happier than those who allow injuries to fester. It takes a lot of negative energy and causes a great deal of emotional drain to relive old offenses over and over again. To be able to forgive *and* forget is a blessing of emotional freedom.

THE KEYS TO BEING FORGIVING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Generous



The more we share, the more we feel that we have.

Generous: “Free in giving or sharing”, thinking with sympathy of others.

One of the greatest temporal advantages of generosity for the giver is that it leaves one with the sense that one is prosperous. Even when a person does not have much in the way of earthly possessions, when one is generous even in their meagerness it immediately provides a relief of feeling of insufficiency. **The more we share, the more we feel that we have.** You have to give away what you have in order to feel that you have extra to give. Add to that the glory of heavenly blessings that are affixed to such a soul who attempts in their sincerity to alleviate the burden of another.

Generous is defined as “Free in giving”. Not only does “free” refer to the frequency of giving, it also means giving without obligation.

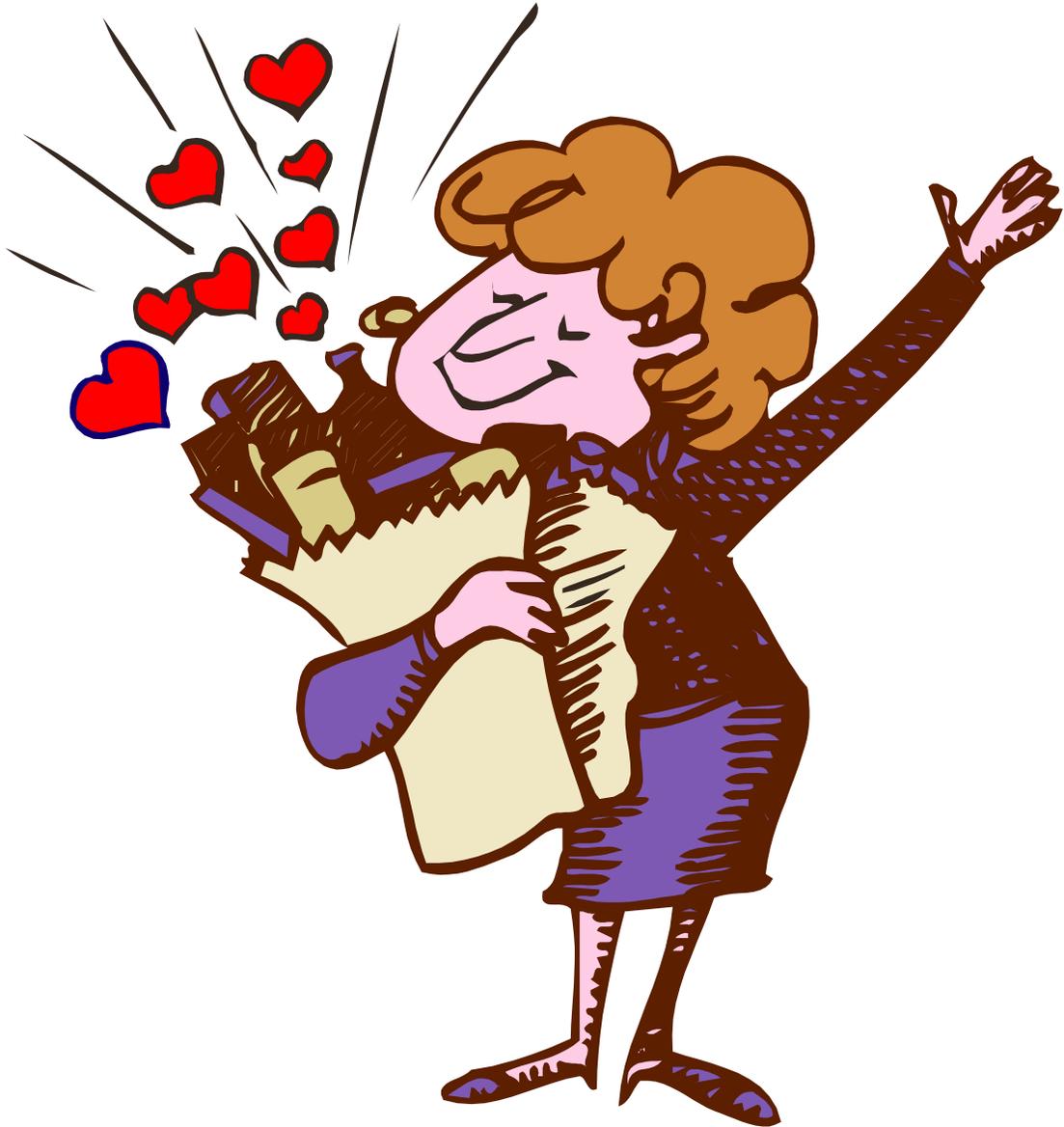
The difference between giving and sharing is that sharing leaves you with enough for yourself. Yet, when you give, you are sharing what you have. Even if you give generously of what you have, you are merely sharing your blessings, although what you have left for yourself is a different commodity than what you gave. By being generous, not only are the sorrows and afflictions of another relieved, but you have added virtue to your personality.

Why would anyone give or share at all? Appreciation of your own blessings and circumstances frequently motivates generosity out of sympathy for those less fortunate. In addition, acceptance of others as they are is necessary in order to be sympathetic of their condition. Those who are judgmental of another’s plight are seldom sympathetic, and rarely generous to that cause. Some give only to those who they know and like. This is the lowest form of generosity. The purist form of being generous is to give to those you don’t know, or to those you don’t like, because a need exists which you can extinguish.

You can’t have sympathy for others unless you think about them first. To be generous to those in your path is commendable, but those who actually go and seek out the needy are exemplary. Throughout the world there are those in need of your talents, skills, energy, encouragement, time, money, or possessions. The hearts of some people turn to third-world countries who suffer with extreme impoverishment. Others adopt a sympathetic cause toward the prevention and treatment of various illnesses. Some choose a balance of multiple activities at the local, state, national, and international levels. One thing that all generous people have in common is a state of inner happiness.

**THE KEYS TO GENEROSITY ARE ACCPETANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Helpful



Helpful people can be satisfied by *improving* the situation of others, even if there is no permanent fix.

Helpful: “One who seeks to aid, assist, improve, relieve, promote, and change for the better.”

There are always people around us to serve, but by definition, one who is helpful actively *seeks* out those in need. This altruistic behavior usually stems from an inner appreciativeness of one's own blessings, with a desire for others to have the same. Total acceptance of others needs to be present, for being judgmental is not conducive to a spirit of good will and a loving heart.

Included in the definition of the word helpful is “relieve”. The point of helpfulness is to ease burdens and other forms of suffering. Their purpose is to “aid or assist”, not to take over. The helpful one wants others to be independent, but recognizes the need for a periodic, temporary bridge toward the self-sufficiency of others. With this as a goal, **helpful people can therefore be satisfied by *improving* the situation of others, even if there is no permanent fix.** Their main concern is that the end result is a change for the better.

Being helpful is a service to others, and service is the highest form of spirituality. When you serve, you open your heart to others. A person who begins to serve another usually winds up loving them more. Therefore, to increase your love for other people, serve them, and be helpful.

An act of daily service can be as simple as lending an ear to someone in need or letting a stranger into the traffic flow on a busy street. Some people make it a point to look for an opportunity to serve at least one person every single day. The more you help, serve, and love others, the better you feel about yourself, and how you are spending your time here on earth, for when you are in the service of your fellow beings, you are only in the service of your God. Thus, being a helpful person makes one happier every day.

**THE KEYS TO HELPFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Hopeful



Once a person feels a sense of security and comfort of tomorrow they are free to enjoy the immediate blessings that surround them today.

Hopeful: “Having desire with expectation of fulfillment in the future.”

Hope and faith are cousins. The difference between them is the amount of confidence. Hope is the ultimate precursor. One who lacks faith can still find a great deal of comfort in hope.

Hope is having a desire for something with at least a small degree of expectation that it could occur. Hope, faith, desire, and expectation are all thoughts which are focused on the future. The problem with having thoughts which are directed towards the future is that there is always a danger that the joys of the present moment can be lost. However, the main benefit of hopefulness is comfort in the present.

Once a person feels a sense of security and comfort of tomorrow they are free to enjoy the immediate blessings that surround them today.

Acceptance plays an important role in the cultivation of hope. Since a hopeful person is one who has a desire for something in the future which is not already possessed, acceptance is what helps to maintain the delicate balance between the comfort of today and the relief of tomorrow. Acceptance implies that something exists which is less than desirable, but has to be coped with. Having hope in the future without acceptance in the present will ruin the happiness of today.

Yet, acceptance alone is not sufficient to boost the emotions of a discomfited person all the way to joyfulness. The final element necessary to do this is appreciation. Regardless of the amount of discomfort that exists in the present moment, a hopeful person can always find things to appreciate. As long as there are those who can smile when in pain, laugh during an illness, or give away their last dollar, proof exists that, through hope, happiness is always possible.

“Love...hopes in all things...” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

**THE KEYS TO HOPEFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Humble/Modest



**Gratitude is the key to the difference
between humility and pride.**

Humble/Modest: “Unassuming, not seeking power, prestige or recognition”

Humility is not present in one who justifies or minimizes his faults, extols his virtues and abilities, and attributes his blessings to himself, instead of God. They are not thankful for their abilities and blessings; instead, they feel they rightfully earned them.

There are virtues, abilities, and blessings that are earned, and those which are God-given, or that we are born with. Physical beauty is one of the most common things that people are proud about, yet one has nothing to do with it. Exercising, eating properly, using makeup, good-looking clothes, plastic surgery are all ways to contribute to an overall pleasant appearance, but is that something to be proud of, or humbly appreciative? Is one who does not do all those things less worthy of praise, have less virtue or attributes or blessings?

One thing that both the proud and the humble have in common is some sort of great ability that surpasses others. How a person perceives himself with this ability is where the dividing line is between pride and humility.

To be “unassuming” is to not take something for granted. A humble person does not take his great ability for granted, while the proud one does.

“Power” is the ability to control or rule over others. A humble person does not seek such power.

“Prestige” is one’s estimation in the eye’s of others, and the ability to influence them. A humble person does not put weight on the flattery of others.

“Recognition” is the special notice of others. A humble person does not seek attention regarding delight in his great abilities.

Acceptance of one’s abilities as a blessing that involved the influence of others along the way is the first step in humility. Everyone has parents, a childhood, and various experiences that contribute to the sum total of character that each of us has become. Even negative or difficult experiences can bring out an extraordinary ability that might otherwise have gone undeveloped. **Gratitude is the key to the difference between humility and pride.**

While dissention, jealousy, hurt feelings, and resentment are frequent companions of those with excess pride, happiness and inner peace follow the person who has extraordinary abilities and treasures them with humility.

**THE KEYS TO HUMILITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Sense of Humor



A person with a sense of humor can appreciate the ridiculous, whereas another may either discount its value, or may even be upset by it.

Humor, Sense of: “A keen perception of, and appreciation for, comical or amusing situations.”

“Keen” means to be mentally alert. “Perception” is having awareness, an ability to understand, insight, and comprehension. “Appreciation” is to be aware of and value justly, to be thankful for, causing an increase in value.

“Comical” means to provoke laughter or amusement. “Amusing” means to be entertaining in a light or playful way. “Situations” are conditions or circumstances.

Therefore, when a person can be entertained in a light or playful way by observing comical situations, one is said to have a sense of humor. Yet, not everyone can see the humor in ordinary circumstances; it requires a mind that is mentally alert, including observation, insight, and comprehension.

Most things that are funny are also ridiculous. Such events can be viewed simultaneously by two people, where one will see the humor in it, and the other will not. According to the definition of humor, the pivotal word seems to be appreciation. **A person with a sense of humor can appreciate the ridiculous, whereas another may either discount its value, or may even be upset by it.**

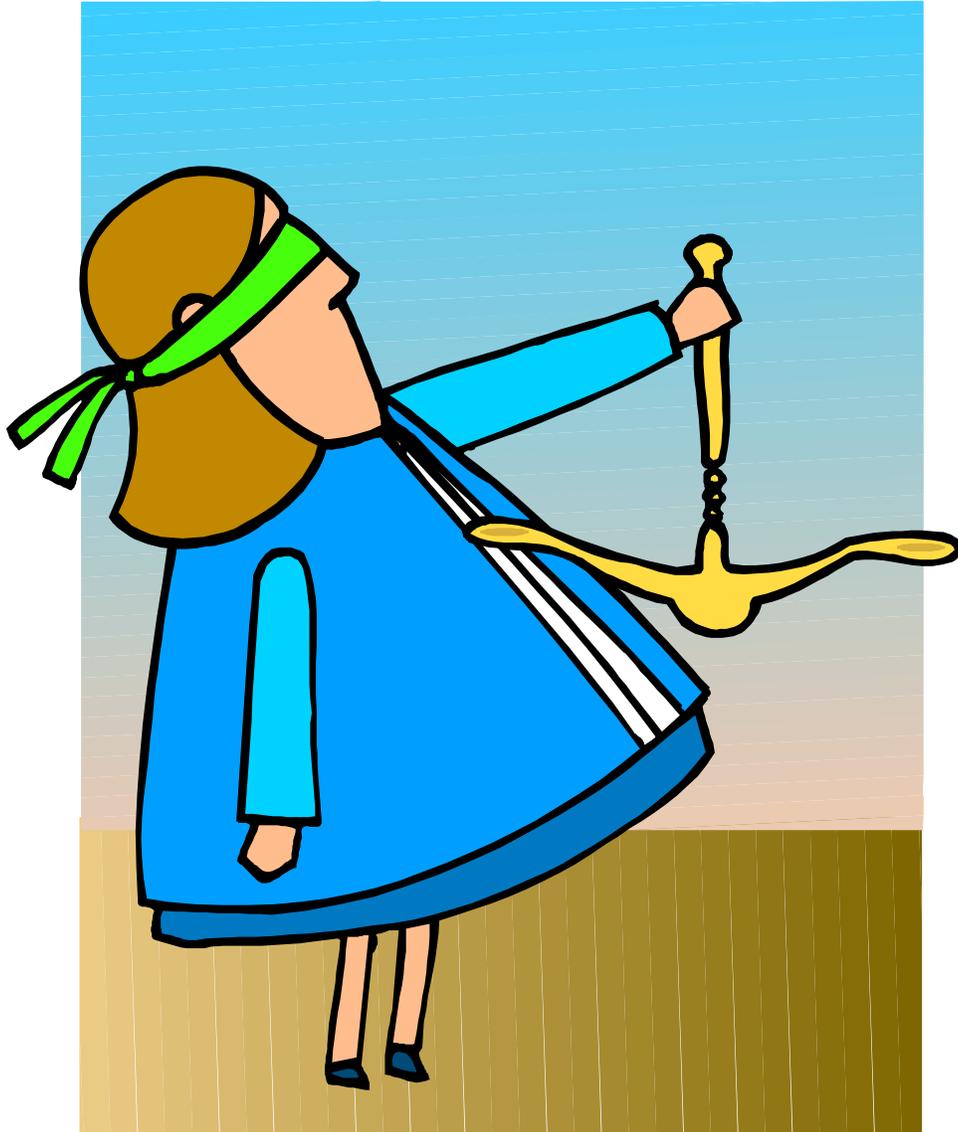
When a bizarre situation occurs where a lot of hard effort suddenly becomes useless due to unexpected circumstances that are beyond anyone’s control, a person with a sense of humor really comes to light. While others are upset or complaining over the loss, how is it that an occasional soul can shrug their shoulders, make a joke, and get back to work?

In such situations, acceptance is the key. A person with a sense of humor moves quickly through all the stages of grief and gets to a level of acceptance rapidly. Acceptance is the stage at which coping skills can be used to enable the person to move forward and recover from the loss. Having appreciation of what blessings are still left is very helpful to retain happiness in these circumstances.

Having a sense of humor is very beneficial attribute, not only to the soul which possesses it, but often for his fellows, as well. If he shares his humorous viewpoint with gentle discretion, he may be able to set the tone and lift the spirits of his companions. As long as he is conscientious of the feelings of those around him, an astute person can carry on through rough points in life with a smile.

**THE KEYS TO A SENSE OF HUMOR ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Integrity



Integrity demands personal justice from within.

Integrity: “Truthful, free from deception, marked by adherence to an incorruptible code of values.”

The hallmark of integrity is adherence to a code of values. Values are the ideals that are desirable, of worth, useful, and important to the individual. Most values are universally acclaimed, but one has to admit that integrity can even be seen in the individual that adheres to a code of values that is not popular.

The thing that all proper codes of values have in common is that they are incorruptible, and not subject to decay or dissolution. This is where morally acceptable values stand the test of time. Among such values, honesty is paramount, and is heralded as a feature in all individuals with integrity.

Honesty is more than just being truthful; it includes telling the correct facts of the real state of things. Absolute integrity includes honesty with no element of deception which is designed to trick or mislead. A person with integrity can still make mistakes, but always assumes full responsibility for his actions, including the consequences of his honesty.

Another prime factor with integrity is a strict adherence to one’s code of values. Adherence means to cling, support, and maintain loyalty without deviation. That means a person of absolute integrity is incapable of being bribed or tempted. One who slips in their integrity can quickly regain it only by admission of guilt, cessation of the behavior, and restitution, including accepting the consequences. **Integrity demands personal justice from within.**

When a person decides to adopt and sustain integrity, he is also deciding ahead of time to accept all consequences of his actions. With this thought in mind, it is easier to not fall into temptation away from his standard, and he is less likely to be snared by bribes. He has already pondered on what is desirable, of worth, and valuable in life, and has chosen to maintain his course with vigilance.

Appreciation of the positive consequences of adhering to virtues helps to motivate a desire to seek integrity. With a little contemplation, it is easy to see how many good opportunities and fewer pitfalls lay ahead for a person who strives for truthfulness. This asset can be a benefit to one’s family, employers, neighbors, and friends.

A person of integrity finds happiness within from the personal satisfaction of adhering to his own code of values. When one is in tune with the things that are important in life, personal satisfaction is ever present.

**THE KEYS TO INTEGRITY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS**

Joyful



**The more frequently you find yourself feeling satisfied,
the more frequently you will feel joyful.**

Joyful: “Feeling happiness that comes from success, good fortune, or a sense of well-being. Being a source of happiness, bliss, delight, enjoyment, or pleasure.”

The definition of joyful includes many adjectives! When you look at the meaning of each of the terms used, you can see where joyfulness really comes from. “Happiness” is pleasurable satisfaction and contentment. “Success” is having a favorable or desired outcome. “Good fortune” is receiving some good thing which was not foreseen. A “sense of well being” is having an awareness or perception of being in satisfactory condition.

A “source” is the origin or beginning of something. “Bliss” is complete happiness and peace. “Delight” is great pleasure, satisfying greatly. “Enjoyment” is having for one’s own pleasure and satisfaction, and “pleasure” is a state of gratification.

It is interesting to note that the terms “satisfy” and “gratify” are used repeatedly throughout all the components of the word for “joy”. To “satisfy” is to pay what is due, and to meet the requirements of. To “gratify” is to afford pleasure to, *beyond what is expected*.

Since the presence of satisfaction is essential for joy, and one’s perception of satisfaction is based on one’s expectations of what is paid justly, it follows that satisfaction, and therefore joy, cannot be found when one’s expectations are too high.

Likewise, when you consistently keep your expectations low about what makes you happy and satisfied, every good thing that you receive above that will bring you joy.

The more frequently you find yourself feeling satisfied, the more frequently you will feel joyful. The more you feel disappointed (from having unrealistic expectations), the more joy you are removing from your life.

Being joyful has two components; one involves receiving joy, and the other involves giving joy to others. In the second part of its definition, joyful is being the “source” of happiness, peace, delight, and giving pleasure and satisfaction to others. These are all action words.

In order to be a completely joyful person, you have to keep your daily expectations low, appreciate every good thing you receive, and express your appreciation so that you become a source of delight for others to be around. Being joyful is not dependent upon circumstances; it is within everyone’s control. It is perception which is based on acceptance, and it is magnified with appreciation. And, of course, happiness is the reward of the process.

**THE KEYS TO JOYFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Longsuffering



Even in suffering, we can focus on appreciating what we still have left to be thankful for.

Longsuffering: “To endure loss, damage, misery, hardship, or injury” over a long period of time with peaceful acceptance.

One of the greatest definitions of love includes longsuffering: “Love suffereth long, and is kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Of course, no one likes to suffer at all, but life is full of events that involve loss, damage, misery, hardship, and injuries. The more people there are in your life, the more such events occur. But each of these seemingly miserable events is actually an opportunity to show forth love.

The first key word in the definition of longsuffering is to endure: “to persist through suffering with patience and tolerance”. The second key word is “acceptance”. To be able to face each of life’s challenges with love, one has to persist through suffering with patience, tolerance, and acceptance. There are children throughout the world who are suffering from terrible illnesses at this very moment, and some of them are even smiling. How do they do that? Acceptance must be a major element.

When we suffer from loss, it involves having something that is now gone. Keep in mind that there was once a time when you didn’t have the thing in the first place, and you probably got along fine without it. If you can return to that state of appreciation of life, you can find happiness despite the loss.

When we suffer from damage, we have experienced loss or harm due to injury of person, property, or reputation.

When we suffer from misery, we are in discomfort from poverty or affliction, or emotional distress.

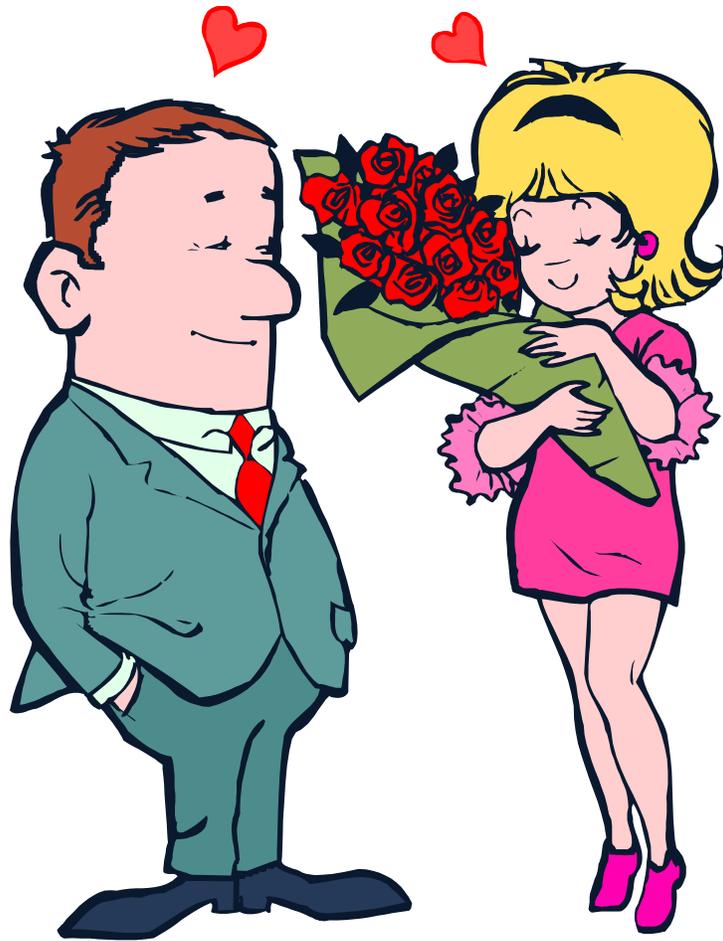
When we suffer from hardship, we lack things that are needed for existence.

When we suffer from injury, we are hurt and impaired from performing to our previous ability.

No matter what we suffer from, if we do so with peaceful acceptance, **we can then focus on appreciating what we still have left to be thankful for.** Therein is found the key to happiness, even while we are suffering. One who accepts and copes with dreadful conditions with patience has a huge character asset as a reward.

**THE KEYS TO LONGSUFFERING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Loving



Love is a verb, which is an action word.

Loving: “Unselfish, loyal, benevolent concern for others”

According to the scriptures, loving God and loving your fellow human beings is the most important thing in life. On these two commandments hang ALL the laws in ALL of the civilizations in ALL of the countries in ALL the world. Laws are designed to protect members of a society. From the smallest stop sign in the smallest intersection of the smallest town, to the largest legislative bill in the largest congressional meeting in the largest city in the country, laws are written out of benevolent concern for others.

From its definition, it is obvious that **love is a verb, which is an action word**. “Benevolent concern for others” indicates, kindly, charitable thoughts that motivate one to action. One can have a loving heart that sits within the confines of their own secure living environment, but one who is truly loving is motivated to get up and move away from their comfort zone, in order to help others less fortunate.

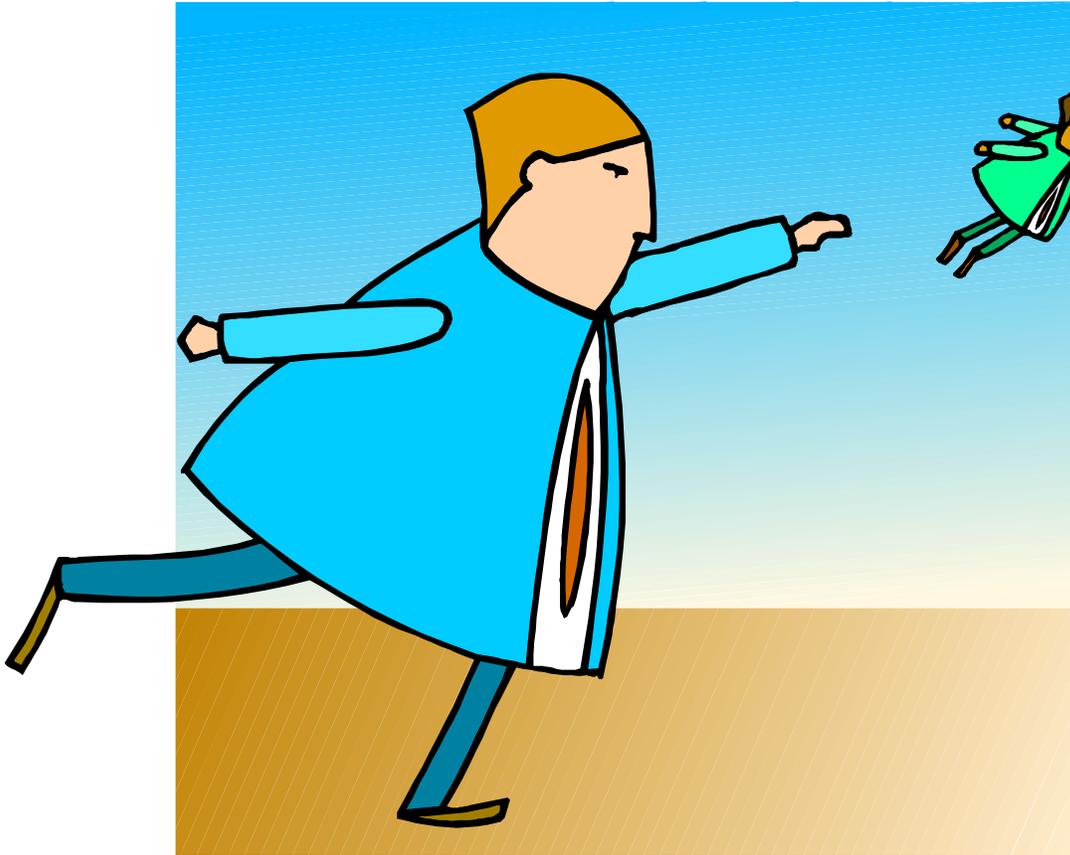
Another obvious fact is that love involves interaction with other people. After all, how can you be known as a loyal person without someone to be loyal to? How can you be unselfish without someone to give to? “Loyal” is constantly having a sense of duty and trust in a cause, ideal, or person; “Unselfish” is having regard for others without being excessively concerned for one’s own welfare. It is difficult to be a vastly loving person unless you have frequent interactions with others.

A third fact that perhaps is not so obvious is that being a loving person involves being exposed to the awful things in life. If a loving person is patient, he must be exposed to situations that test the limits of his patience. If a loving person is not envious, he must be exposed to others who have more than he does. If a loving person thinks no evil, he must be exposed to such darkness routinely. If a loving person is not easily provoked, there must be frequent attempts to do so. If love bears all things and endures all things, a loving soul is in for a difficult journey, but one that results in inner peace and ultimate happiness.

Acceptance plays a key role in maintaining inner peace during turbulent circumstances. When combined with appreciation, happiness can be the constant companion of the loving soul.

**THE KEYS TO BEING LOVING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Loyal



Everyone is loyal until the trouble starts.

Loyal: “Constantly faithful to a cause or ideal.”

Everyone is loyal until the trouble starts. True loyalty rides out the waves. A person’s initial commitment to a cause or ideal stems out of trust or like-mindedness that is compatible with their own character. However, with time, some people change their minds about their values. In such cases, a loyal person merely switches sides, but continues to remain loyal to their new persuasion.

One who is truly loyal will maintain faith and trust to a cause that they continue to believe in, even if it has become difficult due to circumstances. When employees believe in their boss, they remain with the company throughout fluctuations in the economy. When a friend is faithful, they are forgiving when their comrade suddenly becomes difficult to socialize with for various reasons. When a spouse is committed, he or she remains a life partner during trying times.

Those who bail out during the hard times are more loyal to themselves than to the others in their life. When one’s priorities are for one’s own comforts, it is difficult to be loyal. When loyalty is assigned only after thorough contemplation, including reflection upon all future possibilities, it has a better chance to manifest itself as a character asset. Thus, loyalty is more likely to abound in those who are selective about to whom or what they give their loyalty.

Once the introspective soul has chosen a person or cause to whom they decide to pledge allegiance, loyalty will only become evident during times of trouble. To ride out these waves, acceptance is necessary. Almost all worthy causes contain imperfections, and people are fallible, have weaknesses, and make errors. The person who is loyal can see the bigger picture, and is willing to cope with such follies as they arise.

Appreciation of all the good in a person or a cause helps to bring contentment in the face of coping with situations that inevitably arise from the innate flaws of worthy people. Those who ponder on the positive aspects are much more likely to be loyal, and they can even find some measure of happiness during the troublesome times of life.

**THE KEYS TO LOYALTY ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Merciful



**Mercy is a gift of relief to offenders
who are undeserving of it.**

Merciful: “Showing compassion for an offender or a victim of misfortune.”

It is easy to feel compassion for a victim of misfortune, when we define “victim” as one who had no part in causing the calamity. But true mercy can be seen after one feels compassion for someone who behaved foolishly, thoughtlessly, selfishly, or brashly. It is even rarer to find compassion for one who has behaved violently, deceitfully, with arrogance, or vengeance.

The difference between justice and mercy is this: Justice is expected and allowed for victims, who are considered as deserving of justice. **Mercy is a gift of relief to offenders who are undeserving of it.** The interesting thing is that mercy can only be given by the victim to the perpetrator. Therefore, in order to experience yourself as a merciful person, you will have to fall victim to another’s foul play, and then forgive them the emotional, physical, or financial debt that they actually owe you. Being merciful isn’t a pleasant circumstance in life, but it does have internal rewards.

The many steps which are required to exact the demands of justice take an additional toll upon the victim. Additional vexations may manifest along the way. When a victim chooses to enact justice instead of mercy, his satisfaction is postponed until the fulfillment of his expectations regarding the matter. Even after justice is satisfied, the victim frequently continues on with his suffering.

On the other hand, the decision to enact mercy can be made anywhere along the way. Most people find an immediate sense of relief once they have made this decision. They also feel a renewed sense of self esteem and self-respect that comes from within. These are feelings that cannot be bought or stolen. Such dignities are some of the priceless treasures and rewards of mercy.

Mercy is an action word. It involves sacrifice. Therefore, after *feeling* compassion, we must *show* compassion in order to claim mercifulness as a virtue. That is where appreciation of one’s own blessings is helpful. When you can feel for another’s sorrows, even those that they brought upon themselves, it is easier to want to relieve their suffering.

Frequently, we stop short of actually doing something about it, and we go back into our own circle of comfort. However, sometimes all it takes is a simple phone call or a note to yourself on your calendar to set the universe in motion, and the good works will follow. Some of the greatest memories one can have to look back on are the simple acts of kindness and mercy shown to another in need.

THE KEYS TO BEING MERCIFUL ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Obedient



It helps to ponder the consequences for disobedience.

Obedient: “To observe, follow, conform to, and comply with the commands or guidance of an authority, and to be submissive to its restraint or command.

Law: “A rule of conduct established and enforced by an authority; a scientific principle stating something that always works the same way under the same conditions.”

The first element in being obedient and law abiding is to have the guidance of an authority. In a democratic society, Governors of State and Governors of households have several things in common. They are considered authorities in their field, and they are in charge of making and upholding laws, whose purpose is to maintain the safety and organization of the people they are guiding. Both types of authorities can exercise consequences for the disobedient.

There is one major difference between each type of Governor in the eyes of their minions: one type of Governor is elected by common vote of the people, and the other is self-appointed. This is where dissention can occur. Whereas elected officials can be removed from office when their policies and practices are no longer accepted by the majority of people, self-appointed authorities (such as parents) are in power for life.

The second element of obedience is to understand the commands and restraints of the law. There is always a reason for a law; it usually has to do with an underlying theme of safety and organization. A State law that requires a car to come to a complete halt at a Stop sign is not unlike a parent’s law to be home by curfew. Both have the purpose of safety in mind, both for the individual and for others that the individual interacts with. All types of laws (and their consequences for disobedience) must be known and understood by those who are asked to abide by them.

The third element is to be submissive and to *always* comply with the commands. In choosing to be obedient to either an elected or a self-appointed authority, **it helps to ponder the consequences for disobedience.** When a set of parents establish a chore list for their children, they are not doing so for the purpose of getting slave labor. They are providing a nurturing environment for their children to learn fundamental principles about how the real world functions, so they can grow up to live independently and be self-sufficient. When a child is unable or unwilling to see the larger consequences for not abiding in a safe and orderly manner within the home, the parent may enforce a “reality check” by withholding privileges that the errant child had been taking for granted.

Both children and adults often find themselves in situations where they can choose to be disobedient without getting caught. It then becomes easy to discard the reason for the law in the first place. Nobility of character is the reward for wise choices in such situations. To strive for such excellence, acceptance of the authority (whether out of respect or fear), and appreciation (for the purpose of the laws) are again the underlying principles.

**THE KEYS TO OBEDIENCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Patient



Patience can only be practiced during times of stress.

Patient: “Bearing pain or trials without complaint; showing self-control by being calm and steadfastly persevering during trials.”

Patience is a celestial virtue that is difficult to perfect, even in a lifetime. As with many other virtues, patience stems from adversity. It is not needed when things are going according to plan. **It can only be practiced during times of stress.**

Patience has two main factors: persevering in the present moment (with hopes of a better future), and doing so without complaint.

Patience involves a lot of waiting. That means there will be an internal struggle between having your attention focused in the future, when in actuality, the only *real* time is the present. The time spent waiting for a better future can be squandered by spending it on anger, frustration, or boredom. A patient soul accepts uncomfortable waiting periods, and uses them to prepare for the next stages of life. By being appreciative of the blessings within the present moment, one can find some inner contentment and even joy while waiting.

Complaining is the first sign that acceptance and appreciation are lacking. It is likewise the first indicator that happiness is not present. To regain happiness, you can empower yourself at any time by removing complaints, first from your lips, and then from your thoughts. Some of life’s problems are brought upon us by ourselves or others. Much time on earth is wasted by looking for someone to hold responsible for undesirable situations. The faster you can accept the present circumstances, the faster you begin to cope with them. One can learn, as well, from negative experiences in life.

Patience is a very empowering personal asset to have among your characteristics. It frees you from anger and fear, allowing more happiness during moments that are otherwise lost to internal and external conflict. Misfortune is robbed of its impact when you bear your burdens with patience.

On your journey towards patience, take another look at those things which might be needlessly viewed as burdens, when they are actually blessings in disguise.

**THE KEYS TO PATIENCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Peaceful



Where your thoughts go, your emotions follow.

Peaceful: “A state of calm and quiet, free from disturbing thoughts or emotions.”

Inner peace is a function of both input and data processing.

What you put into your mind through your eyes and ears, such as music, television, books, newspapers, magazines, and conversations, has a powerful impact on your inner peace.

Consider the choices you make every day. Are there people in your life who constantly say things that drain your energy or stir up frustration or depression? Instead of taking information in without being selective, remember that everything that goes through your eyes and ears has an impact on your mental (and physical) health. Choose wisely.

Some unpleasant events cannot be avoided. Information from these experiences must then be processed in order to regain a peaceful state. Distressing circumstances are processed in the same way that grief is processed; the faster you reach the stage of acceptance, the faster you can feel free from being disturbed by the disquieting event.

Appreciation is then necessary in order to go from acceptance into happiness. **Where your thoughts go, your emotions follow.** When you think about your blessings, and appreciate what you still have, and realize how much worse your situation can be, you are lowering your expectations, making you more able to unite with a sense of satisfaction in the present tense. Trust in yourself; you have the ability to cope with every event in your life, and know that everything is going to be okay. Chances are, ten years from now, you won't even remember most of what is disturbing you at the moment.

When you limit the amount of disturbing thoughts that go into your eyes and ears, and then process the ones that get in by focusing on acceptance and appreciation, you are more readily able to enter into a state of calm and quiet, free from disturbing thoughts and emotions. You can become more peaceful today.

**THE KEYS TO PEACEFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Peace-Maker



The best truces end with dignity in tact for all.

Peace-Maker: “One who commonly steps in to negotiate an argument, to stop a fight, or supervise a truce.”

Many people are peaceful with their own relationships, but whenever other people are included in one’s life, there is bound to be a contention periodically. Such occurrences are painful for a peaceful person to observe.

Those who choose a lifestyle of a hermit tend to withdraw from humanity for such reasons. However, one with a truly loving heart will bear the pain of it and do something to resolve the situation. In some cases, the initial motivating factor might be for their own benefit; they are healing themselves as they heal others. Whatever the reason, their cause is to restore peace.

For one who commonly steps in to negotiate, there must be a great deal of acceptance and tolerance for both sides, for either side will retaliate against the negotiator who seems partial to the opponent. Good negotiations proceed when both sides feel that they are being heard and understood by a neutral party who seeks for a peaceful conclusion that both sides can live with. **The best truces end with dignity in tact for all.**

In all probability, the peace-maker has his or her own opinion on many matters, but diplomacy requires a demonstration of understanding for both sides. Acceptance and tolerance for both sides of a dispute stem from understanding how each side feels.

Most peace-makers are not professional diplomats. This quality is commonly found in parents, siblings, neighbors, managers, spouses, and co-workers in everyday situations. Everyone has seen a peacemaker in action. The charismatic ones are the first to be called back in when a fresh debate breaks out.

This asset can be particularly useful for parents who are involved in the argument with a child, and still want to find a way to regain a peaceful resolution. When challenged to play a “tug-of-war” game, the first thing a peacemaker will do is drop the rope. When the first words out of their mouth is “I understand what you mean”, and then they accurately describe how the person feels, the opposition disappears somewhat because the aggressive one is no longer viewing the opponent as a distant, threatening, and aggressive force that does not understand the situation from their perspective.

Once the aggressor agrees that his views are being heard and understood, a measure of respect has been granted. After this groundwork has been established, it is possible to explain your own viewpoint, and use gentle wisdom to try to gain persuasion. A peace-maker appreciates people for who they are. Negotiating peace is extra work, but once an “enemy” is conquered by friendship and mutual respect, future conflicts come to swifter resolutions, since the foundation of acceptance and appreciation has already been laid.

**THE KEYS TO PEACE-MAKING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Prayerful



Start every prayer with an expression of gratitude.

Prayerful: “To regularly and devoutly ask or thank God earnestly for something.”

The power of prayer can create miracles in our lives and even in our personalities. Prayer is magnified with faith. Any prayer is an act of faith in itself, but to increase our faith in asking for what we need, there are steps we can take along the way.

When we **start every prayer with an expression of gratitude** before we ask for what we need, we get closer to serenity because we are dwelling on the things we already have that we appreciate. When we are satisfied and grateful for what we recognize has already been given to us, we feel loved by God, and therefore we feel closer to Him

To proceed in our prayer by pondering our shortcomings brings us to a state of humility. When we feel and express sorrow for our shortcomings, and reconsider the choices we have made recently, it provides a time for reflection that can be instrumental in motivating us to improve our personality.

After expressing appreciation and reflecting on our errors as part of every prayer, we can feel much more comfortable about asking God for our heart’s desires in righteousness. Some people don’t want to ask God for small things, like help in finding lost car keys, but others are comfortable asking for assistance in all kinds of things, leaving it to their Creator to answer “yes”, “no”, or “not right now”. Acceptance of God’s Will, having faith in His love for us, provides comfort at the end of every prayer.

Devotion in prayer can be expressed by kneeling; this is a good practice on a daily basis, for one who feels reverent tends to feel more comfortable and has less trouble understanding that they are loved by God. However, additional prayers throughout the day must surely be welcome as well. Many prayers have been said when driving, doing dishes and laundry, gardening, and even showering. Prayer can be individual or linked with others. When a group of people join forces by putting their minds and hearts together in a positive, powerful direction, miracles have been known to happen. Some pray out loud, others in silence. The only failed prayer is the one that goes unsaid.

One thing that faithful prayers have in common is earnestness. The more desperate one feels they need God’s assistance, the more faith one tends to express in that prayer. Trying to impose our Will on God will cause us much stress. He loves us! When He says “no”, it’s for a reason.

Praying with frequency helps. Just like a car needs regular maintenance, so do our spirits. If we make a habit of expressing our appreciation with equal fervor when we have no troubles, and accept that He loves us no matter what, we open the door to happiness and on a daily basis.

**THE KEYS TO PRAYERFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Problem-solver



The problem-solver spends almost no time denying that a problem exists, nor does he waste much energy pointing the finger of blame.

Problem-solver: “One who seeks to find the solutions to unsettling questions which are a source of puzzlement or vexation.”

Everyone is plagued with problems at various points in life, but people react to adversity differently. Some people give in, withdraw, get angry, or feel depressed. Some add to the troubles of others by complaining in self-pity. The problem-solver is one who has come to terms with accepting the difficulty and takes steps to resolve the situation.

The problem-solver spends almost no time denying that a problem exists, nor does he waste much energy pointing the finger of blame. He quickly rolls up his sleeves and gets to work on finding a solution. The rest of us do that, too, but only after much time and energy has been squandered in denial, fear, anger, and depression.

Once the problem is accepted, we can *all* become problem-solvers. The key to being skilled in this area is to accept the problem *quickly*.

Those who have this as an attribute are usually very willing to help others as well. Frequently, they go in to comfort someone else, and leave feeling comforted themselves. There is a great deal of satisfaction in a job well done, especially when it helps another.

We all can grow through struggling with problems. Problems can actually be gifts that merely need to be unwrapped.

**THE KEY TO PROBLEM-SOLVING IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Prompt



**Those who are prompt have
put some effort in ahead of time.**

Prompt: “Being ready and quick to act, being on time, performing things immediately”

When a schedule exists, a deadline exists, and there also will be a consequence for lateness. A person who is chronically late has priorities which are out of order. Their main concern is for themselves, with little regard for the effect their lateness has on the feelings and the lives of others. A person who thinks that there will be no consequences for this behavior has a grandiose opinion that the world cannot do without him.

Those who are prompt have put some effort in ahead of time. They made themselves *ready* to be on time. For one to be concerned about being punctual, one must feel some appreciation for how his or her actions affect others. They also appreciate a sense of dignity about personal responsibility and integrity.

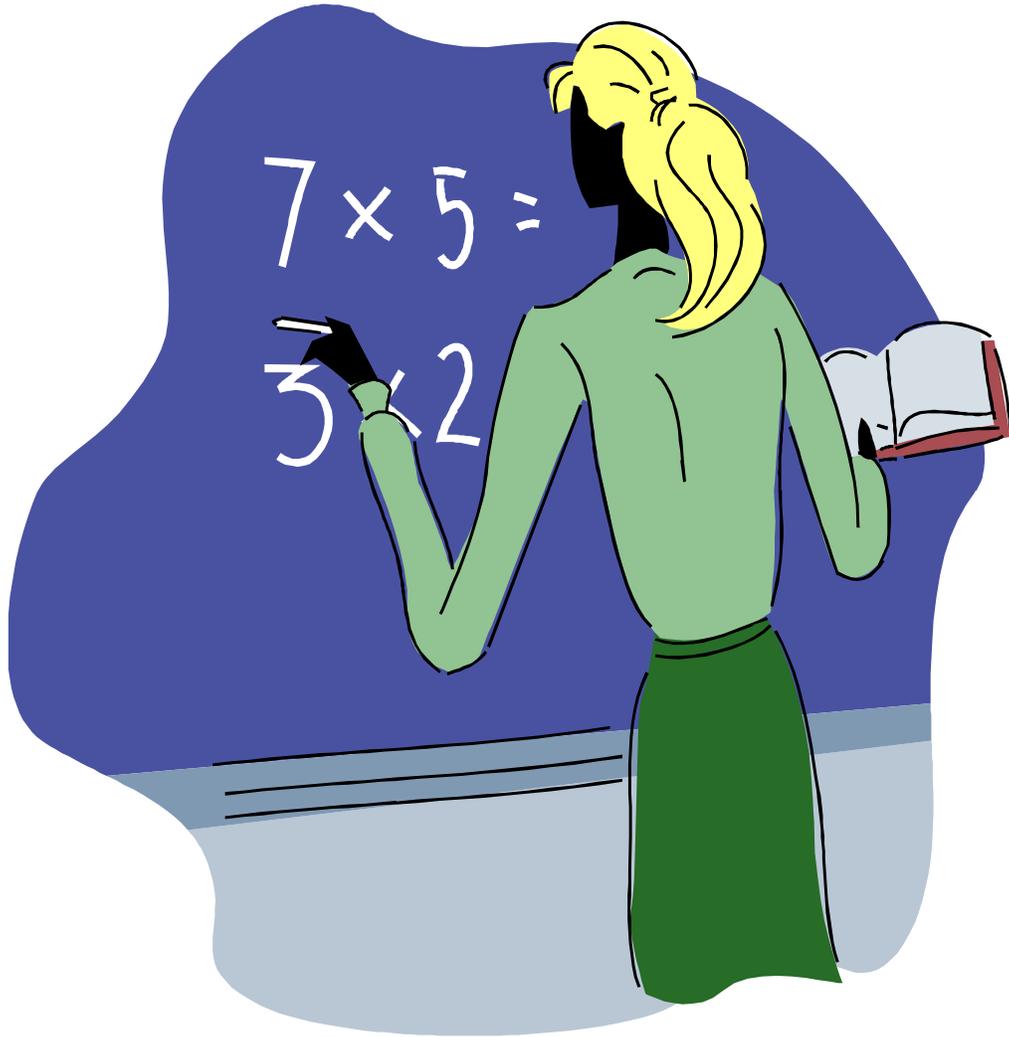
Preparation for promptness is not sufficient without action. Once you have solidified such plans, you must follow up with quick actions that achieve the goal. Being prompt is not only being on time; it also involves performing tasks immediately.

Procrastination always contains an element of fear. Once this fear is embraced by a thorough reflection of the consequences, it can be broken down sufficiently to make some progress. When one chooses to delay one’s responsibility, one must be ready and willing to accept full responsibility for the consequences.

Therefore, some thoughtful consideration of the problems that your delays cause others is necessary in order to motivate a change in behavior. After understanding the consequences, one must accept the responsibility for the pain that is caused in others by this lack of promptness. When you possess a true appreciation for the value of others in your life, and when you have a true appreciation for the value of promptness in being a factor of personal integrity, you will be able to claim promptness as an asset in your personal inventory.

**THE KEYS TO PROMPTNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Realistic



**Being realistic involves two things:
facing facts and dealing with them.**

Realistic: “Facing facts and dealing with them practically.”

Being realistic involves two things: facing facts and dealing with them.

Acceptance plays a major role in this personality asset. Before you can accept a fact, you have to have accurate perceptions. Facts substantiate reality, and they can be used to unravel distorted perceptions. Sometimes, others can provide more accurate perceptions than you have; be open to listening to such thoughts by those who care for you.

When the facts seem to conflict, try writing them down; it gives you distance from them, and allows you to condense overwhelming information onto paper that looks easier to handle. Fears can diminish merely by writing them down and challenging them.

When you find yourself with inaccurate perceptions, but you continue to hang onto them, you have to figure out what your payoff is in being unrealistic. You have inside you all the clues you need to unlock such mysteries.

Facing the facts means that you have reached acceptance. This is where coping begins. The first step in coping is the same as the second step in being realistic: dealing with reality in a practical manner.

Something is practical when it is useful toward a desired result. It involves taking action. This step requires acceptance as well; not all necessary measures toward a desired end result are pleasant. A realistic person will face this fact, too, and take such steps despite the discomfort, keeping his eyes on the bigger picture.

A realistic person spends little time assigning blame, complaining, wishing the situation was different, or other thoughts that are based in the past tense. Realism is acceptance of the present, with no strings attached. It is also moving toward the future with hope.

**THE KEY TO BEING REALISTIC IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Relationships



In good relationships, everyone involved is benefited.

Relationships: “Being connected by an understood bond” within a family, circle of friends, or other common condition.

Good: “Having a favorable character or tendency; being suitable, agreeable, pleasant, commendable, kind, and loyal, having benefit to those involved.”

Relationships involve a connection with others, whether they are family, friends, or those who share common conditions. That means you can even have the chance to develop a good relationship during an elevator ride, or in line at the grocery store! Considering that you never know when or where you will meet your new best friend, it’s a good idea to seek for such bonds in every occasion.

Good relationships have several things in common. One is that **everyone involved is benefited**. Relationships all have their ups and downs, but those that are generally beneficial have a tendency to be favorable in character most of the time. Each participant feels that they are understood, accepted, and appreciated. Some relationships begin because they are mutually suitable, meaning that they meet the needs and desires of each other. Others begin a relationship because it is pleasant and agreeable. Still others are commendable, in that they are praiseworthy of committing to one another’s care.

All good relationships involve kindness and loyalty. For these qualities to continue throughout the years, acceptance of one another’s faults, tolerance of their weaknesses, and appreciation of their virtues, must continue to be nurtured, or else the relationship will deteriorate. In order to remain cognizant of the importance of the relationships in life, we must keep in mind our priorities. Consider your values as those which will bring you the most satisfaction during your declining years. It’s not our success in careers, accomplishments, or finances that will matter. It’s the people we have loved and who we have been loved by that enrich our life.

Sometimes, we put more effort into our casual relationships with neighbors and coworkers than we do with our more significant relationships at home. When we get distracted by work, duties, and hobbies, the first people to get short-changed are those we take for granted, such as family, spouse, children, and friends. When other responsibilities take our time and energy, our loved ones do understand... for a while.

However, even a plant needs water and nutrients now and then. If we don’t take care of our closest relationships with regular attention, they will wilt as well. When you turn down the extra hours (and money) at work so that you can be home for dinner, you are moving your family up on your priority list.

When your priorities of today are in tune with your priorities of tomorrow, you won’t die with any regrets. Giving your most important relationships your love and attention will count as your greatest success of your life.

THE KEYS TO GOOD RELATIONSHIPS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Respect



You cannot demand respect; you must earn it.

Respected: “Considered to be of high value, to be admired and shown decent and correct conduct.”

Respectful: “To show deference or courteous submission to the opinion or wishes of one who is considered to be of high value, and is admired.”

Respect is a value that is highly sought after but less frequently found. Everyone wants to be admired, considered highly valued, and shown decent and correct conduct. But respect is a virtue that is assigned by others. It's *their* estimation of you that counts.

You cannot demand respect; you must earn it.

One can be respected for a single outstanding quality, but to be generally respected by others, one must have a great number of noble qualities. If even one characteristic of a person is flawed, that much respect is lost as well.

In order to be respected, you have to be respectful to others in the first place. People only admire those who love them and others. How Much Respect Do You Want?

The Qualities of a Respected Person

Accepting of others' beliefs and behavior of things you would not do yourself.

Chivalrous: Marked by courtesy and generosity.

Discrete: Respect for another's privacy and feelings.

Protective of others: Desire to shield others from injury or harm.

Finishes what he/she starts: Does not burden others with completing his projects.

Team player: Allows others to contribute.

Offers good suggestions: Has a desire to improve another's situation.

Never hurts another's feelings: Considerate of how others feel. Everyone leaves feeling good about themselves.

Never talks down to people; talks on their level: Sensitive in communicating ideas.

Speaks up to benefit others: Will not remain silent when others will either suffer or not gain a proper advantage.

Has proper time for others: Shows concern for all others in his life; shows that he values them by spending an agreeable amount of time as is respectable.

Organizer and planner: A respected person is a leader, and takes an active part in life.

Achieves his own goals: Does what he says he'll do, with persistent effort.

Work ethic: Doesn't waste time, he spends it being constructive.

Flexible, open-minded: Shows consideration for each individual.

Forgiving: Willing to let go of offenses, placing relationships ahead of his pain.

Disciplined, will-power: Not letting emotions pull him away from his goals.

Devoted to his causes: Doesn't lose interest, maintains effort.

No hidden agendas for personal gain at others' expense: A respected person earns what he has, and has nothing to hide.

Altruistic: Strong empathy with humanity, desiring for all people to be better off.

Financially Responsible: Lives within his means, pays others what he owes.

Thoughtful: Alert, notices things to benefit others.

Tolerant: Gets along well with others in all walks of life; the poor, rich, sick,

immigrants, other religions, races, ages.

Performs at the best of his ability: A person with little ability can still earn a great deal of respect by consistently doing the best that he can.

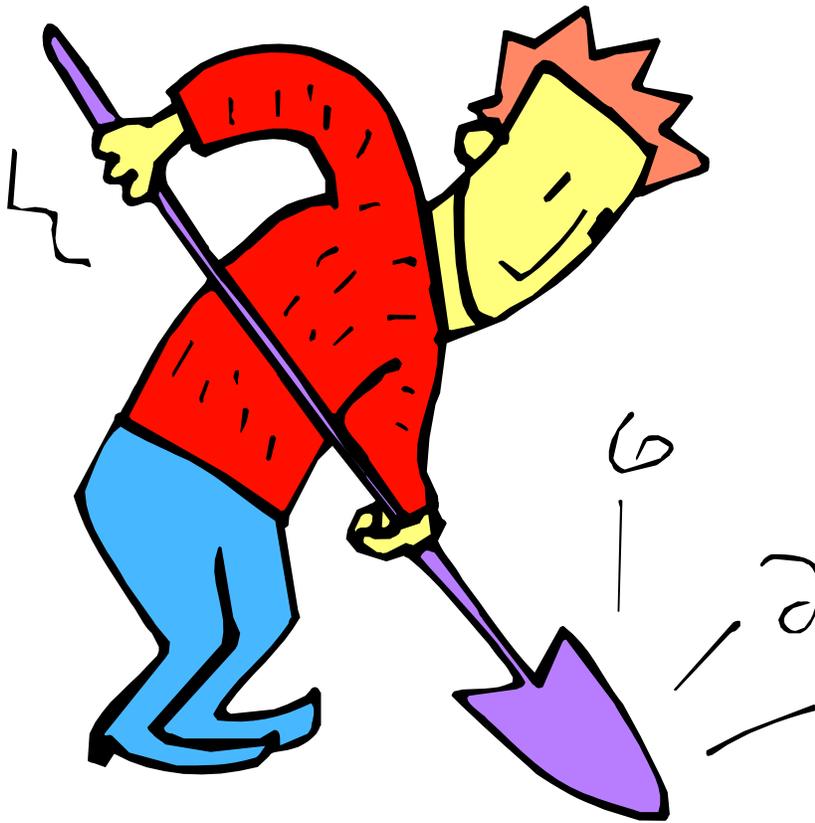
Understanding: Pays attention to the viewpoints of others, giving it proper consideration; grasps the meaning of what they say.

In a family, a respected person is easy to live with. They can even be involved in an argument, without losing respect because they present their opinion in a courteous manner: They don't belittle the other person, they don't hit, and they never curse at the other person. When their opinion is expressed with consideration for the other, their point of view may even be accepted; when it is not, they don't hold a grudge.

In seeking respect in others, you have to consider this: How much respect do you show? In the qualities of a respected person, acceptance tops the list. People respect those whom they admire, and others cannot admire someone who does not accept and appreciate them the way they are.

**THE KEYS TO RESPECT ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Sacrificing



**The person who offers a sacrifice
has a vision for the future.**

Sacrificing: “Offering something precious, causing a loss or deprivation to oneself, in hopes of a better end, cause, or ideal.”

There is no such thing as sacrifice. By its very definition, although sacrifice means surrendering something precious, it is given up in order to get something better in the end.

Sacrifices are a matter of cost for value. For something to be worth sacrificing, a worthwhile payoff must be reasonably expected. **The person who offers a sacrifice has a vision for the future.** They see a way that they can affect a better end; they have hope in an ideal. Although they cause themselves to be deprived, they find satisfaction in their cause.

The outcome for sacrifice is wide and varied. Studious young people sacrifice the pleasures their peers enjoy so that they can pursue a college education that will reward them in the future. Single parents work long hours to save money for a better life for their children. Some people sacrifice their savings account to give to those in need.

Sacrifices cannot be demanded; they are freely offered by the one from whom the cost is incurred. People who sacrifice are at peace with themselves. They enjoy happiness from serenity of their own device. One who deprives themselves for a better outcome later must be realistic in their expectations. The future can be tenuous, and if there is any uncertainty in its outcome, the person who sacrifices must accept that their investment may not reach the full maturity of their hopes. When one can appreciate the value in the *act* of sacrifice, they can enjoy their reward in the process, instead of the outcome.

Many sacrifices take the form of service. This is a sure way to increase one’s spirituality. Service not only benefits others, it also refines and purifies the servant. In this way, sacrifice can bring out the best in each of us. We begin to look at the needs of others instead of our own comforts. As we are prompted to consider the needs of others, we forget our own sorrows for a while.

Sacrifice involves appreciation for three aspects: whatever is given up, whatever is gained, and the person or persons who receive the benefit. This process takes some introspection for the person who wishes to have a character that is willing to sacrifice for a better cause. Without appreciation for the value of the outcome, no one would sacrifice anything of consequence. And without appreciating the value of what is given up, there is no real sacrifice involved.

**THE KEYS TO SACRIFICE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Self-Confident



**Self-confidence can be gained from errors
as well as sound judgment.**

Self-Confident: “Self-assurance, trust, reliance”

Self confidence is based on trust in oneself. “Trust” means having a basis for belief in the character, strength, or truth of someone. In order to trust yourself, you have to have a history of experiences that have given you confidence in your abilities. Although your abilities have a basis in the past, a self-confident person uses this as reason to believe in his capabilities for future outcomes.

Having assurance means to feel secure. It does not have to mean there is *insurance*; uncertainty is always woven into human character. A self-confident person does not have to trust that a desired result *will* occur; he just has to trust in his ability to deal with whatever outcomes he finds himself faced with. Self-confidence is not based on external rewards; it comes from within.

Reliance means to depend on something; the desired outcome is based or contingent upon who is relied upon. When a person is self-confident, he places his trust on his own shoulders and manages whatever the consequences are of his decisions. There is no disempowerment for one who does not assign responsibility or blame to others. Happiness is within the control of the self-confident individual.

Although disappointments are inevitable within the realm of human frailty, the self-confident person feels satisfaction in the process, not the results. Acceptance of one’s errors as a part of the learning process only serves to strengthen one’s wisdom; therefore, **self-confidence can be gained from errors as well as sound judgment.** Although we can learn from the wisdom of others, self-confidence can only be gained by doing things independently.

For children to be taught to appreciate themselves, they need to be given opportunities to try things with their own efforts. With too much supervision over too great a period of time, the child will learn dependence instead of self-confidence. This can lead into adulthood as well. To develop self-assurance, an individual needs to accept all outcomes as manageable and within his capabilities to deal with.

When a person learns to appreciate himself as a worthwhile, capable human being with a lot to offer, accepting his weaknesses and limitations, he can go forth into the world as an individual, imbued with self-confidence. Such a person will find happiness more easily along the way.

THE KEYS TO SELF-CONFIDENCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Self-disciplined



**Self discipline usually entails
a certain amount of discomfort at first.**

Self-Disciplined: “Training to correct, mold, or perfect oneself by obedience.”

We are already quite self-disciplined; we tend to do what we really want to do. The word “disciple” means one who follows another. To be self-disciplined is to follow yourself. The path to self-discipline is being *aware* of what we really want to do. For example, we may think we want to diet and exercise to lose weight, but when we choose instead to be still and eat, we *are* doing what we *really* want to do. If you wish to change your mind about poor health habits, you must accept this change as what you really want to do. The same can be said from smoking to nail-biting; from disorder to responsibility.

Obedience is the pivotal word in the definition of “self-disciplined”. If you are not doing what you had decided to do because other emotions seem to change your mind, you never really decided to do otherwise in the first place. It wasn’t a weak emotion that caused this change; it was never a strong will to begin with. Self discipline is doing what you don’t feel like doing right now, but it is what you decided to do earlier.

When your boss makes a rule, when you are obedient, you follow it. You choose this deference when you really want to follow the rule. Some people choose obedience because of the consequences of conformity. For instance, a man stays at a job he doesn’t like, because he wants the money.

Others choose obedience out of fear of the consequences of noncompliance. An example of this is a motorist who wants to speed, and would if he could get away with it, yet he chooses not to, because he is afraid of getting a ticket.

Then, there are some who are obedient because they are in complete agreement with the law. This is the case when a motorist has no desire to go beyond the posted speed limit, because he knows that is the safe and proper pace for that road condition. He would not exceed the limit, even if he knew he would not get caught. No matter what the reason, we all do what we really want to do. When you make a rule for yourself, you will follow it, *if* it is what you really want to do.

When we set a goal that involves self-discipline and fall short of it in our endeavor, the least we can do is have acceptance and appreciation of our own good intentions for ourselves. Remember, two steps forward and one step back is still making progress! Keep yourself in contact for the reason for your goal in the first place. Then look at why you changed your mind and “failed” at achieving your goal. The real reason is, *you changed your mind*. You decided that you would rather have a different action than the one you intended earlier. In the end, you always do what you really want to do.

Self discipline usually entails a certain amount of discomfort at first. If you want to improve self-discipline, you must completely accept the reasons why you are setting your goal, and you must appreciate the consequences of sticking with it.

**THE KEYS TO SELF-DISCIPLINE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRETIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS**

Self-Esteem



The rescuers of 911 give 100% effort to every person without prejudice or judgment because each and every soul is of infinite worth.

Self-Esteem: “Having a high regard, or value, on oneself; self-respect.”

If you are suffering from poor self-esteem, you must be basing your values on an unsteady foundation. If your values are looks, athleticism, talents, skills, approval from others, social skills, etc, you are not seeing your true worth at all! Your worth is in your soul.

When “Baby Jessica” fell down the well in 1987, all America tuned in and watched with concern. Many companies sent million-dollar machines across the country to aid in the three-day rescue effort. Prayers poured out from every heart in the world. It’s easy for all to see the value of an innocent child.

But it doesn’t stop there. In 1989, San Francisco was hit with a deadly earthquake that collapsed the two-tier Bay Bridge. The news featured a particular car that was suspended precariously between life and death, hanging over the bay. As the hours rolled by, television sets all over America were tuned in, and the conversation in the streets turned from “Nice weather we’re having” to, “Did they get that guy out of the car on the bridge?” All sorts of rescue divisions were sent in to assist, and no expenses were spared.

What was not reported were such things as the age of the man in the car, his race, creed, nationality, past history, social status, personality, or occupation. The reason for this is simple. **The rescuers of 911 give 100% effort to every person without prejudice or judgment because each and every soul is of infinite worth.**

What you do with your life reflects your values. Who you are as a person is revealed through your attributes, which consist of assets as well as flaws. One way to increase your self-esteem is to make a list of virtues and attributes that you would like to have. List as many as you can think of. Then list them in order of priority. Select just one from your top-ten list, and focus on that aspect of your personality. As you work on developing these attributes, you will develop a sense of accomplishment, self-discipline, and control over your self, your life, your personality, and therefore, your destiny. Your self-esteem should improve with time as you mark your progress, and your self-esteem will be based on who you are, and not on superficial things, such as what you look like, or what others think of you.

Regardless of what point you are at in your progress, remember that you are of infinite worth just by being a member of the human race, and therefore, a Child of God. It is important to accept yourself as you are. When a baby first learns to walk, he takes a few steps, loses his balance, falls, cries, and eventually gets up and tries again. Just because he frequently stumbles does not make him any less perfect. The same is true of adults. After all, no matter how old we get, we are still infants in the Eternal scale of things.

Some people already have many virtues, but their perceptions of themselves are distorted, and therefore, they see themselves in a negative light. To change these inaccurate perceptions, they need to written down and challenged. The act of writing down things that cause unpleasant emotions allows one to step back and observe them with more objectivity and less pain. Once they are in writing, be your own defense attorney, and challenge them

for accuracy, as though you were defending someone else. If you still wish to cling to negative perceptions of your self which are inaccurate, it's time to start understanding what your payoff is for maintaining these inaccurate perceptions. There is a reason why you like to keep this negativity within your self-esteem. Perhaps it serves you to keep other people, situations, or events at a safe distance from yourself.

There are vices in all walks of life. Those who are educated wish to brag, and to be admired. The uneducated try to appear to be wise. The rich want to be respected for their wealth. The poor want to appear wealthy, to gain the acceptance of the rich. The powerful seek to be respected, feared, worshipped, and obeyed. In fact, all of them are trying to appear to be what they are not. Whether one is educated or not, rich or poor, powerful or meek, only those who are truly humble are what they appear to be.

Marking our progress by noting our improvements over the years allows us to appreciate ourselves right now. It also helps us to accept ourselves as we are, knowing that we are gradually improving. Those who believe in Eternal Life know that we have a long time to perfect ourselves; that gives us a reason to be a little more patient with our flaws....for now!

**THE KEYS TO SELF-ESTEEM ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Thoughtful/Considerate



**A thoughtful person spends at least part of his time
focused on someone other than himself.**

Thoughtful/Considerate: “Absorbed by thought, careful in thinking, observant of and attentive to the rights and feelings of others.”

To be considerate, one must first be thoughtful. Such a person takes time for internal reflection to contemplate the situation of others. During these quiet moments of introspection, the thoughtful one is absorbed and focuses carefully on someone other than himself.

His thoughts during this solitude include being attentive to the rights of others. Many people in the world suffer indignities that are heaped upon them by circumstances. A thoughtful person who sees this does not merely turn away. With some contemplation, the thoughtful people of the world have gathered together in groups of like-mindedness, and a great deal of compassionate service is even now changing the tide of others who are less fortunate. This could not have been done without thoughtfulness and consideration.

He also spends time paying attention to how others are feeling. **A thoughtful person spends at least part of his time focused on someone other than himself.** The reason for this is that he *cares*. Compassion is another asset that usually accompanies thoughtfulness. One who pays attention to how others are feeling does so because he is concerned about their welfare.

Being observant is a precursor to thoughtfulness. You can be more thoughtful about someone you know well. Take advantage of the time you spend together to get to know your acquaintances better. Physical mannerisms offer clues to how people are feeling. Being observant can open the doors to dialogue that can tune you in to another person. When adding these observations with quiet moments of consideration, a thoughtful person can come up with ideas that will touch the hearts of others. Acting on inspiration can lead to rich lifetime memories for all involved.

Acceptance of circumstances as they are, and of individuals as they are, is important in order to be a thoughtful person. One who does not yet accept things as they are will still waste their time wishing things were different, complaining, or assigning blame. Once the stage of acceptance is reached, coping can begin, and it starts with thoughtful consideration of the feelings of others.

Appreciation for the value and welfare of others is the substance of thoughtfulness. One cannot be considerate of things of little consequence. The more important a person is in your life, the more time is needed to be spent focusing on what you can do to make them feel better for having known you. In this, there is a whole world of happiness to claim as your own.

THE KEYS TO THOUGHTFULNESS ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Tolerance



**Tolerance, by its very definition,
implies some type of annoyance or disagreement.**

Tolerant: “Sympathy or indulgence for, or enduring another’s beliefs or practices which are different from your own; the allowable deviation from standard; the ability to become less responsive over time.”

The world is filled with billions of people, and no two are alike. Each one has a personality which is uniquely different from every other. While encompassing the entire range of behaviors is impossible for descriptive purposes, societies around the globe have their own, unwritten idea of what acceptable, standard behavior is.

However, out of all of the thoughts, words, and deeds of each of these billions of individuals, only a certain number fall into the category of “standard behavior” at any given time. All the rest of these behaviors that deviate from standard are opportunities for us to practice tolerance.

Tolerance, by its very definition, implies some type of annoyance or disagreement. Ordinarily, annoyance produces a predictable response, such as anger or frustration. But there is another reaction that can be *deliberately chosen*: Tolerance.

It takes practice to develop this attribute, and unfortunately, practice requires something to practice with. To become tolerant, you must be exposed to other people whose thoughts, words, deeds, beliefs, or practices are annoying or disagreeable. Do you have such people in your life? If so, you have the opportunity to become a tolerant person. Since you are being exposed to such vexations anyway, it’s better to practice tolerance than to live in anger and frustration.

Also by definition, tolerance has the innate ability to make one less responsive over time. After practicing indulgence for others, rather than indulgence for your own temper, you should find yourself bothered less and less by the common annoyances in everyday life. However, like a muscle, using tolerance may initially make you feel stiff and sore! But patient perseverance will turn your weakness into strength, and as a side effect, a big chunk of anger and frustration within your life will now be sliding off your shoulders with merely a shrug.

Acceptance is the key to this marvelous, new method of thinking. You don’t have to agree with another person’s way of being; you merely accept them as they are. To practice tolerance, decide to allow others to indulge themselves in their own whims. You do not need to actively participate in their lifestyle. Just listen politely and attentively to what they wish to talk about (or leave them alone if they so desire). If they decide to go out and do something that you would not do yourself, just be a shoulder to lean on if they wind up suffering some unpleasant consequences. Cheer them up when they are down, encourage them when they seek good paths, and advise them when they are receptive to it. After giving them wings, let them fly where they may.

People learn from the consequences of their own choices, both good and ill. Their character is formed from the sum total of all of their life experiences. They came into your life partly molded before they met you, so just accept them for who they are now. There is

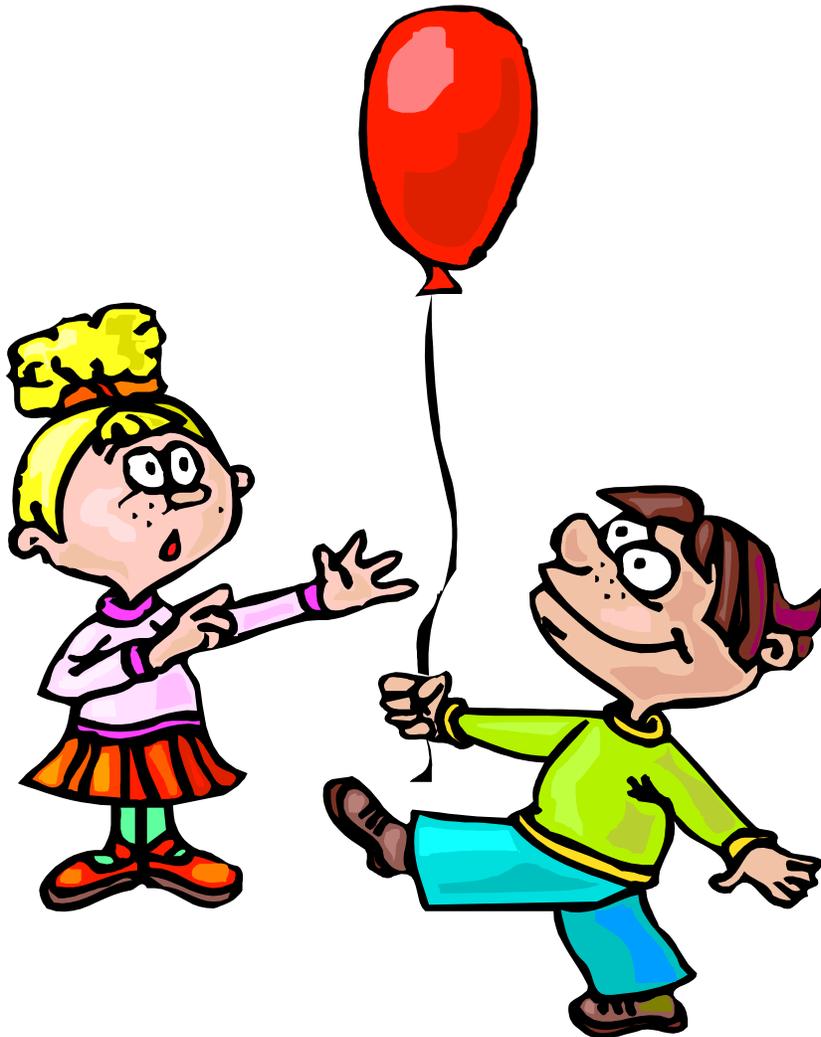
hardly anything nicer than having a friend or relative who loves you unconditionally. Be that friend to all you meet, and your unspoken example will heal those who are injured, guide those who have strayed, and lift those who are not at your level. By loving people unconditionally, and appreciating them just as they are, you will do more than heal one soul; you will help to heal the world as well, one person at a time.

(1 Corinthians 13:4-7.)

Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

**THE KEYS TO TOLERANCE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Trusting



Trust issues are about trusting yourself to deal with other people, whether they prove themselves to be trustworthy or not.

Trusting: Having a basis for an assured faith, hope, or reliance on the character, strength, or truth of someone or something. To believe in and extend credit to another. To place confidence in someone to stay or go without fear or misgiving.

Having a basis of assurance in anything implies that there is some history to use as a foundation. Thus, trust comes with experience; both of your own past and the previous actions of the one with whom you are considering placing your trust.

Trust involves extending credit to another, whether monetary or not. A lender of money requires some substance from the borrower to submit as proof that the loan will be repaid as agreed. Likewise, one who gives another person credit in character must base this decision on some substance as well. Both creditors base their decision on the past credit history of the debtor.

This makes trust an issue for both parties. The one who requests the trust is in a helpless state, as is the one who has decided to extend the trust. Reliance in any form involves vulnerability.

Many personal relationships contain trust issues. Everyone would like to go through life with confidence that their partner will be loyal. But human beings have free agency, and no one has a guarantee in the actions of another. The biggest fear in trusting a person is not whether they will stay or go; the fear is what will you *do* if they go?

Being trusting is *not* a matter of trust in other people. **It's about trusting yourself to deal with other people, whether they prove themselves to be trustworthy or not.** You have survived misplaced trust before; you can do it again. Trust yourself to be able to cope with whatever circumstances befall you. If you are fearful of this, make a plan for what you will do if your fears come true. A well-thought out plan will eliminate such fears, empowering you with a tremendous ability to trust in *yourself*.

Acceptance is important key to trust, because you have to accept other people the way that they are. Trying to change them is what causes your grief. It is much safer to trust yourself by accepting your own abilities to cope with all circumstances in which you find yourself.

Appreciation for the individuality of others and appreciation for yourself and your abilities to cope will help you to journey through time with self-confidence. In trusting yourself, you can find freedom to appreciate happiness on a daily basis as you move forward in life without fear.

**THE KEYS TO TRUSTING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.**

Trustworthy



**People who are trustworthy
must be predictable in their behavior.**

Trustworthy: “Assured reliance on the character, strength, or truth of someone or something; a basis of faith or hope leading to confidence, without fear or misgiving.”

There are those who are generally mistrustful of others. This usually is the result of bad experiences; however, one who does not trust anyone at all tends to act with suspicion. If you act suspicious of others, you may lead people to believe that you are not trustworthy yourself, for one who thinks ill of others does so because it is a reflection of what is in his own heart. It is not so important that you *find* trustworthy people as it is to feel confident that you can *deal* with untrustworthy people when they manifest. This is the responsibility of each individual.

A person who is trustworthy is one in whom others have confidence in his honesty *and* in his actions. You can be honest without being trustworthy, but you cannot be trustworthy without being honest. Being trustworthy is a step above honesty. It is all-inclusive. It reflects the overall integrity of a person’s behavior. Trustworthiness is difficult to perfect in every aspect. Except for God, who is completely trustworthy in all ways? However, striving for perfection in this way makes for a responsible person. Trustworthy people can quickly rise to success, both in business and in personal relationships. **People who are trustworthy must be predictable in their behavior.**

Self-sufficiency is a good thing, but not the only thing. An emotionally secure person feels comfortable asking for needed help. It does *not* indicate weakness, but strength. Acceptance of another’s help or advice is the first step to trusting them. This always has to be tempered by your own best judgment, and it doesn’t hurt to have a contingency plan, in case the person in whom you have placed your trust does not live up to your expectations. When your investment in trust turns out to be misplaced, the key to returning to a state of peace is acceptance. You must renegotiate your idea of what reality is, regarding the trustworthiness of that individual. Just as it takes time to earn a person’s confidence, once trust is lost, it takes time to regain.

To regain the trust of an offended individual, one must follow the same steps as the four principles of repentance. First, there should be an admission of wrongdoing by the offender. Second, there must be a cessation of the inappropriate behavior. Third, restitution must be made to the fullest extent possible. Fourth, asking for forgiveness helps to smooth over the remaining rough spots in the relationship, and tends to lead to the granting of another chance. A person who has admitted his guilt, stopped the behavior, and satisfactorily completed restitution, *deserves* to be forgiven. In this way, trust has an opportunity to be restored, as it should be.

However, if the one who breached the trust has followed these four steps fully and is still not forgiven, it then falls upon him to accept this as the consequences of his actions. For some people who are offended, time needs to pass with a display of consistently trustworthy behavior. Unfortunately, there are some people who never forgive. In any case, the one who fully repented of the violation needs to carry on without guilt, letting the painful experience build in him a stronger character. Such individuals usually do not transgress again.

It is important to be trustworthy for the sake of others. Your lack of responsibility may have a profound cumulative effect on another person. You might be just the last person in a long line of others who have violated an individual's trust, thereby being the straw that broke the camel's back. On the other hand, if you are trustworthy, you can be the one who reassures the frightened soul that there are still honorable people in the world.

**THE KEY TO REGAINING TRUST IS ACCEPTANCE.
ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS**

Understanding



**Until you know what another person's situation is,
and how they are feeling about it,
you cannot expect to understand them.**

Understanding: “Tolerant, sympathetic acceptance of another person’s feelings or situation.”

There cannot be understanding without first being knowledge. Clear communication must be present in the first place. **Until you know what another person’s situation is, and how they are feeling about it, you cannot expect to understand them.**

Once you think that you know the circumstances and feelings of another, you may feel inclined to jump in and advice them on what you would do. However, this may not go over well if the person feels judged by you. Many people fall into ill times because they did something to bring it upon themselves. In order to feel understood, a person must feel accepted.

Acceptance of the other person’s feelings is the prime consideration in being a supportive individual. Being an understanding person is an asset that is assigned to you by others. They will not feel understood unless they feel validated by your acceptance.

After knowing how they feel and accepting them as they are, it is also important to feel tolerance for them in their plight. Tolerance, however, implies the presence of some annoyance. It contains an element of judgment that the other person has done something you would not have done. If you look back and remember that you gained your wisdom by making perhaps the same types of errors, tolerance is easier to attain without judgment.

Sympathy is the next step after tolerance. When you can relate something in your own past experiences to what they are going through now, you are more able to empathize with them. With sympathy comes compassion, which motivates to action. One who truly understands a person, accepts them, and sympathizes, will find insight with a compassionate heart to inspire or uplift their companion. The other person will then think of you as an understanding individual, and they will assign to you this asset as part of your character.

To be an understanding person, one must appreciate and value the worth of all souls. When you can be grateful for the past experiences, even the negative ones, that have molded your present character assets, you feel more connected to all others, regardless of the stage of progress they are in compared to yours. You can look upon your own mistakes with an understanding heart, and move forward with happiness today.

THE KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

Part III



Heavenly Attributes of Small Children

Godly Attributes in Adults

The Quality of Life Improved With Two Words

“Magic” Phrases to Instant Happiness

The Eight Deadly Phrases

Adages for Happiness

How to Use Your Key to Happiness

Give Others Your Key

Summery

Index of Common Problems and Solutions

Heavenly Attributes of Small Children

Children seem to intrinsically experience happiness more easily and frequently than many adults. Perhaps there are elements in childhood that become discarded with age; re-examining typical childhood characteristics may provide clues to the innate happiness children tend to enjoy.

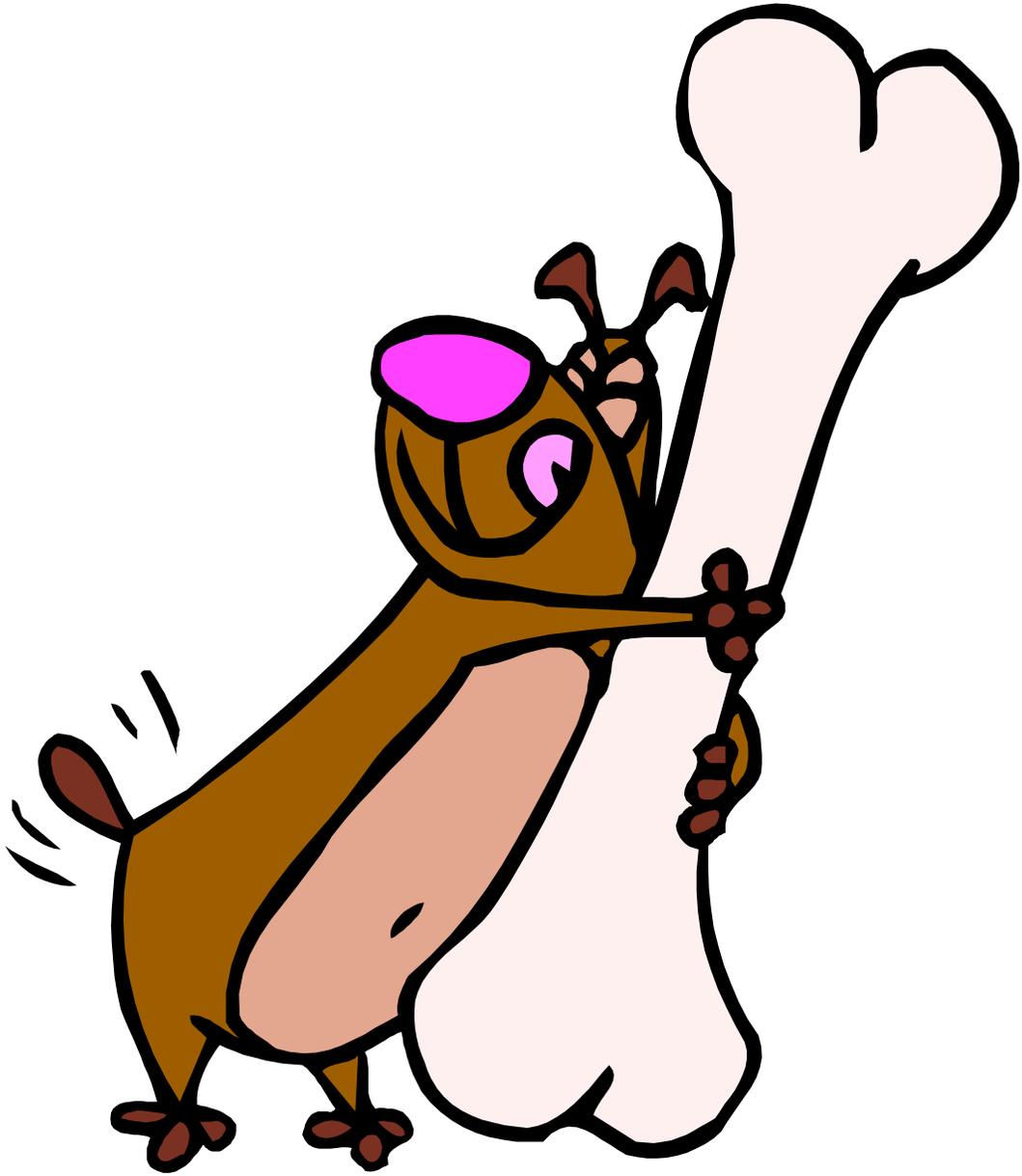
Follow their parents' actions
Tell you right away if they have a fear, question, or trouble
Expect and accept help
Full of faith
Enjoy nature and animals
Everything they say is heartfelt
Sympathetic to others
Loyal: Your problem is their problem
Generous
Make friends easily
Cheerful and optimistic
No guile or hidden agendas
No deceit
Caregiver to the sick
Sharing, taking turns
Simple vocabulary, no bad words
Amiable to doing anything
Prayers are heartwarming.... They really talk to God
Not worrisome
Non-judgmental
Play fair
Only need 5-10 minutes of punishment
Accept people into their family readily, even strangers
Wholesome sense of humor. Even silly things are funny
Tolerant of people who are different... they soon forget their differences
Easily amused, wide interests

Godly Attributes in Adults

There are many praiseworthy characteristics which are available to those who seek them. Below is a list of some which are a combination of the basic attributes outlined in this book. Striving for such qualities in personality brings us closer to God as we emulate Him and the examples of His prophets throughout the ages.

Felicity:	Tries to promote happiness in self and others.
Gracious:	Felicity + tolerance/sacrifice.
Patient:	Frustration + tolerance. Wanting something right now that you can't have right now, yet accepting the necessary wait. Patience is time related. It's being content in the present while waiting for something in the future. Acceptance is the key word.
Benevolent:	Seeks to do good things. Doing good to another, even if there is <i>no need</i> .
Long-Suffering:	Suffering/being offended + patience, acceptance, humility, and/or courage.
Chastity:	Pure in thought, modest; free from what violates, weakens, or pollutes.
Humility:	Unassuming, not seeking power, prestige or recognition.
Merciful:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Being offended by someone's actions who knew it was an offense, had a choice, and chose to offend.2. Feeling frustrated/angry3. Tolerance: expecting or not expecting improved behavior.4. Overlooking the offense, withholding retribution or consequence, even when the person deserves it.
Tolerant:	Patience + longsuffering + expectations of improved behavior.
Forgiving:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Being offended by someone's actions who knew it was an offense, had a choice, and chose to offend.2. Feeling frustrated/angry3. Tolerance: expecting or not expecting improved behavior.4. Showing mercy5. <i>Giving the person a clean slate, whereby the offense is spoken of no more.</i>
Empathy:	Sympathy + same sorrowful experience → pity + attempt to relieve another's sorrow.
Sympathy:	Thoughtful concern for another's sorrows; sees, listens, tries to understand the other's sorrow. If your sympathy is deep enough, you can take a shortcut to compassion by not having to go through sorrowful experiences. Sympathy is made deeper by increasing thoughtfulness. If, after seeing another's sorrow, you thoughtfully imagine what it is like for them, then you can have empathy without going through the sorrow yourself. A sure way to know if you actually feel empathy is when you follow up with compassionate service to the individual.
Sacrificing:	Giving up something you want for something you want more.

Charity:	Compassion + sacrifice. Doing good to another <i>in need</i> .
Compassion:	Kindness/Empathy + sacrifice of time, energy or possessions.
Kind:	Sympathetic + very small sacrifice.
Proud of Others:	Encourages all others to improve and achieve.
Generous:	Thoughtful + sacrifice of a possession that is of value to himself.
Thoughtful:	Being empathetic and/or sympathetic + sacrifice thinking time.
Respect for Others:	To show deference or courteous submission to the opinion or wishes of one who is considered to be of high value, and is admired.
Worthy of Respect:	Considered to be of high value, to be admired and shown decent and correct conduct.
Obedient/Lawful:	Adheres to a universal standard of good
Joyful:	Humor + benevolence + felicity.
Honest:	Knowledge of the truth + temptation to avoid the truth (because of fear).
Loyal:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having a temptation to leave a commitment 2. Having a choice to leave a commitment 3. Consistently deciding to maintain a commitment or resolution
Courteous:	Civil, polite, and marked by respect for others.
Self-Esteem:	Having a high regard, or value, on oneself; self-respect.
Trustworthy:	Not trusting anyone turns into not being trusted by anyone. Self sufficiency is a good thing, but not the only thing. You should ask for help when you need it. It doesn't mean you are weak. Just the opposite.



Try not to want anything too much.

The Quality of Life Improved With Two Words

Most people describe quality of life as having a nice home, good health, and a close family. However, there are many people who have all these things, yet are not happy. On the other hand, there are many cheerful people camping in the wilderness and living off the fruits of the land. Some people are sick and in pain, yet have a smile for everyone. Others have no family left, yet live a richly fulfilled life with quality friendships or find joy in serving others. These people think of themselves as having an excellent quality of life, despite difficult circumstances. Therefore, quality of life must be linked to one's state of mind.

Quality of life goes down when satisfaction goes down. Those who are feeling unsatisfied exhibit such behaviors as anger, complaining, depression, discouragement, fear, greed, guilt, impatience, mistrustfulness, regret, and resentment. These things make them difficult to interact with, and their relationships suffer challenges.

Quality of life goes up when appreciation goes up. Those who are appreciative exhibit such characteristics as altruism, a positive attitude, benevolence, cheerfulness, compassion, courage, sympathy, faith, forgiveness, generosity, helpfulness, loyalty, mercy, and self-esteem. They are respected by others, and enjoy good relationships.

Therefore, quality of life is directly affected by one's feeling of satisfaction and sense of appreciation. Under the exact same conditions, one person reacts with anger, while another acts with patience and tolerance. One acts with bragging and pride, while another acts in humility with self-esteem. One displays discouragement, while another remains hopeful. In our common struggles with life's challenges, some people are living a quality life, while others are not. The difference is the state of mind, which is determined by the levels of satisfaction and appreciation within each individual.

The solution to these problems is actually quite simple if you break each component down into common factors. You can save yourself a lot of grief if you adjust your way of thinking so that you quickly accept reality as it occurs, instead of trying to change behaviors and events which have already happened. Disappointments occur when your expectations have exceeded what reality has demonstrated. Therefore, the problem is not with external circumstances; you had unrealistic expectations.

Acceptance of people as they are and events as they occur goes a long way towards relieving misery. But to really improve your state of mind and the quality of your life, you need to increase your sense of appreciation. When you compare what you have to others who have more, you lack appreciation. When you compare what you have to others who have less, you feel appreciation. With this state of mind comes happiness, and an improved quality of life is the result.

THE KEYS TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE ARE ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION.

ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION ARE THE KEYS TO HAPPINESS.

“Magic” Phrases to Instant Happiness

Most people don't believe in magic, but when defined as "something that has extraordinary power and influence over natural forces", you might find that you can believe in magic after all.

The following phrases are like magic wands that can wipe out such things as complaining, depression, fear, and anger, in as little time as it takes to fill in the blank at the end of the sentence. When you are struggling with the concepts of acceptance and appreciation during times of negative emotions, give one of these phrases a try:

"Oh, well. At least...."

"Oh, well. It's better than..."

"It's okay. After all..."

"It could be worse..."

"Well, let's just do this..."

"It's all for the best."

The first "magic" phrase is the one that is useful in most situations. Like the illusions of magic tricks, there is a reasonable explanation as to why it works. The first part of the phrase, "Oh, well", takes you from denial to acceptance. When you find yourself uttering this part of the phrase, you have been confronted with something unpleasant, but you have accepted it as reality. It is usually preceded with a heavy sigh. This is a venting process that indicates the removal of waste produces (denial from one's thoughts), and the inhalation of fresh air designed to prepare for the coping to follow. The first part of this magic wand does not produce happiness, although it does reduce misery.

The second part of the phrase, "At least..." will start you on the path to appreciation, where the real key to happiness is found. By the time you have finished filling in the rest of the sentence, you will have found something to appreciate that you already have. Thus, within the 30 seconds it takes to finish this phrase, you will have moved yourself from a lower state of being into a higher one. This is because you have moved through all the stages commonly associated with grief, leaving you to acceptance and appreciation, and therefore, greater happiness than you felt before you started.

This is like magic because a simple string of words can have an extraordinary ability to change the strong negativity of anger, fear, and depression, which are natural forces we commonly face in everyday circumstances.

The Eight Deadly Phrases

Contrary to the “Magic Phrases” to happiness in 30 seconds, the following phrases contain the venomous toxins that will sour anyone’s attitude in an instant. If you catch yourself uttering any of these phrases, you are guaranteed to feel worse by the end of the sentence:

“I wish...”

“If only...”

“Why won’t he/she just”

“I should’ve...”

“You could’ve...”

“I would’ve, but...”

“I’ll be happen when...”

“I’d be happy if...”

These phrases fan the flames of depression, fear, remorse, resentment, and anger. Thankfully, there is an antidote to these deadly phrases. When they are *immediately* followed by one of the “Magic Phrases” listed above, the poison is counteracted with an injection of acceptance and appreciation. If you find yourself thinking or saying these deadly phrases frequently, you have no need to wonder why you aren’t happy.

The first step in changing your emotions is to think about what you are thinking about. Start a new habit of catching yourself when you fall victim to these lines, and cure yourself with your new magic wand. You now have the tools which empower you to lift yourself out of your own negativity, dismiss misery, and set you back on a path of happiness today.

Adages for Happiness

The following sayings are some other ways of getting to a level of acceptance and appreciation when life assails us with trials. Those who are familiar with these phrases have a good repertoire of weapons in their arsenals to defend against adversarial conditions. Happy people tend to spout these out regularly:

All good things must come to an end

All is fair in love and war

All’s well that ends well

Another day older, another day wiser

April showers bring May flowers

At the end of the rainbow there is a pot of gold

At the end of the storm, there’s a rainbow

Attitude determines your altitude

Beauty is only skin deep

Beggars can’t be choosers

Better late than never

Better luck next time
Better off to walk away and live to fight another day
Better safe than sorry
Cross that bridge when you get to it
Different strokes for different folks
Don't cry over spilled milk
Don't make a mountain out of a molehill
Every dark cloud has a silver lining
Every little bit helps
Fake it till you make it
God helps those who help themselves
God works in mysterious ways
Grin and bear it
He who laughs last laughs best
Hindsight is always 20/20
Hope for the best and be prepared for the worst
I can't do everything, but I can do something
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again
If you fall off the horse, get back in the saddle
In God we trust
It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game
It's the thought that counts
Keep a stiff upper lip
Keep your own side of the sidewalk clean
Kill them with kindness
Let bygones be bygones
Let nature take its course
Life's too short
Live and let live
Look on the bright side
Man proposes, God disposes
Never say never
No good deed goes unrewarded
Nobody's perfect
Nothing ventured, nothing gained
One day at a time
One step at a time
Patience is a virtue
Practice makes perfect
Slow and steady wins the race
Stop and smell the roses along the way
The best things in life are free
The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence
The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away
The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing, that's the main thing.
The more I know, the more I don't know

The show must go on
The third time's the charm
There are other fish in the sea
There is nothing to fear but fear itself
There's a first time for everything
There's a reason for everything
There's a time and place for everything
Things always work out in the end
This, too, shall pass
Time heals all wounds
To each his own
Today is the first day of the rest of your life
Tomorrow is another day
Turn over a new leaf
Turn the other cheek
Two wrongs don't make a right
Variety is the spice of life
Walk a mile in his shoes
What doesn't kill you makes you stronger
When a door shuts, God opens a window
When life gives you lemons, make lemonade
When the going gets tough, the tough get going
Where there's a will, there's a way
You are only as old as you feel
You can't have your cake and eat it, too
You can't keep a good man down
You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar
You get what you pay for
You have to learn to walk before you can run
You never know
You win some, you lose some
You'll never know until you try

How to Use Your Key to Happiness

Consider your personality and your relationships as your most valuable possessions. After all, those are the only two things you take with you when you die.

Anger and fear are the two most detrimental emotions to one's personality. They are the antipathy of contentment, whereas love opens the door to happiness. The characteristics of Love are acceptance and appreciation.

There are two things you must focus on accepting as they are: people and circumstances. The only thing you can change is yourself. You cannot undo what another person has said or done; all you can do is react to it differently. All the angry words in the world cannot change an event that has already occurred; all you can do is respond to it differently. Acceptance has to occur eventually anyway, before coping can begin. The faster you accept reality, the faster you can get on with your life.

If you remind yourself that your personality and your relationships are the most valuable things to strive for in life, is it really so important that you get your own way? Winning small battles at the cost of the relationship is actually losing the war. When those in your life walk away from their experience with you feeling good, you have won another treasure that you can take with you into eternity.

Add to this an inner sense of gratitude. Appreciation is to the soul as food is to the body; it has to have such nourishment daily. To focus on increasing your gratitude each day, set aside specific times for reflection upon *all* the things in your life that you would be sorry to lose. Prayer in the mornings and/or evenings can be a very useful tool to keeping up your sense of appreciation for what you already have. Always ponder on more and more things to add to the list.

Express your gratitude in prayer before you ask God for anything. Then remember that what you ask for reflects your priorities.

The Importance of Acceptance and Appreciation in Prayer

Dear God:

**Please help me to be loving and cheerful
in thought, word, and deed,
to everyone I think about or
make contact with today.**

If you make this kind of prayer your main goal for each day, you are deciding to make your relationships the highest priority in your life. With this prayer, your character defects will melt as your personality assets grow. As your soul is nourished by acceptance and appreciation, you earn all the best treasures on earth.

Give Others Your Key

You don't have to be outstanding in all of these character assets before you help others to be happy. "Imperfect People can Preach Perfect Principles". However, the best teacher is a good example.

To be able to love others, you must first love yourself. You cannot give what you do not have. To love yourself, you have to accept your strengths as well as your weaknesses. You have to accept your past errors as lessons in wisdom, and forgive yourself. When you perceive yourself as a lovable, worthwhile person in spite of your weaknesses and errors, you are more able to accept others with their foibles as well.

Teach others what you know about how acceptance can change one's attitude, and how it can eliminate a lot of stress in life.

Teach others what you've learned about how improving your focus on appreciation can improve your perception of how much satisfaction is enough.

Teach others what you understand about how acceptance and appreciation can increase one's happiness.

Even when you ponder on the needs of others, you can look for things that they should be grateful for. When gentle wisdom is used to guide receptive spirits towards appreciation, it may help them on their road to happiness. In this way, you can send the light of God into their hearts to awaken their souls to a path of peace.

The Importance of Acceptance and Appreciation in Prayer

Dear God:

Please help me to do now

What I would do now

If I knew now

What I will know, when....

Remember that the most valuable treasures in life are good relationships and character assets in one's personality. These are the only two things you take with you when you leave this mortal realm.

Summery

Some of the best virtues can be achieved overnight (such as honesty). Others may take some practice. But, who you were yesterday is not who you are right now, nor is it who you will be tomorrow. A sinner can become a saint in one minute. It starts with a mental decision of who you want to be. You are not what you DID. You are what you DO.

You can be better today than you were yesterday.

Picture this: You are a person who is Loving, Accepting, Tolerant, Longsuffering, Forgiving, Merciful, Cheerful, Peaceful, Patient, Agreeable, Humble, Modest, Self-Confident with Self-Esteem, Understanding of others, Guiltless, Unselfish, Generous, Thoughtful, Considerate, Honest, Trustworthy, Humorous, Peace-Making, Helpful, Courageous, Trusting, Prompt, Hopeful, Faithful, Realistic, Appreciative, Self-Disciplined, a Problem-Solver; one who Admits own faults, is Respected, and is Respectful of others.

These attributes would make you a good neighbor, a good friend, a good spouse, a good parent, a good child, a good co-worker. The people in your life would be happy to know you. Would that make you happy?

This list may seem overwhelming to achieve, but look again. All of these attributes can be obtained simply by working on just two things: acceptance and appreciation. A person who possesses these two attributes empowers himself or herself to be able to find happiness in whatever situations life has to offer. Their quality of life would begin to improve immediately. They would be a blessing to those whose lives they touch.

Your present thoughts and actions can foretell a new future. Start with just one constructive day, week, month, and year.

How will history remember you?



**You cannot change another person;
you can only change yourself.**

Index of Common Problems and Solutions

Note that Fear is the most common emotion and Complaining is the most common thought behind most of these problems. Therefore, Fear can be considered the opposite of Happiness, and Complaining is its frequent companion.

PROBLEMS BETWEEN SPOUSES

Unfaithful: See also Anger, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fear, Guilt, Mistrustful, Resentment, Self-Pity, Trustworthiness, Unforgiving, Grief

Anger/sarcasm: See also Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making Excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Unforgiving

Disrespectful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Complaining, Denial/Making excuses, Discouragement, Fearful, Gossiping, Hypocrisy, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Vanity

Mistrustful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Hypocrisy, Laziness, Presumptuous, Regretful, Resentment, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Procrastination, Unforgiving, Grief

Resentment: See also Anger/sarcasm, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Regretful, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Procrastination, Unforgiving, Vanity

Unforgiving: See also Anger/sarcasm, Complaining, Controlling, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Gossiping, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Grief

PROBLEMS PARENTS HAVE WITH CHILDREN

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Laziness: See also Complaining, Controlling, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Fearful, Impatience, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Procrastination

Spoiled: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Complaining, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Fearful, Greed/Avarice, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Procrastination, Vanity

Disrespectful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Complaining, Denial/Making excuses, Fearful, Greed/Avarice, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Laziness, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Procrastination, Vanity

PROBLEMS CHILDREN HAVE WITH PARENTS

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Controlling: See also Anger/sarcasm, Competitive, Complaining, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Trouble-Maker, Unforgiving, Vanity

PROBLEMS BETWEEN FRIENDS

Gossiping: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Greed/Avarice, Hypocrisy, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Unforgiving, Vanity

Self-Centered: See also Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Greed/Avarice, Guilt, Impatience, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Regretful, Resentment, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Procrastination, Unforgiving, Vanity, Grief

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Greed/Avarice: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Gossiping, Hypocrisy, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Unforgiving, Vanity

Disrespectful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Fearful, Gossiping, Greed/Avarice, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Laziness, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Unforgiving

PROBLEMS EMPLOYERS HAVE WITH EMPLOYEES

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PROBLEMS EMPLOYEES HAVE WITH EMPLOYERS

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Pride: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Fearful, Gossiping, Greed/Avarice, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Presumptuous, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Vanity

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Trouble-Maker: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Denial/Making excuses, Disrespectful, Fearful Gossiping, Greed/Avarice Hypocrisy, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Procrastination

Disrespectful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Fearful, Gossiping, Greed/Avarice, Hypocrisy, Impatience, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Pride, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Procrastination, Unforgiving

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Discouragement: See also Competitive, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Fearful, Greed/Avarice, Laziness, Pride, Regretful, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Procrastination, Unforgiving, Vanity, Grief

Fearful: See also Anger/sarcasm, Bragging, Competitive, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Disrespectful, Greed/Avarice, Guilt, Laziness, Mistrustful, Regretful, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Trouble-Maker, Procrastination, Vanity, Grief

Guilt: See also Anger/sarcasm, Complaining, Controlling, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Fearful, Gossiping, Hypocrisy, Laziness, Mistrustful, Presumptuous, Regretful, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Procrastination, Unforgiving, Grief

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Grief: See also Anger/sarcasm, Complaining, Controlling, Covetousness, Denial/Making excuses, Depression, Discouragement, Fearful, Guilt, Mistrustful, Regretful, Resentment, Self-Centered, Self-Pity, Spoiled, Unforgiving