

Volume 2, Issue 4

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



COMPARING

Friend or foe to happiness

Happiness Is...

News and Views

The 90/10 principle

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**Issue
Editors**

Design

**Contact Us:
Email
Website**

Volume 2, Issue 4
Christina Lane
Souad Abuhalm
awexdesign

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com
www.motivatedmagazine.com

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FROM THE EDITOR

I came across a gem of wisdom recently that changed my life. I could have brushed those words aside as not applying to me, but I am so glad I didn't. The thing that amazes me now is how easily I could have missed it.

I'd been feeling happy and fulfilled, satisfied with my life and where it seemed to be taking me, when things took an unexpected turn. Problems tumbled about me and my whole life seemed to turn upside down.

This is when those words became a reference point and helped get me through the next few difficult months. "If we would all be satisfied to fulfill our place in life and not want any more or any less, we would be very happy. But we sometimes make ourselves unhappy by being dissatisfied, because we haven't learned to be content in whatever state we're in."

That doesn't mean, of course, that we should be content to continue on in bad habits or stop striving to be better people. We also shouldn't have a defeated attitude when our circumstances aren't what they could or should be. But that little bit of advice helped me realize that while my circumstances had suddenly changed, that didn't change the things that count most in life.

It didn't change who I was or my main goals, nor did it change the love of family and friends. Therefore it shouldn't rob me of the contentment I'd had before things changed.

The happy ending? I made it through that difficult time by focusing on what I still had and not what I had lost, and came out happier in the end.

I hope the articles in this issue of *Motivated* will do the same for you.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

THE CRACKED POT

— Author Unknown



There once was a water bearer who had two large pots. Each hung on one end of a pole, which he carried across his shoulders. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishment, being perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them."

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique "flaws." We all can learn from that cracked pot. Let's not be afraid of our flaws. Let's acknowledge them, and take advantage of them, so that we, too, can bring beauty to the pathway along which we walk. ✨



— By Maria Fontaine

Friend or foe of happiness?

Comparing ourselves with others! We all do it in one form or another. We want to be better, stronger, more beautiful, more gifted. It is part of human nature to compare and be competitive, and for some it becomes a deeply ingrained habit.

Comparing isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes it's necessary to observe and analyze situations or other people in order to learn or gain insight, and it's a positive thing if it helps us count our blessings and get in a positive frame of mind. But when measuring our experiences, problems, or blessings against those of others causes us to be negative, critical, dissatisfied, or self-righteous, it's a very bad thing indeed!

People compare for different reasons and to different degrees. Some people have just one "trouble area" that they struggle with, like something they don't like about themselves.

Others are chronic comparers who constantly battle with feeling that others are more talented, better looking, have more privileges, or have something else they want. Whatever the case, it is possible to help us overcome this

negative mindset that can steal our joy and fulfillment in life.

It's important to understand that sometimes what's good for one person isn't good for another, so we can't compare and wonder why some people seem to have it so easy, while others don't.

We are each a necessary part of God's magnificent, vast, overall plan. From our perspective, we sometimes can't see how we fit in with the overall fabric of life and the balance of the universe, but someday we will see how perfect it all is, and we'll be thankful.

What you look for is what you get

A lot of it has to do with our point of view and what we're looking for.—Like in the anecdote about half a cup of water. Are we looking at the cup as if it is half full, or half empty?

If we look only at how "empty" our cup of life is, and then look at others and see how "full" their cup is, of course we're going to be unhappy. It may not be immediately obvious, but everyone else has problems and sorrows, too. Nobody has a perfect life. Maybe others have something we want, but maybe we have something they want. Maybe they

have something very special, but maybe they had to go through a lot to get it. People often want what someone else has, but they only see the silver lining—the benefits, the advantages; they don't see the cloud—the sacrifices and hard decisions that made others what they are.

We're each given what we need. It may not always be what we want or come in the way we would like it to, but when we have faith, it's easier to accept what comes our way.

Whether it seems to be a blessing or a burden at the time, each attribute and each experience is a gift and it all balances out in the end.

When we are content with who we are and what we have, we don't struggle as much inwardly. If and when we constantly compare, examine, observe, and analyze everything to see how we match up, we usually come to very unhappy (and often wrong) conclusions and that won't help us lead very happy lives. Our negativity about ourselves and our circumstances not only make us miserable to begin with, but it also drives others away, which seems to validate our negative feelings and thus perpetuates the cycle.

Comparing can make quite a mess of things, but there is a way out: Realizing that we should not compare ourselves with others and that we are loved for what we are, is a giant step toward relieving problems we may have with envy and comparing. Then the relatively trivial things of life—our looks, our body, our skills, and abilities—will fade into the background as the things of true importance take on greater meaning.

The “glad game”

The solution is really that simple, but it's often easier said than done, especially if we have a deeply ingrained habit of negatively comparing ourselves with others or our situation with theirs. It will probably take a conscious effort over time to form a new, more positive mindset.

One of the best exercises that we can do is to compare ourselves favorably with other people who are much worse off than we are, and to count the things we can be “glad” for.

Whenever we are tempted to complain about our problems or the way we are, it's nearly always easy to find others who are worse off than we are. Even with our worst problem, we can usually think of countless others who have even worse problems.

No matter how bad off we are, we're always better off than many others.

This is the way we need to look at it. If we will take the time for this little exercise in positive comparing, I dare say that without exception we will come out feeling better. It may not take care of our immediate problems, but it will cause us to be happy and thankful and it will truly cheer us up!

No matter how “bad off” we may be, with faith we are among the most blessed people on earth! Even our problems we can be sure are for a good purpose, and we can find cause for joy in the knowledge that they will ultimately accomplish some good in our lives.

So let's take the positive approach, and play the “glad game”! ✨



WHEN WORK is PLAY

Children actually enjoy and take pride in being helpful

By Catherine Neve

Believe it or not, young children like to help out. It's true! Children actually enjoy and take pride in being helpful until they are "taught" otherwise. It's only when they hear others or older siblings grumbling about "having to do" this or that around the house that helping out becomes a chore.

If approached positively, helping out can seem more like play. It can also go a long way in building self-esteem and instilling other qualities that will greatly benefit the children in school and throughout life, such as selfdiscipline, initiative, diligence, perseverance, self-reliance, and being responsible.

There is at least one educational system that uses this "work as play"

principle in a big way. Departing from traditional teaching methods in favor of capitalizing on the child's natural interests, Maria Montessori (1870-1952) gentled some of the most undisciplined preschool children from the poor neighborhoods of Naples, Italy, into highly motivated, creative, and accomplished students. One facet of Montessori schooling called "practical life" involves teaching children the basic skills they will need in everyday life, such as dressing, hygiene, and food preparation. Two-year-olds, with their "I can do it myself" attitude, are at the perfect age for practical life training, but there are plenty of practical life challenges for every age and stage of

development, right up to learning to drive and maintaining a home.

I made a point of creating situations where my children could succeed and receive appreciation and praise. As a busy first-time mother, I usually found it quicker and easier to do the little jobs myself than to teach my little one to help. But I soon realized that I was being shortsighted. I needed help, and my children needed opportunities to learn and feel “grown up.” Later, when helping to care for others’ children as well as my own, I found that even rascally children were usually happy to channel their boundless energy into doing little jobs for me if I approached them right.

The kitchen is a great place for helping out. Preschoolers can help with simple meal prep, beginning with washing vegetables, spreading peanut butter onto sandwiches, or mixing cookie dough or pancake batter. The table needs to be set and cleared, and spills wiped up. Young children enjoy using hand brooms and dustpans, and they love getting under tables and into other places we adults have a hard time reaching. Little ones can also sort and put away the silverware (or non-breakable plates, bowls, and cups) after the dishes are washed and dried. If we keep it fun and reward them with praise and recognition, they will be thrilled when they “graduate” to washing or drying alongside us, and eventually on their own.

And it doesn’t need to stop in the kitchen. Even toddlers can learn to help tidy their rooms, put away their things, and fold their pajamas or clean laundry.

Nor does it need to end when children reach school age. It was a milestone for my children when they were considered old and responsible enough to use the vacuum cleaner. Some children like to clean bathroom sinks and change the hand towels. Others like to rake leaves or mow grass, or help wash the car. Some older ones like to sew on buttons or do other simple mending. The list is endless—if we just look around!

Assigning game names to household jobs is good “marketing strategy.” The first such game I taught my children when they were little was “Ant Hill.” They pretended they were ants and scurried around, taking every toy, block, or stuffed animal that was left out back to the “ant hill” (where it belonged). Even babies can learn to play this game, sitting in our lap or next to us while taking turns putting blocks or other small toys into a box—followed by praise, praise, praise!

There are so many benefits to making work fun for children. Not only will they learn practical skills and develop character, but as we work alongside them they will also learn to work as a team and better appreciate how much we and others do for them.

Finally, if we want our children to get into that habit of helping cheerfully, then we should get in the habit of thanking and praising them. We should thank them on the spot, reward them with hugs and the occasional special treat, and sing their praises to our spouse, family members, and friends—preferably within our children’s earshot. Nothing builds self-esteem like praise and appreciation from those we love most! ❀

Do some people really “have it all”?

Author unknown

Q: Why is it that some people seem to lead charmed lives? They have perfect looks, perfect health, lots of natural abilities and lots of friends—everything—while other people seem to have no end of deficiencies and problems?

A: On the surface things often don't seem fair or equal, but a lot goes on in every person's life that is unseen by others. As the wise saying goes, “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under Heaven.”

Not everyone goes through the same rough spots or at the same time, but everyone has their share eventually. No life is complete without a touch of suffering, sadness, and difficulty. So, while we may look at someone else and think they have it so easy, we can be assured that they have troubles too.

All of the difficulties that we experience teach us to overcome and make us strong. This is brought out so well in the following story:

A maker of violins searched all his life for wood that would serve for making violins with a certain beautiful and haunting resonance. At last he succeeded when he came into possession of wood gathered from the timberline, the last stand of the trees of the Rockies, 12,000 feet above sea level.

Up there where the winds blow so fiercely and steadily that the bark faced windward has no chance to grow, where the branches all point one way, and where a tree must stay on its knees all through its life—that is where the world's most resonant wood for violins is born, lives, and dies.

Some of the greatest treasures of spirit come by way of trials, suffering, or great difficulties. We may feel at the end of our rope at times, but it is at times like these that we are made strong. ✿

Happiness is...

“The happiest people don’t have the best of everything. They just *make* the best of everything.”

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups—porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite—telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: “If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink.

“What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups... And then you began eyeing each other’s cups.

“Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money, and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee that has been provided for us.”

So let’s be sure to focus on enjoying the coffee! ✨



The 90/10 Principle

By Stephen Covey, adapted

What is this principle? 10% of life is made up of what happens to us and 90% of life is decided by how we react.

What does this mean? We really have no control over 10% of what happens to us. We cannot stop the car from breaking down. The plane will be late arriving, which throws our whole schedule off. A driver may cut us off in traffic. We have no control over this 10%.

The other 90% is different. We determine the other 90%. How? By our reactions! We cannot control a red light, but we can control our reaction. We should not let anyone tell us otherwise; we can control how we react.

Let's use an example. A business man is eating breakfast with his family. His daughter knocks over a cup of coffee onto his business shirt. He has no control over what just happened. What happens next will be determined by how he reacts.

He gets angry. He harshly scolds his daughter for knocking the cup over. She breaks down in tears. After scolding her, he turns to his spouse and criticizes her for placing the cup too close to the edge of the table. A short verbal battle follows. He storms upstairs and changes his shirt. Back downstairs, he finds his daughter has been too busy crying to finish breakfast and get ready for school. She misses the bus.

His wife must leave immediately for work. He rushes to the car and drives his daughter to school. Because he is late, he drives 40 miles an hour in a 30 mph speed limit.

After a 15-minute delay and a \$60 traffic fine, he arrives at school. His daughter runs into the building without saying goodbye. After arriving at the office 20 minutes late, he finds he forgot his briefcase. His day has started terrible. As it continues, it seems to get worse and worse. He looks forward to coming home.

When he arrives home, he finds a small wedge in his relationship with his spouse and daughter. Why? Because of how he reacted in the morning!

Why did he have a bad day?

- A) Did the coffee cause it?
- B) Did his daughter cause it?
- C) Did the policeman cause it?
- D) Did he cause it?

The answer is "D".

He had no control over what happened with the coffee. How he reacted in those five seconds is what caused his bad day.

Here is what could have and should have happened.

Coffee splashes over him. His daughter is about to cry. He gently says, "It's ok honey, you just need to be more careful next time". Grabbing a towel he rushes upstairs. After grabbing a new shirt and his briefcase, he comes back down in time to look through the window and see his child getting on the bus. She turns and waves. He arrives 5 minutes early and cheerfully greets the staff. His boss comments on how good a day he is having.

Notice the difference? Two different scenarios. Both started the same. Both ended different.

Why?

Because of how he REACTED.

He really did not have any control over 10% of what happened. The other 90% was determined by his reaction.

Here are some ways to apply the 90/10 principle. If someone says something negative about us, don't be a sponge. Let the attack roll off like water on glass. We don't have to let the negative comment affect us!

If we react properly, it will not ruin

our day. A wrong reaction could result in losing a friend, being fired, getting stressed out, etc.

How do we react if someone cuts us off in traffic? Do we lose our temper? Pound on the steering wheel? A friend of mine had the steering wheel actually fall off! Do we curse? Does our blood pressure skyrocket? Do we try and bump them?

WHO CARES if we arrive ten seconds later at work? Why let the cars ruin our drive?

Let's remember the 90/10 principle, and not worry about it.

We are told we lost our job. Why lose sleep and get irritated? It will work out. Let's use our worrying energy and time into finding another job.

The plane is late; it is going to mangle our schedule for the day. Why take out our frustration on the flight attendant? She has no control over what is going on. Let's use our time to study, and get to know the other passenger. Why get stressed out? It will just make things worse.

Now that we know the 90/10 principle, let's apply it and we will be amazed at the results. We will not lose anything if we try it.

The 90/10 principle is incredible. So few know and apply it!

The result? Millions of people are suffering from undeserved stress, trials, problems, and heartache.

Let's make an effort to have a positive, full of gratitude attitude when things don't go right, and try to understand and apply this 90/10 principle, because it CAN change our life! ✨



Smile

The world is like a mirror: Frown at it, and it frowns at you; smile at it and it smiles too. — Herbert Samuels

Most smiles are started by another smile.
— Frank A. Clark

A smile is the lighting system of the face and the heating system of the heart.
— Barbara Johnson

A smile is worth a thousand words.
— Author Unknown

Wear a smile and have friends; wear a scowl and have wrinkles. What do we live for if not to make the world less difficult for each other? — George Eliot

Wear a happy face! It's your display counter—your show window, your best advertisement! — David Fontaine

Nobody needs a smile so much as those who have none to give.
— Author Unknown

Smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, it doesn't matter who it is, and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other. — Mother Teresa

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity. — Joseph Addison

A smile is a light in the window of the soul indicating the heart is at home.
— Author Unknown

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been. — Mark Twain

There are hundreds of languages in the world, but a smile speaks them all.
— Author Unknown

A winning smile makes winners of us all.
— Author Unknown

