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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

LOOK FORWARD, NOT BACKWARD

How's Your Life?

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As the end of the year draws closer, most of us wonder what the New Year will hold for us—and of course, we hope it will be a good one, especially if the past year has been challenging.

It's true that we cannot control many of the things that will happen in the year to come, but did you know there is one thing within each of us that can drastically improve our chance of success and a truly happy year?

I recently read that this one thing is "... seldom considered, though it does more to influence everything about us than virtually any other thing in life. It often controls the time we get up in the morning, the time we go to sleep, what we eat and drink, and the very thought that runs through our head. It can make us either happy or sad, loving or hateful, cheerful or remorseful, congenial or spiteful, and in doing so, control the very capacity that we have for success.

"When its impact on our life is considered fully in our every thought and action, when we are mindful of its awesome power, when we nurture and groom it for positive use in our life, it can become more contagious than the most infectious disease. Its influence will spread to every person we come in contact with.

"Groomed and nurtured in a positive manner there will be no person or obstacle that can stand in the way of its success or fail to be impacted for the better."

That one thing is our attitude.

I hope the stories and articles in this issue of *Motivated* will inspire and encourage you to adopt and keep a hopeful, positive outlook and attitude at the onset and throughout the year ahead.

Happy New Year!

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Look Forward, Not Backward



By David Mead, adapted

A few weeks ago, I was taking the train to work like I usually do, and I realized that for some reason I always sat facing the back of the train so that as I looked out the window, I only saw where I had been, not where I was going. I have no idea what compelled me to always sit that way, but since the seat across from me was empty, I switched seats, and therefore, my vantage point. Although I'd never thought of the difference before that day, seeing what was coming up rather than what had already been had a huge impact on me.

I noticed that when I sat facing the back of the train, all I really focused on was what was right next to the tracks—the graffiti-filled walls of warehouses, the guard rail next to the

train, people's back yards, etc. When I sat facing forward, the first thing that jumped out at me were the mountains. My viewpoint immediately changed from what was right in front of me to the bigger picture of where I was, and where I was headed.

This simple experience can be related to life and the way we act. If we are always looking back at where we've been and what we've done, there's no way we can see where we want to be or where we hope to end up. On the other hand, if we look forward and allow our minds to grasp the wonderful things we are capable of, we can plan for the future and be successful at it.

We know where we've been. The key is to focus on where we're going. ■

How's YOUR Life?



Written by Nancy Julien Kopp

That old quote, “Out of the mouths of babes oft time come gems,” came to mind after I read an e-mail from my eight year old granddaughter. Alexis wrote to tell me about school, some new friends, and a cheerleading class she “loved.” She chattered about each one and then made this statement: “I’m doing just great in my life. How about yours?”

Her words brought a smile to my face. Alexis will do all right in this world if she already recognizes that her life is a good one. Most eight year olds consider the positive things in life as something to be expected. I suspect she will grow up to look at a glass as half full rather than half empty.

I reflected further on her words the next few days. Was I, like Alexis, doing great in my life? I’m still happily married to the man I wed over forty years ago. I have two children who are

independent and settled, as well as three grandchildren who light up my life more often than not. I count my many friends as a special blessing, as well as reasonably good health for my age. Yes, I’m doing great in my life, and I hope I’ll stay aware of that as the years march on. Don’t I ever have problems? You bet I do, but I choose to dwell on the good things rather than the sad. Because if I do that, my happiness quotient is a lot higher than my misery measure.

One way to keep your life a good one is to have a positive outlook. Many years ago, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale wrote a book titled, *The Power of Positive Thinking*. It became a bestseller, read by thousands. The title alone offered all the advice found within the covers of the book. It obviously made an impact on me, as I retained that piece of advice, and put it into practice most of the time.

Negative views create imaginary



black clouds that hover above the person who carries them like heavy baggage. The more negative the outlook, the heavier that baggage becomes. Always finding the down side of life can become a habit. This type of personality may elicit sympathy from others, but these people also risk losing friends. We'd all prefer happy stories rather than tales of woe.

Take a look at two women and how they react to the same situation. Both Susan and Jane have been appointed to a committee to find volunteers to staff a Health Fair in their community.

Susan grumbles to herself all the way home from the meeting. Why should I have to do the president's job? Let her find her own volunteers? What's in it for me? I'll have to give up precious time, and I probably won't find anyone who'll say yes. I'll end up having to work three shifts at the Health Fair myself. By the

time Susan walks into her kitchen, she's scowling and throws her purse on the table in disgust.

Jane spends her drive home from the meeting making a mental list of possible prospects. She plans to make calls right after dinner. It will be nice to have time to chat with some of these longtime acquaintances, she thinks. She considers filling one of the shifts with her own name. She has been president of the organization and knows how much she appreciated willing workers, so Jane is happy to serve.

These two examples may seem like extremes in both cases, but you can reach the happy medium. No one is happy and upbeat one hundred per cent of the time, but if you strive to have that positive outlook, you'll like your life more often than not.

Like my granddaughter, my life's doing great. How's yours? ■

Broken Eggs and Shattered Glass

By Keith Ready, adapted

One Saturday evening at around midnight, my wife and I were just about to turn out the light and go to sleep when we heard the sounds of a group of people talking in the street, outside our home. Then out of the blue came two loud thuds above our bedroom window, followed by the noise of laughter and people running away down our street.

We both jumped out of bed. I turned on the external lights and rushed outside unsure of what had caused the two thuds or what damage I could expect to see. The silence of the night was broken by the distant sound of people laughing, and at that moment I was of a mind to chase after them. However, running bare-footed on the road in the dark is not a very wise thing to do.

I could hear dripping noises on the driveway and the flood light above our garage helped me to identify just what had happened. Our home had been the victim of an egg bombing!

Being faced with the prospect of

cleaning up this sticky mess in the early hours of the morning was not a pleasing thought, and I was less than impressed that we had been singled out for this annoying prank. I decided that it was too late to clean up the mess, as it would disturb our neighbors, so it could wait to the morning.

Early next morning with a bucket of warm water and scrubbing brush in hand, and with the extension ladder placed on the front wall, I was ready to wash off what was now two dry yellowish, egg grit impregnated, long patches above our front bedroom windows.

My task was made even more challenging by the two large canvas awnings which protect our bedroom windows from the heat and glare of the afternoon sun. My annoyance with the late night pranksters was again building to the level of the night before.

After retracting each of the awnings, something we rarely do except when there are very high winds, I climbed the

ladder to clean up the first patch of egg stain, and then move the ladder to clean the second patch.

As I climbed the ladder for the second time, I noticed that the glass in a small window just under the roof line was very badly cracked. On closer inspection the crack ran around over half of the outer edge of the window pane. As the awning protected the window, it was clear to me that the damage had not been caused by the egg bombing. As I carefully placed my hand on the glass, I discovered that the pane of glass was very loose, and had the window been closed with any force, it would have most likely shattered and the glass dropped to the driveway, some seven meters below.

Just a few meters away, we have a basketball ring, and on most days of the week there are up to six young people who play in the immediate area, including both my sons. My thoughts immediately turned to what could have happened if the broken glass in the window had gone undetected for much longer and then suddenly shattered. The likelihood of my two sons and their friends being seriously injured was extremely high.

After quickly washing the remaining egg stain off the front wall, with the help of Tom, my youngest son, I got to work with some heavy duty masking tape and secured the cracked window as best I could. Within 24 hours the cracked window had been replaced and all was back to normal, except for the small bits of egg shell I kept finding on the front driveway and stuck to our garage doors.

Over the next few days, I realized that had our home not been bombarded by those eggs late on that Saturday night,

I may not have discovered the broken window pane before it shattered and came down all over our driveway.

Even though it had been an annoyance at the time, the broken eggs and the stains were cleaned up very quickly. However, the pain that could have been caused by the shattering of glass would never have gone away, and would have haunted my wife and myself forever.

The cold shudder that ran down my spine when I first discovered the cracked window, and the thought about the consequences of someone being seriously injured or even killed, made me realize just how very lucky we had been.

Frequently in life, the small things that happen to us may have a negative impact and cause some form of pain, sadness, discomfort, or personal aggravation. It is often said that we should not “sweat the small stuff” and always look for the positive outcome or the silver lining in those dark clouds of the current circumstance, even though at the time that is not always an easy thing to do.

My personal experience with the egg bombing that Saturday evening reminded me that in most cases there is always a flip side to everything that happens to us, and that often the flip side can provide a positive outcome or an even greater benefit, if not now, then at some time in the future.

From now on, whenever I see or break an egg, I will think of the egg bombing incident and say a thank you to those late night pranksters. Equally, I will always be reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre’s quote:

“What is important is not what happens to us, but how we respond to what happens to us.” ■

5 REASONS WHY IT IS OK TO NOT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS



By Jeff Munn, adapted

We spend a lot of time in life not knowing.

There are a lot of things that we're comfortable not knowing. Not knowing a stranger's name. Not knowing our credit card number or a friend's address. Not knowing the capital of Vermont.

We're comfortable with these things

because we know there are answers. Even if we have to get on our smartphones for a few minutes to find them, we know these things are all facts that actually exist.

But there are lots of other things that we really want to know, like if our decision is going to be the right one, or if a job is going to work out, or if we're about to be laid off.

What is the best use of my life? What is my mission? These things are unanswerable. There are many things that we simply can't know.

And while we think it would be nice to know these things, to know the future, I'm here to tell you it's really not the case. Even if we could know these things, we might be better off not knowing them.

Last year, I took a new job in sales. It was a big change for me. I'd been in consulting and legal practice the rest of my career, and while part of my past work had been around growing relationships and coming up with ideas for new projects, I'd never taken a job where I was a "sales guy," where I would be evaluated solely on my "numbers."

When I took the job, I was given a quota that, if I met it, would mean a significant increase in my pay. I was also told that I'd be groomed for greater responsibilities, that I was seen as a likely future member of senior management.

The company has some cutting-edge ways of looking at health care expenses, and we help millions of people live better, healthier lives. It was a mission that I enthusiastically signed up for.

This is what has happened since:

The company has been through three major restructurings. Several of my peers, including the two people who brought me in for grooming, have either quit or been let go.

The market has dried up for our services, even as we were able to prove their effectiveness with randomized controlled trials. There have been virtually no new sales. This means that I have taken a substantial pay cut and have had to dip into my savings to meet my

expenses.

The company has made almost no progress on new offerings, and several current clients have left. There is some encouraging talk of new partnerships and capabilities, but these will take months to implement.

I sold nothing last year and am unlikely to sell much this year. And the most enthusiastic advocates for my development within the organization are gone.

Now the question is, had I known all that, would I have taken the job? And the answer is almost certainly no.

But that would have been a big mistake—because I've learned so much.

I've learned a whole new industry.

I've broadened my relationships and deepened my friendships.

I've learned to let go of what I can't control.

I've learned that my value can't be reduced to a percentage of a quota.

I've learned to see and address my fears—of not having enough, of having to sell my house, of having my friends think I'm a failure.

I've learned to be an advocate for what I need.

I've learned to define success differently and to understand better what brings me happiness.

I've had time to explore blogging and teaching about applying wisdom practices to the workplace, and I have personally seen the benefits of those practices on a daily basis.

In short, I would not have traded this experience for anything.

Here are 5 reasons why it's sometimes OK to not know what's coming next:

1. Not knowing takes the pressure off.

When we think we should know, we get stressed out when we don't know things. But when we see that not knowing is our natural state, we can actually open into that, into a state of curious detachment, of childlike wonder. What's going to happen next? Will it be a pleasant surprise, a learning opportunity, or both?

We can see that, in a sense, we can't know anything. We've never known anything. So when the time comes to make a decision, we just give it our best shot. And we know that we can always adjust if we need to.

2. Not knowing saves time.

When you know you don't know (and can't know), you look at the world differently. Think of the time and money that we spend on trying to predict the future. I'm a big fan of sports radio. About ninety percent of it is pure speculation on who's going to win or lose, and what that might mean. And the news is no different: the debt crisis, the economy, the next Presidential race.

We don't know what's going to happen with any of this stuff. It's possible just to admit that. Instead of trying to keep up with what all the pundits are saying, we can spend our time doing things we enjoy, like spending time with our spouse and kids. Or enjoying a walk in the park.

3. Not knowing fosters learning.

I wouldn't have taken my current job if I'd known the outcome. And I would have lost so much in the process. I think we can all point to bad experiences that

we would not have chosen—a difficult job, the death of someone close to us, struggling with a health issue.

And yet most of our growth comes from pain. I've seen paraplegics and cancer victims smile as they relate the growth that has come from their condition, insisting they wouldn't have things any other way. Often we only recognize in retrospect how valuable an experience has been.

4. Not knowing brings the joy of surprise.

Of course, we don't want to know when bad stuff is going to happen. But what about the surprise call from a friend? What about the windfall you didn't know was coming? What about the laughter of a child?

A lot of the joy in life comes from surprise, too. And knowing exactly what's coming would take all of that away.

5. We have no choice.

Let's face it, not knowing is the natural state of things. When we want to know things that we can't know (like the future, or the right course of action), all we create is frustration for ourselves.

I know this can sound like “just accept it, you can't change anything,” but we really can change a lot.

When we understand that we can't control certain things that happen, we can devote more of our energy to what we can control, and to how we respond and what we learn. And we can open to a new sense of ease in the process. ■

I HAVE A CHOICE ABOUT TODAY



Author Unknown

I woke up early today, excited over all I get to do before the clock strikes midnight. I have responsibilities to fulfill today, and I am important. My job is to choose what kind of day I am going to have.

Today I can complain because the weather is rainy, or I can be thankful that the grass is getting watered for free.

Today I can feel sad that I don't have more money, or I can be glad that my finances encourage me to plan my purchases wisely and guide me away from waste.

Today I can grumble about my health, or I can rejoice that I am alive.

Today I can lament over all that my parents didn't give me when I was growing up, or I can feel grateful that they allowed me to be born.

Today I can cry because roses have

thorns, or I can celebrate that thorns have roses.

Today I can mourn my lack of friends, or I can excitedly embark upon a quest to discover new relationships.

Today I can whine because I have to go to work, or I can shout for joy because I have a job to do.

Today I can complain because I have to go to school, or eagerly open my mind and fill it with rich new tidbits of knowledge.

Today I can murmur dejectedly because I have to do housework, or I can appreciate that I have a place to call home.

Today stretches ahead of me, waiting to be shaped. And here I am, the sculptor who gets to do the shaping.

What today will be like is up to me. I get to choose what kind of day I will have! ■

Hope for the Future

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.—**Desmond Tutu**

Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.

—**Albert Einstein**

We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.

—**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.—**Jonas Salk**

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for.

—**Joseph Addison**

A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.

—**Elbert Hubbard**

You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.—**Michelle Obama**

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.—**Samuel Smiles**

Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future.—**Robert H. Schuller**

Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.

—**Thich Nhat Hanh**

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul—and sings the tunes without the words—and never stops at all. —**Emily Dickinson**

