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# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Editor

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Christina Lane

Design

awexdesign

Contact Us:  
Email  
Website

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com  
www.motivatedmagazine.com

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Our lives are not meant to careen from one major, consequential moment to another major, consequential moment. In fact, most of us don't go through life-changing situations too often. The character and quality of our lives usually consists of many little moments.

Unfortunately, it's all too natural to fall into routines and learned ways of doing things, and to pay no attention to the little moments, because... Well, they seem so "little." But in reality, those are what make up our lives; that set up our future, and that shape our relationships.

The concept of mindfulness has become an increasingly popular subject, as more and more people realize that they want to live each moment to the full, embrace the concepts of paying attention, and doing few things at a time but doing them well.

This issue of *Motivated* includes some great stories and articles from different people who learned through events in their lives to value their experiences, and to live in the moment. I hope reading their accounts will inspire you to do the same.

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# Little White Star

By Elsa Sichrovsky

Another stressful, exhausting day was finally over. Frustration and fatigue hung heavily over me, a combination of hassles with my cranky computer, a gloomy sky with drizzles and chilling winds, the exasperation of burning the chicken for dinner—and a dozen other everyday annoyances.

After dinner with the burnt chicken, I set out for a nearby park. My mom often says that “nature can soothe ruffled nerves like nothing else can,” and I decided to put her advice to the test.

I wandered through the park, half-expecting some “magic” to work itself on me. A discarded cigarette package crunched under my shoe, and some wilted flowers in a pot drooped wearily in front of me. A little farther ahead, a toddler was crying as his mother pushed his stroller, while behind me, a middle-aged couple was arguing. Sighing in disappointment, I turned toward home.

Perhaps it was a subconscious determination to find “nature’s magic” despite the unlovely surroundings, for as I turned to go, I paused and looked up at the pitch-black sky. It was such a

cloudy evening that I didn’t expect to see any stars, but to my surprise, there was a little white star twinkling at me. It was the only visible star and it shone so brightly, as if rejoicing that I had finally noticed it. I suddenly realized how rarely I took time to really look at the sky. Why didn’t I gaze at it every day and savor its uplifting beauty? Why didn’t I let it remind me of the One who made it—and me?

As I admired the little white star, I lingered for a last look before starting home. There it shone, a sole light in the drab darkness. It didn’t matter that the other stars were obscured by air pollution and clouds or that on any other night my star might be obscured as well; I’d know the stars are still up there. And so it is with God’s care, I mused. It is constant and vibrant, even when struggles and doubts seem to shroud it. Nothing can snuff it out; it is always here, waiting to pierce the fog and shine into our lives. Now I know why nature soothes ruffled nerves: through its wonders, it whispers to us of the One who cares for us no matter what the circumstances. ■



# Take One, Take Two

By Iris Richard

## Take one

Hearing the crunch of metal against metal as I backed out of my parking spot almost made my heart stop. I was in a hurry and had quickly scanned the parking lot before climbing behind the wheel, but somehow I had overlooked a pick-up that was parked in an unusual place.

I quickly got out of the car to examine the damage and found a nasty crack and dent on my bumper, plus a broken tail light on the pick-up. I scribbled an apology and my phone number on a piece of paper, which I stuck under the windshield wiper of the other car. I would have to deal with this incident once I got

back home. With ruffled nerves I drove out the gate.

I had planned to beat rush hour, but as I reached the main road, I realized to my dismay that traffic had already been building up, which meant I would be late for an important meeting. I impatiently drummed on the steering wheel as the traffic crawled along the congested two-lane road.

I felt irritated about the incident at the parking lot and kept replaying it in my mind, trying to figure out how I could have overlooked the parked vehicle. The day had only just begun and my stomach was already in knots when a minivan cut in the line right in front of me. I rolled down my window and shouted an angry rebuke. So much for being gracious, I thought. Actually, I didn't feel any grace for the day, which had started off on the wrong foot.

Sitting in traffic gave me time to think and reflect on my morning routines of recent weeks, and I realized that my usual mindful, quiet mornings had been squeezed out because of an increased workload and tighter schedule. It seemed that since then I had become easily irritated and unusually short-tempered. Right there, as the traffic slowly cleared, I committed to getting back my moments of meditation in the morning.

## Take two

The next week's schedule was packed, and glancing over my agenda, it didn't seem that there was much of a margin for anything but work. To weather the workload, I surely would need an extra amount of endurance and patience. I needed a plan.

I decided to set my alarm for half an hour earlier and put together a variety of inspirational reading material and a blank notebook with a pen to keep in the living room for my early morning meditation time. I knew that waking up early was going to be a sacrifice, as I treasure each minute of sleep, but I was determined to give this new commitment a try.

When my alarm rang the first morning, I mustered up the energy to crawl out of bed and sleepwalked to the living room, where I settled into a corner of the couch. It was still dark outside, but the first birds' crystal clear song began to announce the soon-coming sunrise. Their song sounded beautiful and inspired me to look at the positives in my life.

As the first timid sunrays crept into the room, I felt more awake and picked up one of the inspirational articles I'd wanted to read. Inspired by the text, which happened to be almost tailor-made advice for my busy week ahead, I copied a paragraph into my notebook. After the half hour was over, I felt refreshed and ready to face the day.

As I started keeping my half-hour morning "appointments", it wasn't the absence of problems, setbacks, or snags that made my work a success, but the way I reacted to them, which helped to smooth rough edges, preserve my nerves—and, I'm sure, made me a more pleasant person to be around.

My quiet moments in the morning have once again become a habit. This first appointment of the day has given me strength to weather the storms of life, to keep the peace, to have more clarity of thought, and to process situations in a more beneficial way. ■

# A Child's Choice

PARENTING  
FROM THE HEART



By Anna Perlini

**I**t was 1996, and our family had just moved from the safety of Italy to a somewhat still troubled and unstable post-war Croatia, settling in a large apartment on the outskirts of Rijeka.

Our neighbors—a mix of refugees, widows, and elderly relatives caring for children whose parents had died or left to find work—had all gone through traumatic experiences as a result of the tragic conflicts that had only recently ended.

Ivan lived on the floor below ours. He wore a patch over one eye, he couldn't hear well, and he also suffered from extremely strong headaches due to a piece of shrapnel in his brain that the doctors couldn't operate on.

Ivan had a wife and two daughters, but it was easy to see that he was finding it challenging to adjust to family life. He was no longer the strong man beaming in the photos in his living room, but a broken soldier suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), who spent most of his time caring for his kids or looking pensively at the horizon.

My youngest son, Jeff, who was five at the time, was a bit scared of our neighbor—and I wasn't sure what to

think myself. I realized that I never really spoke to Ivan, due to my limited knowledge of Croatian at the time, but also because I didn't know how to face such obvious suffering.

One day, I explained to Jeff about what our poor neighbor was going through and the reason he wore a patch. I taught him a simple, kind greeting in Croatian, and suggested that he say that to Ivan the next time we saw him.

I will never forget that moment the next time we met Ivan, when this fierce-looking man bent down to hear what a small five-year-old whispered in his ear. Then he straightened, and I could see tears trickling down his face as he whispered, "Thank you."

From that moment on, Ivan and Jeff became good friends, and we often visited him and his family, and to simply keep him company.

Ivan passed away not long after. He had been struggling with a lot of health problems and discouragement, but in his final years he found solace and peace.

Jeff is now a grown man and a father himself, but I still fondly remember that day that my little boy helped replace fear with love through a simple kindness. ■



# The Story of the Two Wolves

By Melli O'Brien, adapted

**A**n old Cherokee Indian chief was teaching his grandson about life.

“A fight is going on inside me,” he told the young boy, “a fight between two wolves. One is evil, full of anger, sorrow, regret, greed, self-pity and false pride. The other is good, full of joy, peace, love, humility, kindness and faith.

“This same fight is going on inside of you, grandson... and inside of every other person on the face of this earth.”

The grandson ponders this for a moment and then asks, “Grandfather, which wolf will win?”

The old man smiled and simply said, “The one you feed.”

I love this story. It's potent. The two wolves represent to me—mindfulness, (the ‘good’ wolf), and un-mindfulness or ‘ego’ as some might say, (the ‘bad’ wolf).

Mindfulness, in my experience and observation, brings with it wisdom, compassion, love, connectedness, and inner peace.

Un-mindfulness, I see in myself and the world at large, leads to suffering, anger, greed and destructiveness.

I needed this story right now to remind me of what's really truly important to me—what really, ultimately matters.

I got busy these past weeks and lost a

bit of balance in my life. I started to make little decisions, seemingly insignificant ones that were feeding the wrong wolf—the wolf I don't really want to feed. Then that ‘bad’ wolf started to rear his head.

Then I noticed, I woke up! And now I choose something different—with every fiber of my being I make that choice—to feed the ‘good’ wolf of mindfulness.

This story reminded me to continue to take responsibility for cultivating and nurturing a beautiful mind. Every day. Every moment.

It reminded me that every day we make choices, important choices that could be overlooked as being trivial—and these choices define us. They are a statement of who we choose to be in this life, and what impact we will have on the world around us.

It reminded me that even when the outside world is demanding, the state of my inner world is my primary concern, because without inner balance, without mindfulness, I cannot properly live in harmony and wisdom with myself and with life.

What about you? Which wolf have you been feeding? ■

(For more, visit <http://mrsmindfulness.com>)

# The 60 - Minute Challenge



By Tina Kapp

I read an interesting self-help article called “Take Charge of Your Life in Just One Hour,” [[Fairlady, April 2013]] by Anna Rich. It stood out to me because the advice was simple, clear, practical,

and putting it into practice actually fits into one hour. Here are my favorite tips (and a few personal adaptations) of what you can do in that one hour. Some points might work for you and others might not,

but hopefully, a few things will make sense and help you get your day in order.

### **One minute: Make your bed**

It might seem silly or inconsequential, but once your room looks neater, you'll feel better already. If you're a relatively neat person, it helps you feel on top of your day when things are in place. If you're on the opposite end of the scale, making your bed may help you find your favorite, long-lost slippers, or that bank statement you were sure the dog ate.

### **Fifteen minutes: Eat breakfast**

There are a lot of health benefits to eating breakfast, although not everyone is a breakfast person. The main point is being aware of your health, making good choices, and not letting them be made for you by running out of time before you can manage to catch a bite.

### **Two minutes: Write a to-do list for the day**

Having a to-do list helps you see exactly what you need to do so you can make sure you get the most important things done first. Being able to tick things off your list gives you that fantastic well-deserved feeling of accomplishment, and helps ensure you don't neglect or miss doing things that are timely or that have a deadline.

### **Ten minutes: Pray for someone or some event**

Getting your spiritual side geared up is as important as the physical side. Take some time to pray for friends and loved ones that come to mind, as well as for the things you're working on or your

upcoming projects. Did you hear about something tragic in the news? You can take a few minutes to pray for those involved.

### **Two minutes: Practice gratitude**

There are so many things we take for granted each day—like our eyesight, our health, opportunities to study and work, friends and family, a roof overhead. Taking a few minutes every day to practice gratitude for the good things God has given us, helps us to see life from a better perspective. Positivity is a powerful thing; it has hosts of health benefits and can even help you walk through doors of possibility that you may not have attempted if you were focused too much on the negative.

### **Thirty minutes: Exercise**

We are physically inactive for much of modern life: studying, working at a desk, reading, driving, or riding in a car or on public transport, sleeping or watching TV, sitting in front of a tablet or a PC. The challenge is to see if we can give ourselves at least 30 minutes to go for a walk or do something active that we enjoy. Taking good care of yourself is important.

If you can add these things to your daily routine, you may be surprised at how much better you'll feel and how much more on top of things you'll become. I've just started, and I love it already.

The most important thing is sticking with it. Anything good that you do, even for a few minutes every day, pays off over time! ■



# Nilo's Smile

By Andrew Mateyak

When I ponder who the greatest people in my world are, I find there are so many to choose from. There are great men and women from the past with outstanding accomplishments, my wonderful parents who raised me well, my teachers, and so many good people making sacrifices to help others around the world.

Someone else who comes to my mind is my friend Nilo. I first met Nilo at a market several years ago. I was walking by and I saw him pushing himself along. You see, Nilo is disabled. I didn't have much money with me but I took what change I had and put it in the cup which he held out. He looked up at me with a wonderful smile.

"Thank you, my friend," he responded, and something about the way he said it made me feel good inside.

The next time I was at the market, I went back over to the same spot to see if Nilo was still there. As soon as his eyes met mine, they lit up with that wonderful smile again.

"Hello, my friend!" he shouted out across the road and waved his hands as I went over to see him.

We talked for a while, and from that day on, whenever I was at the market, I always tried to take the time to see him.

"What is it about Nilo that makes him different from other people I see there on the side of the road?" I asked my wife.

We thought about it awhile, and then came to the conclusion: "It's his smile!" In spite of his hardships and his disabilities, he doesn't act depressed as if he hates life and the world around him. No, he always has that wonderful smile on his face and cheerfully calls me his friend, even if I don't have much to give him.

That's a great person! That's someone I respect, someone who can face the hardships of his life every day with a smile and keep moving forward in spite of the difficulties. If we could be like that, the world would be a better place for everyone. ■

**For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with years,  
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth,  
Is the smile that shines through tears.  
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850–1919)**

# Sanctuary



By Koos Stenger

“The conclusion”—the speaker said in a booming voice—“is simple. Thank God for the small things in life. Don’t look for the millions, but be thankful for the cents.” Everybody applauded.

The seminar was over. With my notebook full of hastily scribbled notes and two new self-help books on how to enjoy life, I left the meeting hall somewhat bewildered.

It had actually been a decent seminar, but I hadn’t heard anything new. The message—to enjoy the small things in life and to do so daily—is as old as the hills. How to do that remained a mystery even after the seminar.

At the start of the year, my life was in shambles. Our bank account was almost empty and health troubles were looming. And now, fear had found a comfortable resting place in my daily thoughts.

How could I be thankful for small blessings like a cup of hot tea under the winter sun, or the reassuring purr of a cat on my lap, when I didn’t know how to survive the next month? There wasn’t a moment where the cares of this life weren’t besieging me with their taunts

and logical explanations for why my life was a failure and I wasn’t going to make it.

Sanctuary. I heard the word in my mind as clearly as if someone had spoken it directly to me. I needed sanctuary.

In the olden days, sanctuary referred to a person’s right to protection within the walls of a consecrated place of worship. As long as the person seeking shelter stayed within the confines of that building, their right to sanctuary was usually respected.

How did that apply to me, though?

I too was on the run. My fears were as real as the pursuers of a miscreant in medieval times. Trying to hide from them was impossible. I needed to take time and find a place where I could order my thoughts, meditate, put things in perspective, and feel safe. And when I did, that’s exactly what happened.

What about all my troubles? Aren’t they still there?

Yes, they are, but after time in my “sanctuary” their sting is gone, and I am better able to handle them. And the best part is, I can run back to my sanctuary as often as necessary. ■

# Moments

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



We do not remember days, we remember moments.—**Cesare Pavese**

It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light.  
—**Aristotle Onassis**

The moments of happiness we enjoy take us by surprise. It is not that we seize them, but that they seize us.—**Ashley Montagu**

Cherish all your happy moments; they make a fine cushion for old age.  
—**Booth Tarkington**

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world.—**John Milton**

Life is a succession of moments, to live each one is to succeed.—**Corita Kent**

It is in your moments of decision that your destiny is shaped.—**Tony Robbins**

If you want to relax, watch the clouds pass by if you're lying on the grass, or sit in front of the creek; just doing nothing and having those still moments is what really rejuvenates the body.—**Miranda Kerr**

Everybody's life has these moments, where one thing leads to another. Some are big and obvious and some are small and seemingly insignificant.—**Peter Jackson**

Miracles come in moments. Be ready and willing.—**Wayne Dyer**

