

Special Issue

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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After special occasions like Ramadan and Eid, we often wish they could have lasted just a little longer. During these special times, family ties are strengthened, and somehow otherwise seemingly insurmountable problems are more easily solved, or smoothed over. But “normal” life resumes, and as we go back to work, hard as we might try, our sincere and heartfelt intentions to hold onto those positive mind-sets fall short. We get impatient when under pressure, tempers flare when faced with frustrating situations, and our love wears thin in the face of sometimes glaring shortcomings of those around us. How we wish we could be... Well, more perfect!

Thankfully, not all is lost. When the festivities end and slowly get lost in the midst of our busy lives, we can refresh ourselves and regain that positive perspective that pervades the festive season by taking some time to stop, reflect, and meditate. Even a short time of focusing on the things that are most important in life can renew us and help us to cultivate good deeds to where they become fixed entries on our calendar, so caring becomes a lifestyle, and happiness a state of mind.

We hope the articles and anecdotes in this special issue of *Motivated* will inspire and uplift, and be a timely reminder that qualities such as love, gratitude, humility, and trust can truly make a difference in our lives, and in the lives of others—not only during special occasions, but the whole year through.

Happy Eid, dear friends! May you be blessed, this season and always.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Thoughts on Renewal

Making each day new

By David Fontaine, adapted

In this high-speed race of life, we need a time when we can slow down, collect our thoughts, evaluate what is happening around us, and get direction from the One Who knows the end from the beginning.

True, it is not easy to put necessary work aside, and stop right in the middle of everything that is going on. Yet, it is something worth learning. We would not worry and fret so if we took some time to slow down and let our minds step outside our immediate surroundings. We would find peace and rest for our soul in that beautiful realm where all is calm and quiet. It would completely renew us and bring new vision and fresh inspiration.

If we can learn to switch from “go” to “stop” and recharge—even for a short time each day—we will come back renewed and ready to face whatever life may bring our way.

Let's start today! ●

Silence and solitude

Author unknown

There is a popular belief these days that the world belongs to those with a lot of drive and initiative, the go-getters. But what we often forget is that those who are leaders in their fields often take time to think, ponder, and meditate on their lives and the lives of others, and that they find their strength, new ideas, and motivation in quiet and positive reflection.

In quietness and in confidence, we find our strength. There's a time and purpose for everything in our life; a time for solitude and a time for friendship, a time for work and a time for relaxation. It is in keeping the right balance between these times that we will make the most of the gift of life we've been given. ●

Thoughts on Love

A lesson in humanity

Adapted from *A Lifetime of Success*, by Pat Williams and Fleming H. Revell

Years ago, a 10-year-old boy approached the counter of an ice-cream shop and climbed onto a stool.

“What does an ice cream sundae cost?” he asked the waitress. “Fifty cents,” she answered.

The youngster reached deep in his pockets and pulled out an assortment of change, counting it carefully as the waitress grew impatient. She had “bigger” customers to wait on.

“Well, how much would just plain ice cream be?” the boy asked.

The waitress responded with noticeable irritation in her voice, “Thirty-five cents.”

Again, the boy slowly counted his money. “May I have some plain ice cream in a dish then, please?” He gave her the correct amount, and she brought him the ice cream.

Later, the waitress returned to clear the boy’s dish and when she picked it up, she felt a lump in her throat. There on the counter the boy had left 15 cents. She realized that he had had enough money for the sundae, but sacrificed it so that he could leave her a tip. ●



Love loves the unlovely

Author unknown

A very wealthy man lived in the beautiful countryside with his wife and his millions. He was childless and said he'd give it all if he just had a son to love and to pass his inheritance on to. As his wife passed her thirties and entered her forties, he began to lose hope. Then one day she became pregnant. However, complications in childbirth cost his wife her life as she gave birth to a son with Down's syndrome. The father loved his boy just the same. He poured his life into that boy. My, how he loved him!

At the age of twelve, the boy died and, suffering from a broken heart, the father followed his two loved ones shortly.

With no one to inherit the father's wealth, the will dictated that a great auction would take place. An auctioneer would sell the houses, the land, and the livestock to the highest bidder. Many wealthy people drove for hundreds of miles to attend the auction.

The auctioneer began the sale with an 11 x 14 framed picture of the boy, who had a Mongoloid face. "What do I hear for this first item up for bid?" the auctioneer cried. No one bid a dime. The audience was silent. They waited for the valuable things to come.

"Do I have a bid? ... Does anyone care to bid?" At the last available minute a woman in the crowd said, "I'll give five dollars for that picture, it's all I've got." She was the maid who had cared for the boy during his twelve years of life. "Do I hear ten...will anyone bid ten? Going once, going twice...sold to the woman for five dollars."

Then the auctioneer tore a letter from the back of the picture as he handed it to the woman who had won the bid. The letter was written in the hand of the father just before he died. It was signed and notarized.

"To the person who thinks enough of my son to buy this picture, I give my entire estate."

The auctioneer's hammer hit the anvil as he proclaimed, "Auction over!" The hush that fell over the crowd lingered in the air for a long time. ●



The Love Cup

Adapted from *A Hug and a Kiss and a Kick in the Pants*, by Kay Kuzma



Seven-year-old Lara was having a miserable day. She whined, pouted, pushed her little sister, Lisa, and then grabbed away Lisa's favorite doll.

Finally, mother could stand it no longer, "Lara, what has gotten into you? You'd better straighten up and be kind to your sister, or you're going to get it!"

Lara paid no attention to the warning and continued to say mean things to Lisa.

At bedtime, mother told Lara that her sour attitude made her very unhappy. That made Lara even angrier. "You like Lisa more than you like me," Lara retorted. She fell asleep sulking.

The next morning Lara woke up in a bad mood. She complained miserably when mother attempted to comb out the tangles in her hair. Mother was beside herself; what was wrong with Lara?

Could Lara be suffering from a lack of positive attention? Mother called, "Lara, I think I know what is wrong with you."

"You do?" Lara looked puzzled.

"Yes," said her mother, "your love cup is empty! Come over here and let me fill it up."

Mom sat Lara on her lap, hugged and kissed her, and told her how special she was. Lara was surprised, but she obviously enjoyed the attention. She knew she deserved the opposite. After a minute, mother asked Lara if her love cup was full yet.

"No, but it's up to here," said Lara, as she pointed to her chest.

Mother loved her up again. Then she asked, "Is it full now?"

"No," said Lara, "but it's up to my chin."

"Good," said mother, with a big hug. "Let's see if we can't get that cup so full that it will spill right over the top."

Finally, with a big smile on her face, Lara said that she was full and running over.

"Well, if you've got that much love," said mother, "why don't you give some of it to your sister?"

"Oh, no," said Lara, "Lisa will just push me away." Mother knew that after the obnoxious way Lara had treated Lisa that just might happen, but she encouraged Lara to try. Somewhat hesitantly, Lara went up to Lisa and said, "Lisa, I love you," and gave her a hug. Lisa hugged her sister back, real tight. Then they both headed off hand in hand to the breakfast table.

But that's not the end of the story. A few weeks later, mother had a terrible day. She grumbled and spoke harshly to the girls. After a while, Lara said, "Mommy, I think I know what's wrong with you. Your love cup's empty!" Then she threw her arms around her mom's neck and gave her a big kiss. Do you know what happened to mother's love cup? Just like that, it filled to overflowing and mom was her happy self again! ●



Thoughts on Gratitude

The value of simple pleasures

Adapted from *Zlata's Diary*, by Zlata Filipovic

Eleven-year-old Zlata Filipovic, like so many girls her age, kept a diary in 1991.

“We gave ourselves a treat today,” she wrote one July day. “We picked the cherries off the tree in the yard and ate them all up. We had watched it blossom and its small green fruits slowly turn red and now here we were eating them. Oh, you’re a wonderful cherry tree!”

Zlata’s words read like any young girl’s whimsical musings. But this innocent summer activity held a much deeper meaning: Zlata wrote the diary entry in the midst of war in her

hometown of Sarajevo.

“I miss fruit a lot,” she continued. “In these days of war in Sarajevo, there is no basic food or any of the other things a person needs, and there is no fruit. But now I can say that I ate myself silly on cherries.”

That simple pleasure brought tremendous joy to a girl who witnessed brutality daily.

Simple pleasures can do that if we take the time to appreciate what the moment offers. ●

Look on the bright side of life

When we walk the gratitude route, the negative fades away and we feel no longer bound by the rules and limitations of life. We are free to enjoy life to the full, regardless of the current state of our surroundings.

Gratitude turns the darkness into day, transforms our sunset into a sunrise, turns dark clouds inside out to reveal their silver

linings, and makes winter look and feel like spring. It alters our way of thinking and our surroundings.

When we are grateful, even through our tears and heartaches, it is like a farmer watering a dry and dusty field that has been barren, and then watching the crops start to spring up.

As we express our gratitude, we will watch new life grow from barren earth. ●

Giving thanks

Author unknown

Every negative thought can be turned into praise, and a thought of thankfulness. We can turn negativity into strength by determining that instead of dwelling on ourselves and what we don't have, we will change the negative thoughts into gratitude.

That should be our goal: transforming our negative and comparing thoughts to ones of praise and thankfulness.

A grateful heart recharges the soul and revitalizes the body. It releases us from

bondage, and lifts our awareness to a place where the wings of consciousness can let us soar in harmony with God.

Gratitude is a way of being.

A wise man once said, "The angels hover over the Earth looking for the rays of thanksgiving and gratitude that radiate from a selfless heart."

Gratitude is the giving of thanks, not one day a year, but every day, every minute, and with every breath. ●

When tempted

Forget the slander you have heard,
Forget the hasty, unkind word,
Forget the quarrel and the cause,
Forget the whole affair, because,
Forgetting is the only way.
Forget the storm of yesterday,
Forget the chap whose sour face
Forgets to smile in any place.
Forget that you are not a millionaire,
Forget the grey streaks in your hair,
Forget the coffee when it is cold,
Forget to kick, forget to scold.
Forget the plumber's awful charge,
Forget the doctor's bill is large;
Forget the repair man and his ways,
Forget the winter's blustery days.
Forget the neighbour's wagging tongue.
But don't forget to thank God
when the day is done.

Thoughts on Humility

The first test of greatness

Author unknown

A farmer and his young son went into the wheat fields at harvest time. As they looked across the waving fields of golden grain, the boy exclaimed, “Look, father, at those wheat heads that hold themselves up so proudly. They must be the ones that are filled with grain, and I would suppose that those with their heads bowed down are of no account.”

“You misjudged, my son!” the farmer said, and taking some of the heads into his hands, he showed the boy that the heads that stood up so proudly had only a few, poor, shriveled grains or were completely empty, while those that bowed their heads humbly were filled with large, full, golden kernels of wheat. ●

Two ducks and a frog

Author unknown

In a certain pond on one of the farms in the East lived two ducks and a frog. Now these neighbors were the best of friends, all day long they played together. But as the hot summer days came, the pond began to dry up and soon there was so little water that they all realized that they would have to move. Now the ducks could easily fly to another place, but what about their friend the frog?

Finally, they decided that they would put a stick in the bill of each duck. Then the frog would hang onto the stick with his mouth and they would fly him to another pond.—And so they did.

As they were flying, a farmer out in his field looked up, saw them and said, “Well, isn’t that a clever idea? I wonder who thought of it!”

The frog said, “I d-i-i-i-d-d-d....” ●

The shepherd's room

Author unknown

A certain rich man arose to his grand and exalted state from very humble surroundings. He had been a shepherd in his earlier days and so, in his mansion, he had one room known as “The Shepherd’s Room.” In that room were reproductions of hills and valleys, running streams, rocks and sheepfolds. Here were the staff he had carried and the clothes he had worn as a lad when herding his sheep. When asked one day the meaning of this, he replied, “If ever my heart is tempted to haughtiness and pride, I go into that room and remind myself of what I once was.” ●

Thoughts on Trust

The confidence of a child

Author unknown

A six-year-old went into a bank and asked to see the president. A courteous clerk showed him into the president's private office. The boy explained that his school's club was raising money for a playground, and he asked the banker if he would please contribute.

The banker laid a banknote and a coin on the desk and said, "Take your choice, boy."

He picked up the coin and said, "My mother always taught me to take the smallest piece." Picking up the banknote also, he added, "But so I won't lose this coin, I'll take this piece of paper to wrap it up in." ●

Trust and take

By Virginia Lee

A well-known lecturer offered a Rolex watch to the oldest of a group of boys sitting on the front row of the auditorium.

"Son, would you like to have this watch?" said the speaker, holding it out to him. "I'm sorry, sir," answered the fellow, "but I don't think you mean it." Looking at the next lad, the speaker repeated the question. Quickly there came the answer, "This isn't April Fools."

Again the question was repeated, and down the line came similar jocular answers.

At last, the speaker offered the watch to a boy who was sitting on the edge of his seat, with bright, eager eyes, focused intently on the face of the presenter. His feet hardly touched the floor, but he was balanced on the edge of the seat just ready to leap, and the speaker did not even have the opportunity to finish his sentence.

"Young man, would you like ...?" That was enough! His hand quickly reached for the watch. Grabbed is the only word to describe the intense, eager action of the believing boy, who instantly pocketed the gift, and while wiggling back on the seat in a pleased manner, he said with a satisfied, grown-up sigh that it was just what he had always wanted.

After the event, the crowd of boys surrounded the speaker with protests.

"Aw, common on, how could we have known you really meant it?" and "Say, that's just the kind of watch I wanted." "Why didn't you tell us you were in earnest?" and then another, "If you really meant it, why didn't you put it in my hand, or say it to me again, so I would know."

Each boy wanted the speaker to put that watch right in his hand, rather than to reach out and take it for himself, while the youngest of them all reached out to take what was offered. ●

Words of wisdom

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Take a rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop. —Ovid

The fruit of silence is tranquility. —Arabic Proverb

A thankful person is thankful under all circumstances. A complaining soul complains even if he lives in paradise. —Author Unknown

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food, and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies with yourself. —Tecumseh, Shawnee Chief

The ways to God are many... But the shortest and easiest is to serve others ... and to make others happy. —Abu Sa'id, (967 AD)

I hate the giving of the hand unless the whole man accompanies it. —Ralph Waldo Emerson

Good humor and character are manifested in a cheerful face, generous giving, and not imposing one's problems on others. —Hasan Al-Basri in Nurbakhsh

If instead of a gem, or even a flower, we should cast the gift of a loving thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels give. —George Macdonald

Hardship may dishearten at first, but every hardship passes away. All despair is followed by hope; all darkness is followed by sunshine. —Rumi

Do good, and leave behind a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name in kindness, love, and mercy on the hearts of those you meet, year by year, and you will never be forgotten. Your name and your good deeds will shine as the stars of heaven. —Author Unknown