



MISSION ENRICHMENT

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The Spirit of the Gospel in Service of the Mission

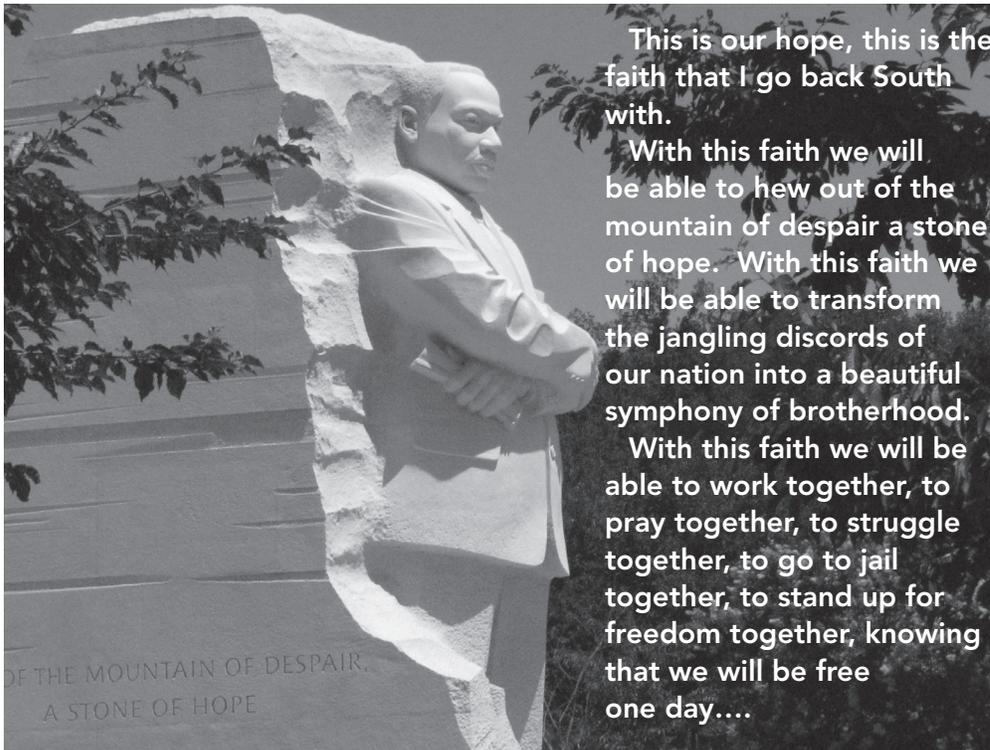
NEVER CONFUSE THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY WITH THE WILL OF GOD. –Charles Colson

Year of Jesus Christ, Savior and Evangelizer

Free to Be Me

(excerpt quoted in Through Seasons of the Heart by John Powell, SJ, p. 23)

Do you really love yourself? Could I ask you to make a little test with yourself: It has to be done in the bathroom tonight. Be sure to lock the door. Anywitnesses will certainly wonder. Go to the mirror and say, “Hey, I love you!” Now that is not the test. I presume that you will do that. The test is: How did you feel when you did that? Can you say those words and really mean them? Or would you rather feel that such an act of loving one’s self is silly and ridiculous? Carl Jung, the great psychiatrist, once reflected that we’re all familiar with the words of Jesus, “Whatever you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me.” Then Jung asks a very probing question: “What if you discovered that the least of the brethren of Jesus, the one who needs your love the most, the one that you can help the most by loving, the one to whom your love will be most meaningful—what if you discovered that this least of the brethren of Jesus. . . is you? †



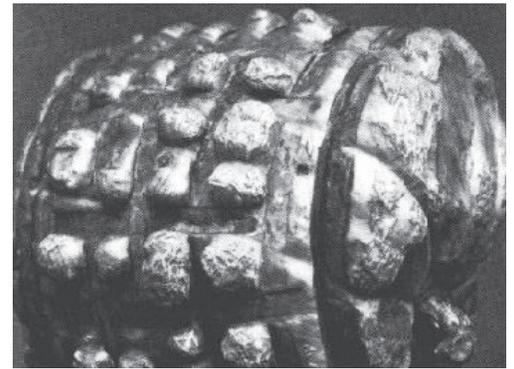
This is our hope, this is the faith that I go back South with.

With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day....

Do You Know Your Own Strength?

by Steve Goodier



In an interesting experiment at Amherst College (Amherst, Massachusetts) a band of steel was secured around a young squash. As the squash grew, it exerted pressure on the steel band. Researchers wanted to know just how strong a growing squash could be, so they measured the force it brought to bear on its constraints. They initially estimated that it might be able to exert as much as 500 pounds of pressure, which is a rather remarkable feat in itself.

In one month, the squash was pressing the hoped-for 500 pounds. But it didn’t stop there. In two months it was applying 1,500 pounds against the steel band and soon the researchers measured 2,000 pounds of pressure. That is when they decided to strengthen the band which was now threatening to snap. As it grew, the squash applied more and more pressure in order to free itself of the constraint. It finally achieved the astounding force of 5,000 pounds of pressure to bear on the band (ten times their original estimation) – when the rind split open.

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Ideas or comments are welcome.

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Geri Furmanek, Editor, Mission Enrichment Office

c/o The Esquiline, 726 Community Drive, Belleville, IL 62223 | Tel: 618-394-6990 | e-mail: gfurmanek@omiusa.org

I never suspected that I would have to learn how to live—
that there were specific disciplines and ways of seeing the world
I had to master before I could awaken to a simple happy,
uncomplicated life.
—Dan Millman

Three Great Ways to Approach Life

from *Life's Greatest Lessons*

by Hal Urban, pp. 42-46

Golfers know that the success of their game is determined by how they approach the ball. Pilots know that the most critical part of landing a plane is in making the right approach. Lawyers know that how they approach the jury will be a determining factor in each case. Approaching means getting ready, taking the preliminary steps toward some type of achievement. The right approach to anything sets the stage for creating the results we hope for. In essence, our attitudes are the way we approach life. And the way we approach it will determine our success or failure.

Based on everything I've ever done, read, heard, and seen, I'm convinced that there are three great ways to approach life. They're three of the most important choices we can ever make....

1. Think with an open mind—

An open mind is an attitude. It means you don't think you already know everything. That's the trouble with too many people. They learn a little and then think they know everything. Their minds shut down, and nothing new gets in. They become know-it-alls. That's the worst mistake you can make.

An open mind isn't the same thing as an empty head.... The purpose of an education isn't to fill our minds but to open them. The more knowledge we have the more we realize how much we don't know. This is what open-mindedness is. It helps us to see all sides, to be more understanding, and to be aware of our own limitations.

2. Think for yourself—

Without any effort or even realizing that it's happening we can turn our lives into exercises in mindless conformity: go with the flow "to be in," be cool. In other words, let others do our thinking for us.

I know how easy it is because I've been there. It's like getting into a big circle and following the follower to nowhere.

If the ability to choose is our greatest freedom and source of strength, then we can't afford to give up the right to choose our thoughts. They're our most valuable resource. The media, the advertising world, and other people try to do our thinking for us every day. They'll take over our minds if we let them. But we have a choice. If we pay attention to what's going on around us, we can screen out the trash and preserve the right to think for ourselves. We can choose our own thoughts and, with them, our own beliefs, values, and priorities. We can do the things that are right instead of the things everyone else is doing....

3. Think constructively—

Does positive thinking work? Not always, but it's a lot more effective than negative thinking is. Actually, they both work to a degree. They set the wheels in motion for fulfilling our expectations.

Positive thinking has a nice ring to it, but to most people it's just wishful thinking. That's why it doesn't always work. Positive thinking must be accompanied with genuine belief. Believing is a mental and spiritual process which is deeper than the average person's notion of what positive thinking is. People who succeed in life don't think they can; they believe they can. That belief in themselves doesn't result from isolated incidents of positive thinking. It develops over a period of time, builds on itself, and eventually becomes a way of life.

That's why I prefer the term constructive thinking. While similar to positive thinking, it takes into account the fact that no one can have positive thoughts a hundred percent of the time. Constructive thinkers are aware of negative ideas clamoring for attention

but don't allow themselves to be dragged down by them. Instead, they train themselves to choose thoughts which build character and lead to personal achievement.

In recent years, the human mind has been compared to a computer. Both are marvelous instruments, but they only work well when fed the right information. Computer programmers have an acronym called GIGO: "garbage in, garbage out." The mind operates the same way. It has to be fed with useful information in order to function at maximum efficiency. Constructive thinkers know this. †

Compassion

1001 Quotes,

Illustrations & Humorous Stories

The instructor from a dog training workshop in Salt Lake City noted that a dog's disposition can be tested by the owner. If the owner will fall down and pretend to be hurt, a dog with a bad temper will tend to bite him. But a good dog will show concern and may lick the fallen owner's face.



Susan Matice attended the class then decided to test her two dogs. While eating pizza in her living room, she stood up, clutched her heart, screamed, and fell to the floor. Her two dogs looked at her, looked at each other, then raced to the coffee table for her pizza †

IF I STAY OUT OF OTHERS' AFFAIRS AND BECOME MORE AWARE OF MY OWN, I HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF FINDING SOME SERENITY."

(*Courage to Change*, p. 234)

The Magic Lamp

(from Hilarious One Liners)

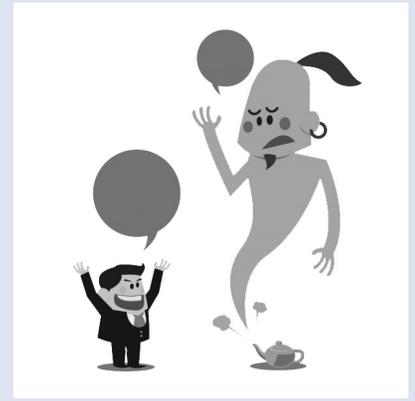
The boss and two managers, junior and senior, are on their way to a meeting when they all spot a magic lamp. They rub the lamp and a genie appears.

“Normally,” says the genie, “each rub allows for three wishes but there are three of you, so... one each.”

Senior manager says, “Me first! I want to be on a boat in the Bahamas with plenty of crew, food, and drink.” Pffftt! And he was gone.

Junior manager says, “Send me to Florida to a beautiful condo with all the fixin’s!” Pffftt! He’s gone, too.

Calmly, the boss says, “I want those two idiots back in the office by 1:30 p.m.” †



NOT MAGIC, BUT MIRACLE

(from *The Spirituality of Imperfection* by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham)

“Miracle” is simply the wonder of the unique that points us back to the wonder of the everyday.”

—Maurice Friedman

Spirituality is aligned not with magic and the effort to control, but with miracle, “the wonder of the unique that points us back to the wonder of the everyday.”

We do not create miracles, we witness them. In witnessing them, we must acknowledge that they exist. In acknowledging that they exist, we must admit that we do not know “why” or “how.” Somehow above and beyond human reason, miracle, like mystery, is inexplicable, unsolvable, incomprehensible.

The Founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) wrote: Why A.A. works is fundamentally a mystery. When we consider that for thousands of years, few alcoholics escaped from their misery and that we are now witnessing a wholesale escape, that adds up to a miracle. And a miracle is a mystery. (*A.A. Grapevine*, February 1948)

And **miracle**, Bill and the other early A.A.s knew from their own experience of alcoholism and recovery, is exactly the opposite of magic. **Miracle** involves openness

to mystery, the welcoming of surprise, the acceptance of those realities over which we have no control. **Magic** is the attempt to be in control, to manage everything—it is the claim to be, or to have a special relationship with, some kind of “god.”

Underlying the very concept of miracle is the simple acceptance that we are not in ultimate, total control. This is also, of course, the inherent, eternal, fundamental message of spirituality: You cannot control everything. **You are a human being, and human beings make mistakes, and that’s okay—because you are a human being, not a God.**

Addiction represents the ultimate effort to control, the definitive demand for magic... and the final failure of spirituality. Turning to the “magic” of chemicals signifies the desperate (and doomed) attempt to fill a spiritual void with a material reality—to make “magic” a substitute for miracle. Addiction has been described as the belief that whenever there is “something wrong with me,” it can be “fixed” by something outside of me. That false start generates ever more drastic illusions. The search for “the quick fix,” inevitably unfulfilled by drugs and unsated by material things, leaps next to spiritual realities and the search for “instant spirituality”—some sort of quick “spiritual fix.”

... “Drunkenness can be a kind of shortcut to the higher life, the attempt to achieve a higher state without an emotional and intellectual effort,” observed Dr. E. M. Jellinek, a pioneer in alcoholism theory and treatment.... But shortcuts, alcoholics learn the hard way, are dead ends, and recovery from addiction requires giving up the claim to be God, the demand to control experience, the search to achieve “magical” solutions.

The core discovery in this area of “not magic but mystery and miracle” concerns **limits and responsibility**—what we human beings can and cannot do, can and cannot will. The difference between magic and miracle reflects the difference between willfulness and willingness. Willfulness involves the demand for change—usually some change in realities outside the self, but also, at times, the demand for change in oneself. Willingness involves the acceptance that one is not in absolute control, thus opening up the possibility of being changed—being open to what change is possible even if one is not in control....

We can will... but we must also be willing. This can be a difficult, even painful lesson to accept, for we tend to want “either-or,” especially in matters of being “controlled” or “in control.”

Spirituality involves not magic but miracle and mystery; not willfulness but willingness. Spirituality can

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Do You Know your Own Strength? *continued*

Researchers sliced it open and found it to be inedible, as it was filled with tough, coarse fibers that had grown specifically to push against the steel which held it in. Since the plant required great amounts of nutrients to gain the strength needed to break its bonds, its roots extended unusual distances in all directions. In fact, it had grown to be so large and powerful, it single-handedly took over the garden space.

Similarly, we may have no idea just how strong we really can be when faced with great obstacles. If a squash can exert that much physical pressure, how much more strength can human beings apply to a situation? Most of us are stronger than we realize. Chilean writer Isabel Allende reminds us, “We all have an unsuspected reserve of strength inside that emerges when life puts us to the test.”

Are you being tested? Do you face an immovable obstacle? Does it seem overwhelming? If so, remember the squash. Its single-minded purpose was to break the bonds which held it. If you patiently focus your energy – what problem can stand against the great mental, spiritual and physical strength you can bring to bear? †

COMPETITION

*1001 Quotes,
Illustrations & Humorous Stories, p. 441*

The five-year-old ringbearer was obviously worried as he looked down the long aisle of the church where his aunt was to be married the following day. His grandmother had an idea. “I think I’ll give a prize to the person who does the best job tomorrow.” She told him.

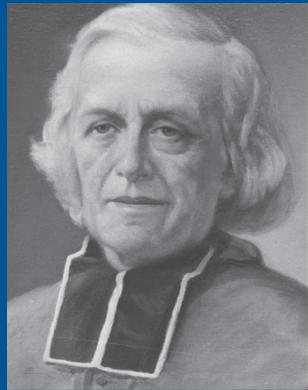
The ringbearer’s chin went up. There were fourteen others in the wedding party, not counting the minister. “I still think I can do it,” he whispered.

The next day, the church filled, and the organ sounded triumphantly. When it was time, the little boy walked to the front with his head held high.

At the reception, when his grandmother told him he had won the prize, he was both excited and relieved.

“I was pretty sure I had it,” he admitted, “until Aunt Dana came in wearing that white dress and the horn was blowing. Then I started thinking—she might win!” †

From the Writings of the Founder



Letter of May 29, 1809 to his mother

I am planning to come up a few days before the solemn feast (Bishop de Mazenod went to l’Osier for the feast of the 2nd centenary of the miracle at l’Osier; celebrated on September 8th). I insist that the best room be reserved for the Bishop of Grenoble. I will be all right anywhere, only I would like you to get rid of all the bugs from the room which I am to occupy. If this is not possible, put me up without ado right above the hothouse: I will be wonderfully at home there. †

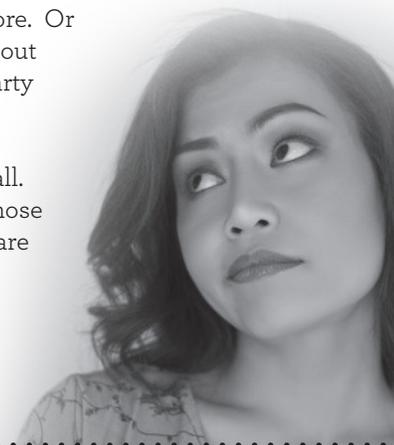
Stop Caring What People Think

“I’m constantly amazed by how easily we love ourselves above all others, yet we put more stock in the opinions of others than in our own estimation of self.. How much credence we give to the opinions our peers have of us and how little to our very own!” —Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, 12.4

How quickly we can disregard our own feelings about something and adopt someone else’s. We think a shirt looks good at the store but will view it with shame and scorn if our spouse or a coworker makes an offhand remark. We can be immensely happy with our own lives—until we find out that someone we don’t even like has more. Or worse and more precariously, we don’t feel good about our accomplishments or talents until some third party validates them.

Although we control our own opinions, we don’t control what other people think—about us least of all. For this reason, putting ourselves at the mercy of those opinions and trying to gain the approval of others are a dangerous endeavor.

Don’t spend much time thinking about what other people think. Think about what you think. Think instead about the results, about the impact, about whether **it is the right thing to do.** †



Not Magic, but Miracle, *continued*

never be a “technique,” an instant answer, a magic potion; there is no quick way to “instant spirituality.” Used fittingly, technique—attention to method, the use of routines—enhances many areas of our lives. But there are limits to all human reality, and technique is a human reality. Unlimited faith in technique—the demand for procedures for everything in our lives, the refusal to acknowledge and attend to what cannot be measured or manipulated—indicates a rejection of our own limitation, a disowning of our very humanity. Such a denial of limitation is a form of the idolatry that demands magic and thus refuses spirituality.

For spirituality can never be “technique,” although that can be a difficult lesson both to learn and to teach.... Spirituality views life not as a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived. †