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This Genesis Gem has an article you will want to read about an important happiness principle.

HAPPINESS IS A HEALTHY HABIT OF THE MIND

There is a lot of unhappiness around us. Just stand on any street corner in any city in any country and observe the faces of those passing by. They are unhappy faces. Very few are smiling. Very few have anything to smile about. Some may be laughing, but Solomon saw through that a long time ago: "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful." (Proverbs 14:13)

Why are so many, so unhappy?

There are some who have every reason to be unhappy. They are hungry, helpless and homeless, or suffer from some terrible malady. But that is not the plight of the majority. Most of us have reason to be happy. Full stomachs, a modicum of success, and a few people who love us. We don't really experience real suffering, and if we are honest, must confess we earn enough to get by on, especially when we compare it with most of the rest of the world. So then why are so many so unhappy - generally speaking?

Perhaps you have never stopped to assess your level of happiness. Even though we put a lot of store on having "the joy of the Lord" in our souls, in practical terms this joy doesn't seem to always translate easily into the practical, down-to-earth experience of bread and butter happiness. The reason isn't always obvious; but somewhere, we've let some bad 'unhappiness habit' creep into our daily existence.

Building a solid foundation for a healthy happiness habit, therefore, is serious business. If you don't work at it, it eludes you. You have to root out unhappy habits, like being ungrateful, self-preoccupied, or never counting your blessings, just as you root out weeds to build a beautiful garden.

AN IMPORTANT HAPPINESS PRINCIPLE

Happiness is appreciating the little things of life. I have a minister friend who can out-preach anyone I know. He is charming and charismatic, a dynamic go-getter. But a sudden heart attack one day literally knocked him flat. In the weeks following his by-pass surgery, he realized that the "big" issues of his life were not making him happy - in fact, they were killing him. While he started his ministry very excited, he wasn't content anymore.

Recuperating, he would sit in his back yard under the warm sun. Then he noticed something he had never seen before: there were birds in his back garden. Many of them. All sorts of birds. He had never realized that he had nature's aviary right outside his back door. Every morning he would excitedly take up a position in his comfortable chair to observe and listen to "his" birds. He watched them building nests, foraging for food to feed their young, and, yes, just being happy little creatures.



What Jesus had said about "the birds of the air who did not worry about what they would eat or drink," took on new meaning. Then one day he sat up and realized that something had happened deep within his own soul: he was happy again.

ENJOY THE LITTLE THINGS OF LIFE

Happiness is seldom found in the 'big' things of life, but it is guaranteed in the little things. It is the simple blessings of life that give real pleasure. If we do not notice the birds in our garden, or the whiff of orange blossoms, or the laughter of little children, we cannot expect happiness. God never designed 'big projects' or great achievements to be the sole, or even the primary source, of our happiness. These demand too much of us; leech too much life from our souls. Our adrenalin-driven activities may excite us, but their power to make us happy is short-lived, as every adrenalin junky will confess.

No, it is in the little things that we will find deep, abiding contentment. It is the whisper of contentment, not the hurricane of thrills, that builds true happiness - the real joy of life that comes to us in God.

So my advice to you is this: play with your children (and grandchildren) more, take in the friendly glances of strangers, smell the fresh fragrances of the first summer rains upon the earth, watch a few more birds, and take more walks at sunset. These are all the "little things" with enormous potential for happiness. They are FREE and always available!

This article was written by Archibald D. Hart, Ph.D. and produced by the American Association of Christian Counselors.

Trouble finding a little happiness in your life? If you are struggling to enjoy the little things, contact Genesis. Our trained counselors can walk you through a whole new attitude. 239-939-5504.

Genesis Gems

Happy New Year!

Winter of 2014 started with plenty of inclement weather up north. That brought us many new 'snow birds,' those seasonal visitors that come to Florida to escape the harsh winter. At Genesis we can meet with visitors while they are here for the winter, especially if feelings of sadness, anger or fear prevail and get in the way of the joy we would like to experience. As usual, we wish to set some goals for this calendar year. Most especially, we want to lift up and pray for **all** our counselees, no matter what their circumstances. It is a challenge to walk the Christian walk at times in this secular world, but with intentional support and encouragement, comes success. All of the counselors are placing emphasis this year on additional training opportunities, such as attending special seminars and presentations that offer new strategies in therapy. That means we will take time away but in hopes to come back more helpful to others.



Why Are We Here?

Genesis Counseling of Fort Myers once again, can offer counseling at no cost or for just a small donation. A new intern from Liberty University has joined our ranks for the semester! Do you need counseling or know someone else who would benefit from therapy? Interns can offer free sessions. Call the office of Genesis Counseling at (239) 939-5504 to set up an appointment with our newest intern. She has openings right away.

A recent testimonial...

Genesis Counseling has helped me put together my puzzle . . . a puzzle I had been working to solve for years. In the six months that I worked with Genesis' counselors, they have helped me place the missing puzzle pieces in order. The

pieces included problem-solving skills, stress-reducing activities, life tips and suggestions, and the use of prayer to make things more manageable. I am now spending more time thinking about the positives in my life and have been overcoming that constant presence of negative thinking and behaviors. I had received work-sheets and articles relevant to my situations, all of which were wonderful reading when life's challenges interfered with daily life, such as proper decision-making, healthy friendships, interactions with family members, and work conflicts. Handouts were specific to my related challenges. My counselor actually thought about me outside our sessions! She listened and responded in each of our sessions. She planned weekly for the next session. God's Word through scripture was a constant in our sessions. I was always reminded to focus on my faith in God during difficult times. It is easy to get down and lose confidence in God's love for us. If you are seeking a counselor who is Christ-driven, truly a professional, with a true sense of care and concern, I would put Genesis Counseling at the top of your list. They have flexible schedules and can match you with the appropriate counselor based on your needs and your schedule. It is extraordinary to be able to pray at each session and leave with a new sense of self and well-being. I am glad I chose to seek out counseling and called Genesis Counseling of Fort Myers. **--More confident now**

Is it ever too late to change?

"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly." The thought of change can be daunting. At times, it is so

overwhelming that what is chosen is often staying within your comfort level. Regardless of what stage you are on in your life, it is never too late to pursue and live your dream. Just when that caterpillar thought his world was over, his life drastically changed for the better. Simply by staying on the course of moving forward and taking a leap of faith, anyone can change. What if the change you are avoiding is the one that gives you wings?

A Recipe for You!

Chocolate Nut Butter Banana Bites

Ingredients

- 2 medium ripe bananas
- 1/4 cup creamy nut butter
- 3/4 cup baking chocolate
- 1 1/2 tablespoons coconut oil

Instructions

1. Cover baking sheet with parchment paper. Slice bananas thin, arrange on baking sheet.
2. Spread nut butter onto 1/2 of the banana slices, then cover each slice with the other slice. Place in the freezer for about 30 minutes or until frozen.
3. Put coconut oil in microwave safe bowl and microwave until melted. Stir in chocolate, continue to microwave until smooth. Use a fork or spoon to cover each banana bite in chocolate, then place back on the sheet. Freeze for one hour. Yummy!
4. Store in freezer and then thaw for a few minutes before eating. Idea is from:

<http://smilesandwich.com/2014/04/02/dark-chocolate-peanut-butter-banana-bites/>

Great snack! Plus, And, just 4 ingredients Easy to make and healthy, too!

