

This month includes long essays I held out of the print edition because they take up too much room on the page - keeping essays to 700 words leaves room for others, but if you have to write long - well - here's the place to do it! - Submit to vesta@sonic.net

Busyness and the American Dream?

By Betina

It appears that the way we are living is anesthetizing us. Our society has defined itself by our excessive lifestyles and unnecessary spending. When I choose to be vulnerable to human suffering, it is not limited to the experience of poverty, but includes the more disguised suffering, that of self importance and material addiction

Question: Is life defined by a racing from event to event (even if these activities are deemed familial/spiritual)?

We medicate, meditate, massage and retreat to ease our suffering?

Suffering is the stream that motivates us to know each other and ourselves.

Question: Maybe busyness is fear's mask?

Symptoms of Busyness

Question: Could busyness keep us from true intimacy?

*Missed birthdays other holidays

*Minimal time and energy for a real phone conversation with a friend

*Sex is when your partner is asleep (cyber..... too tired to make love to your mate

*One armed hugs

*Rushed lunches with loved ones

* Endless lunches with business associates

*Being better at multi-tasking than being kind or present

*Gratitude...thank you cards don't sell as much as ten years ago

*Taking moments to be truly grateful for all that you have, thanks for my life...

*Complaining about how exhausting "doing Christmas" is ...

Add three of your own symptoms here:

Question: Maybe to know who you are is imperative?

Materialism Run Amok

Our lives are filled with ornaments of distraction. Is it possible that the more expensive the toy the greater the distraction? Are we truly prospering

if stress is the #1 killer. Monday 9 AM (highest incidence of heart attacks), According to Larry Dossey MD there were no other risk factors present for these heart attacks other than WORK (that word).

Americans make up 5% of the overall population and yet we use 1/3 of its resources and half its hazardous waste. You might wonder where do we find the time to do all this damage, but we do.

Question: How are you living to contribute to this, even with your recycling practice?

Our consumerism puts luxuries out of reach for many families' and children in America; never mind what we do to children in other countries. How do we aid and abet the discrimination of the poor? Love is free, we cannot continue to rape the world.

Be rest assured that we, the spoiled ones, will either choose true compassion through sharing and vulnerability to world suffering OR nature will seek its inherent balance and the suffering will come closer and closer until we know each other's pain intimately. Your causes won't change this planetYOU WILL.

The State of the Nation and Hippie Politics

If our individual actions are oblivious or apathetic to the daily suffering of others, what can we expect our political representation to mirror? We vacation in third world countries and pamper ourselves amidst human suffering. Why not make ¼ of your trip giving to the human race instead of just getting?

The war that exists on the macrocosm exists in the microcosm. The war is in our consciousness and reflected back in our government. We all have our own shields and weapons to keep ourselves from feeling one another.

Many people in Sonoma County (where I reside) profess to be hippies. However many of the original hippies didn't shower and did not work. They had sex with each other, Loved and

moved the energy for change with intent. Contemporary hippies wear 100-dollar tie-dye shirts and buy 50 yoga mats and go on thousand dollar retreats. I call this spiritual materialism. Hypocrisy at its best. Our lifestyles speak louder than our causes and organizations. If you want to be truly enlightened Feed People.

Change comes form personal sacrifice. People have been starved and tortured for your freedom. What personal comforts would you be willing to sacrifice for the sake of a total stranger? America needs a time out , then a nap, and some lessons in how to share and play nice .

YOUTH

For the sake of all children let us slow down and feel each other. From birth children are enrolled in classes and have schedules. Our teenagers have 2 jobs before they even turn 18. What are we modeling?

This generation suffers from an array of disorders / diseases associated with self-hatred or self-denial. Why? Children who act differently are medicated and diagnosed as something undesirable to our society. Question: Maybe normal is sick?

The typical high school student looks like a carbon copy of another kid. Same hair, same values, same clothes, same drugs, same music, same sexual activity.

"A child without courage is like a night without stars " Where is the courage in being like everyone else?

Question: If we, as adults, had one wish, would it not be for more time?

More time to love and play. Why burden our youth with the disease of busyness? Is the purpose so that they too will experience material gain and material expression?

Antidote for the Busyness Coma

(In no particular order)

Skip a manicure and buy one for a homeless /struggling woman

Have one less beer and buy lunch for homeless man

Don't leave your hair on the walls of public showers in our fancy gyms

Say hello and ask people how they are

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and mean it (all people, not just the ones you judge to be worthy)

Make eye contact in your local supermarket, make it everywhere and mean to send something kind to the other person

Question needing VS wanting

Really listen, not because you have to, to everyone

Instruct and explain to your child that they must choose one luxury and give it away to someone on a weekly basis. Teach that giving is far better than getting

Take a look at the police log in your local paper and Wake -UP to the things you can make better

Choose a local cause that you do not have to be right about

Sell an item of great value and change someone's life with its worth

Offer your services for free at least 10% of the time

Introspect on ALLL marketing and realize it is intrinsically deceptive

Question why you NEED name brand items (maybe there is something lacking in your perception of the truth of which you are?)

Ask, who would I be if all materialism disappeared from my reality?

Reverse Consumerism.

Can you say Balance?

If nothing else was ever manufactured from this day forward, we already have enough for the next few generations. Spending as much as we do invites the astronomical prices we pay. (I.e. gas)

We have the power to determine what we spend and how we spend it, this is great power. It seems that we just passively pay or we bitch and blame the government. Ultimately we choose our lives?

What are you opting for?

"We can be casualties of an individualist culture always striving on the myth of independence and self-making. We can choose to step out of the ghetto self making and re-create a world we are proud to call our own "



The Invitation

by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living, I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul; if you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty, even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments."

From The Hill

By Karen Timmons

There's a saying these days that says, "It's all good." But is this true? If it's "all good" why does it often seem so bad? First, what is this "it?" Call it God; some do. Call it Nature. Some see God as a Being, while others see God as the vehicle for cause and effect of everything, while still others don't care about the philosophy of it. What many people consider good is synonymous with pleasant, while bad means unpleasant. It could also mean what's happening. Now we all know that war, pestilence, famine, etc. etc. is most unpleasant. But if the Great Whatever is all good, then everything that's happening is all good. It is transcendent. It goes beyond the duality and our desire of our egos to enjoy our senses until we can't go to the bathroom anymore.

If it is transcendent, then what's going on? What's in it for man. We are being pushed, forced to acknowledge that we must become sane in our dealings with every living being, that we are part of a great whole.

Man may or may not be around to colonize other planets before our sun goes nova, but how we survive on this planet, barring our own folly and acts of God, depends on this consciousness.

Globalization is a big part of this consciousness. Yes, greed is still here, jealousy is still here, wanting what others have is still here. The idea of globalization is a start. I'm reminded of the Prime Directive of the Star Trek series. Don't interfere with other civilizations' natural progress. Of course, it was sometimes necessary to do so. War for Power's sake,

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however, was not the answer. And taking what belonged to another was definitely not the answer.

Okay, so the Chinese eat dogs. We won't make them stop and they won't sell us wheat gluten laced with melamine. Okay, so they sell (contract out) young girls to work in factories until they get sick and go home to their bucolic villages to die or marry. Still, they are helping to support their parents who, until now, lived in gross poverty. It has been a long time since our young here in the US were proud to help their families by sacrificing. Now our young are often pampered predators, either emotional or physical.

The way to survive and become a humble part of the whole is to respect all boundaries—physical, emotional, cultural, spiritual. And it starts within each one of us. Before we can act globally, we act locally, we act in our family and we love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

The way to survive is to have the proper intent. Respect others, take what we need, give away the rest, and share. This keeps the balance within ourselves and ultimately in the world. We must understand that the world crisis lives within us. Our intention must be altruistic. To come to the Light, we must become Light. That is the Great Whatever's Prime Directive. That is the only ultimate responsibility we have and everything we do and think needs to be defined by this.

Have we thought about what living in a Hate Free Zone means? Hate free means fear free means love filled. And by declaring this area such a place, we've polarized any negative consciousness.

Labor Day ended and slipped into the cooler time. Fall began and I realized contentment her on the hill at home in my heart. It is a feast for my eyes of filtered sun and a joy for my nose in early morning when the earth exudes spice. Acorns drop and redwood needles fall during windy afternoons.

YOUTH

By: Samuel Ullman

Youth is not a time of life - it is a state of mind,
it is a temper of the will,
a quality of the imagination,
a vigor of the emotions,
a predominance of courage over timidity,
of the appetite for adventure over love of ease.

Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years.
People grow old only by deserting their ideals.

Years wrinkle the skin,
but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.

Worry, doubt, self-distrust,
fear and despair - these are the long,
long years that bow the head and
turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whether they are sixteen or seventy,
there is in every being's heart
the love of wonder,
the sweet amazement at the stars
and starlike things and thoughts,
the undaunted challenge of events,
the unfailing childlike appetite
for what is to come next,
and the joy and the game of life.

You are as young as your faith,
as old as your doubt;
as young as your self-confidence,
as old as your fear,
as young as your hope,
as old as your despair.
When the wires are all down
and all the innermost core of your heart
is covered with the snows of pessimism
and the ice of cynicism,
then you are grown old indeed.

But so long as your heart receives
messages
of beauty, cheer, courage, grandeur
and power from the earth,
from man and from the Infinite,
so long as you are young.

Honesty

By Vesta Copestakes

When I was young, I believed that honesty at all times was an absolute. I guess I had been caught lying enough times that I took the opposite approach to keep from getting caught again! But as I grew older I learned that 100% honesty can be painful. There are times when withholding the truth is a better option.

Do you need to tell the truth to make *yourself* feel better? To relieve the guilt you feel for lying, stealing, cheating? If it's going to hurt someone else to know the truth - then not saying anything is the more considerate approach. If you feel guilty and miserable and the person you slighted feels just fine - leave it that way.

Living our lives in 100% honestly is actually easier in the long run. If you do nothing to feel guilty about, then you have nothing to confess. You have no false story to remember, the facts are always correct because they are true. Memories are tricky enough as it is without having to remember things that never really happened!

Honesty is one of those life lessons that has so many subtle aspects to learn that people don't really learn the complete ramifications until they've stumbled and fallen over lies enough times to get it. Children lie almost naturally when they get to a certain age. It takes time to learn *not* to lie. Life's hard lessons are the teachers.

One of the most difficult times to be honest is when you've caught someone in a lie. It's easier to remain silent than to confront the liar. Which brings us back full circle to withholding the truth.

Being honest is not easy...is it?!



WCG On My Mind Page 3- Comments? send to vesta@sonic.net

This space is yours. Please carefully edit your work before submitting it so I don't have to.
You are responsible for what you say and how you say it. Enjoy!