



# MISSION ENRICHMENT

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*The Spirit of the Gospel in Service of the Mission*

In your life's journey, there will be excitement and fulfillment, boredom and routine, and even the occasional train wreck... But when you have picked a dream that is bigger than you personally, that truly reflects the ideals that you cherish, and that can positively affect others, then you will always have another reason for carrying on. ~ Pamela Melroy, Astronaut

## From the Writings of the Founder—

--April 6, 1837 letter from Bishop De Mazenod to Fr. Mille at Notre Dame du Laus

I cannot help reproaching you for wanting to give at any cost this mission at Prébois which I had asked you to give up ... be prudent, for God's sake! and for once learn to sacrifice your ideas in favour of a father's remonstrations.

How many things I would have to say about the way missions are done! Gradually, our traditions are turned aside; each one foolishly pretends to do better than those who had gone before them and, generally, this is an error. When someone wants to change something, it would be wise to consult me. I do not say this more to you than to the others; I make this remark incidentally, so that you may know what is the proper thing to do. †



## A Slave to His Destiny

by Adam Khan

**O**ne morning a sixteen-year-old boy was kidnapped from his house by a band of knife-wielding thugs and taken to another country, there to be sold as a slave. The year was 401 AD.

He was made a shepherd. Slaves were not allowed to wear clothes, so he was often dangerously cold and

frequently on the verge of starvation. He spent months at a time without seeing another human being -- a severe psychological torture.

But this greatest of difficulties was transformed into the greatest of blessings because it gave him an opportunity not many get in a lifetime. Long lengths of solitude have been used by people all through history to meditate, to learn to control the mind and to explore the depths of feeling and thought to a degree impossible in the hubbub of normal life.

He wasn't looking for such an "opportunity," but he got it anyway. He had never been a religious person, but to hold himself together and take his mind off the pain, he began to pray, so much that "...in one day," he wrote later, "I would say as many as a hundred prayers and after dark nearly as many again...I

would wake and pray before daybreak -- through snow, frost, and rain...."

This young man, at the onset of his manhood, got a 'raw deal.' **But therein lies the lesson. Nobody gets a perfect life. The question is not "What could I have done if I'd gotten a better life?" but rather "What can I do with the life I've got?"**

How can you take your personality, your circumstances, your upbringing, the time and place you live in, and make something extraordinary out of it? What can you do with what you've got?

The young slave prayed. He didn't have much else available to do, so he did what he could with all his might. And after six years of praying, he heard a voice in his sleep say that his prayers would be answered: He was going home. He sat bolt upright and the voice said, "Look, your ship is ready."

Ideas or comments are welcome.

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# The Power of the “And Principle”

by JC Peters in *Spirituality and Health*

This year, I’ve been deepening my research into Tantric yoga philosophy while also taking courses on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (or CBT), which is a modern psychological practice often used for anxiety and depression.... The basic idea of Tantra is that everything in existence, the good, the bad, and the ugly, are manifestations of the Divine. You, me, your computer, your joy, your anger: it’s all made up of the same stuff. That doesn’t necessarily make it all good, but it all has energy, power, and potential.

The yoga and meditation practice is about bringing awareness to the richness and complexity of life and doing what we can to engage with all of our experiences, whether pleasurable or painful, and learn from them. CBT is not about trying to eliminate negative thoughts in exchange for rainbows and flowers either. Rather, we engage with negative thoughts directly by addressing them and asking them questions. **We don’t ignore the anger, we look right at it and ask what it might be protecting us from.**

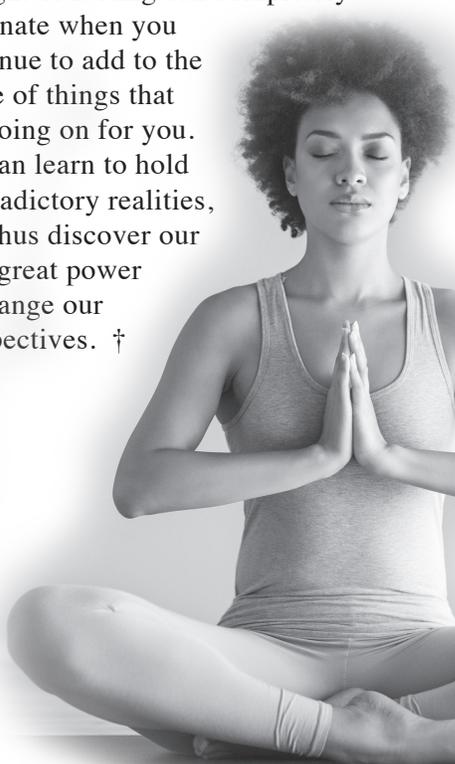
In theory (and certainly in practice, for me), CBT can illuminate what’s happening in your brain and allows you to catch yourself in your thought spirals and shift your perspective without rejecting any of your thoughts, feelings, or experiences. You learn that you can feel and engage with your emotions without necessarily attaching to them. Both systems work with what I like to think of as the “And Principle.”

Tantra acknowledges that in the divine play of the universe, many different kinds of energies can exist side by side. In fact, you can’t feel the deepest forms of joy without a seed of sorrow, and the deepest sorrows in turn always have a seed of sweetness in them. “I feel depressed today, but

I have so much to be grateful for!” becomes “I feel depressed today and I have so much to be grateful for.”

The two states of mind are not mutually exclusive. Nothing is absolute, everything changes, sometimes life is totally contradictory, and that’s the nature of the universe. CBT acknowledges that as humans, we have a tendency to want to put things in boxes and categories. In a negative state of mind, it’s hard to imagine feeling any other way ever again. The And Principle asks you what else might be going on in that moment-- “This divorce is the worst and my best friend made me laugh today.” Remembering that sweetness can pop up at anytime and snuggle right up beside the bitter reminds us that the world is often much wider than it seems.

To meditate with the And Principle, sit or lie down comfortably, and mentally list the things that you are thinking and feeling. Add the word “and” at the end of every item so that the list must continue. No single thought or feeling can completely dominate when you continue to add to the range of things that are going on for you. We can learn to hold contradictory realities, and thus discover our own great power to change our perspectives. †



TREASURE THE ONE WHO THINKS OF YOU WHEN ALL OTHERS ARE THINKING OF THEMSELVES.

—JAMES GUNN  
(I BELIEVE IN YOU)



An 80-year-old woman was arrested for shop-lifting. When she went before the judge he ask her, “What did you steal?”

She replied, “A can of peaches.”

The judge asked her why she had stolen them and she replied that she was hungry.

The judge then asked her how many peaches were in the can.

She replied, “6.”

The judge then said, “I will give you 6 days in jail.”

Before the judge could actually pronounce the punishment, the woman’s husband spoke up and asked the judge if he could say something.

The judge said, “What is it?”

The husband said, “She also stole a can of peas.”

# CELEBRATE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S WEEK

## APRIL 19-25, 2015

### 3 Qualities of a Great Administrative Assistant

An administrative assistant needs to have a lot of exceptional qualities in order to rise above the realm of mediocrity. While anyone can theoretically be called an admin., there are certain qualities that will make one person great at it and another mediocre on their best day. Being an administrative assistant is a special kind of job that demands a few special traits. The following are a few such traits:

#### **An Eye For Details:**

Some people say that the devil is in the details, and they're right. When you focus on the big picture, as many executives are forced to do most of the time, it's easy to gloss over a multitude of tiny details. These go way beyond where you left your keys.... A great

way to spot an exceptional admin is to do the dishes with them.

#### **Flexibility to Spare:**

So you're working with someone in Jakarta, and they're 8 hours ahead of you. What do you do? If you're like a lot of people you'll "toss them an

e-mail" or "add them on Skype." But an exceptional admin will do several things, including finding out when their client's most productive time of day is and temporarily adjusting to that. If it means being up and alert at 3 a.m., so be it. A great admin makes results instead of excuses.

#### **Great Organizational Skills:**

While everybody loses things from time to time, a great administrative assistant has a detailed system in place for both keeping what needs to be kept and accessing it in a hurry.... During a high stress situation people fall back on the lowest common denominator of their training. If this training is solid, the admin will have everything ready... and will be cool as a cucumber in the freezer when everybody else is all but freaking out. A great admin keeps everyone else's work going.... †

## Potatoes Spoil, People Don't Spoil *by Steve Goodier*

I knew a woman who worked with children all her life. She was especially good with children we would call "at risk" -- children who acted out, children from rough backgrounds, children who built impenetrable walls to keep others out. In time, she always found a way into their hearts. Children acted differently around her than around others, even their parents. I often remarked on it and she would sometimes say, "Children need a lot of love. You can't spoil a child with too much love. Potatoes spoil, children don't spoil."

Don't get me wrong. She had boundaries, and when children misbehaved, there were consequences. But the consequences were fair. And the kids she worked with eventually learned that they could depend on her constant love and concern for them through it all. At the end of the day, no matter what kind of day it was, she would be there with arms open.

Can you love someone too much? Perhaps you can show the wrong kind

of love, but I'm sure you can't show too much.

One of my favorite stories tells of a woman who finally decided to ask her boss for a raise in salary. All day she felt nervous and apprehensive. Late in the afternoon she summoned the courage to approach her employer. To her delight, the boss agreed to a raise.

The woman arrived home that evening to a beautiful table set with their best dishes. Candles were softly glowing. Her husband had come home early and prepared a festive meal. She wondered if someone from the office had tipped him off. Or did he just somehow know that she would not get turned down?

She found him in the kitchen and told him the good news. They embraced and kissed, then sat down to the wonderful meal. Next to her plate the woman found a beautifully lettered note.

It read: "Congratulations, darling! I knew you'd get the raise! These things will tell you how much I love you."

The supper was perfect. Afterward, her husband went into the kitchen to clean up, and as he left the room she

noticed a second card that had fallen from his pocket. Picking it off the floor, she read: "Don't worry about not getting the raise. You deserve it anyway! These things will tell you how much I love you."

Someone has said that the measure of love is when you love without measure. What this man tried to convey to his spouse was total acceptance and love. Whether she succeeded or failed, whether she won or lost, he loved her regardless. Love without measure. Sometimes his love might celebrate her victories and other times it was there to soothe and comfort.

Upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Mother Teresa said: "What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family."

Yes, love your family, and also love your friends. For some friends are truly family. Love the people in your life. Love them without measure. And don't worry about spoilage. Potatoes spoil, people don't spoil. †

He was a long way from the ocean, but he started walking. After two hundred miles, he came to the ocean and there was a ship, preparing to leave for Britain, his homeland. Somehow he got aboard the ship and went home to reunite with his family.

But he had changed. The sixteen-year-old boy had become a holy man. He had visions. He heard the voices of the people from the island he had left -- Ireland -- calling him back. The voices were persistent, and he eventually left his family to become ordained as a priest and a bishop with the intention of returning to Ireland and converting the Irish to Christianity.

At the time, the Irish were fierce,

illiterate, Iron-Age people. For over eleven hundred years, the Roman Empire had been spreading its civilizing influence from Africa to Britain, but Rome never conquered Ireland.

The people of Ireland warred constantly. They made human sacrifices of prisoners of war and sacrificed newborns to the gods of the harvest. They hung the skulls of their enemies on their belts as ornaments.

Our slave-boy-turned-bishop decided to make these people literate and peaceful. Braving dangers and obstacles of tremendous magnitude, he actually succeeded! By the end of his life, Ireland was Christian. Slavery had ceased entirely. Wars were much less frequent, and literacy was spreading.

How did he do it? He began by teaching people to read -- starting with the Bible. Students eventually became teachers and went to other parts of the island to create new places of learning, and wherever they went, they brought the know-how to turn sheepskin into paper and paper into books.

Copying books became the major religious activity of that country. The Irish had a long-standing love of words, and it expressed itself to the full when they became literate. Monks spent their lives copying books: the Bible, the lives of saints, and the works accumulated by the Roman culture -- Latin, Greek, and Hebrew books, grammars, the works of Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Homer, Greek philosophy, math, geometry, astronomy.

In fact, because so many books were being copied, they were saved, because as Ireland was being civilized, the Roman Empire was falling apart. Libraries disappeared in Europe. Books were no longer copied (except in the city of Rome itself), and children were no longer taught to read. The civilization



*Remember this:*

When the uncontrollable things or people in our lives are making us miserable, it is because we allow them to do that to us. They can't keep us on that roller coaster if we decide to get off. How do you get off? By choice, by a decision of your will, by much prayer, and by the power of God's Spirit within you. It takes determination on your part, but if you don't let God supply the power, you're not likely to be able to do it.

--Mary Whelchel

## IF A DOG WERE YOUR TEACHER

--Author Unknown

If a dog were your teacher, these are some of the lessons you might learn...

When loved ones come home, always run to greet them

Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride

Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy

When it's in your best interest practice obedience

Let others know when they've invaded your territory

Take naps and stretch before rising

Run romp and play daily

Thrive on attention and let people touch you

Avoid biting, when a simple growl will do

On warm days stop to lie on your back on the grass

On hot days drink lots of water and lay under a shady tree

When you're happy dance around and wag your entire body.

No matter how often you're scolded don't buy into the guilt thing and pout run right back and make friends

Delight in the simple joy of a long walk

Eat with gusto and enthusiasm

Stop when you have had enough

Be loyal

Never pretend to be something you're not.

If what you want lies buried dig until you find it

When someone is having a bad day be silent .....sit close by. ...and nuzzle them gently.

that had been built up over eleven centuries disintegrated. This was the beginning of the Dark Ages.

Because our slave-boy-turned-bishop transformed his suffering into a mission, civilization itself, in the form of literature and the accumulated knowledge contained in that literature, was saved and not lost during that time of darkness. He was named a saint, the famous Saint Patrick.

**"Very interesting," you might say, "but what does that have to do with me?"**

**Well...you are also in some circumstances or other, and it's not all peaches and cream, is it? There's some stuff you don't like -- maybe something about your circumstances, perhaps, or maybe some events that occurred in your childhood.**

But here you are, with that past, with these circumstances, with the things you consider less than ideal. What are you going to do with them? If those circumstances have made you uniquely qualified for some contribution, what would it be?

You may not know the answer to that question right now, but keep in mind that the circumstances you think only spell misery may contain the seeds of something profoundly Good. Assume that's true, and the assumption will begin to gather evidence until your misery is transformed, as Saint Patrick's suffering was, from a raw deal to the perfect preparation for something better.

**Ask yourself and keep asking, "Given my upbringing and circumstances, what Good am I especially qualified to do?" †**