



MISSION ENRICHMENT

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The Spirit of the Gospel in Service of the Mission

“Above all, don’t lie to yourself. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to a point that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love.” ~ *Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov*

From the Founder’s Writings

August 12, 1847 letter to Father Vincens
Superior of Notre Dame de L’Osier.



L.J.C. and M.I.

Yes, my dear Father Vincens, the enormous responsibilities weighing upon you are certainly enough to scare you. But who can dare to decide the measure of the Lord’s merciful plans? His will is too clearly manifest for us not to be obliged to go forward with blind

confidence. It is at this moment that the Lord calls our Congregation to extend its zeal to a great many countries... Let’s have courage then and put our confidence in the Lord. The important point will always be to form good men; neglect nothing to that purpose.

.... You speak to me of Zucker. (Note: Charles Zucker, born at Dusseldorf, entered the novitiate August 14, 1847, and made his profession. Ginies, whom the Founder mentions after Zucker, is never named in the Oblate writings of that period.) The information I have received about him tells me that he is a real hypocrite, a thief and a liar, not to say more. He does not lack ability, but what is talent worth when virtue is totally absent. We risk too much in trying to bring him to a good behaviour. Can we rely on a villain who uses all his skill to betray those he depends upon? Do not let yourself be taken in....

+ C. J. Eugene, Bishop of Marseilles †

Meditation Secrets from a Former Nonbeliever

by Molly Gallagher (from Well + Good)

When you Google “Dan Harris” one of the first hits that comes up references an “on-air panic attack.” And while that sounds like a mortifying moment, for Harris, the co-anchor of ABC’s *Nightline* and the weekend edition of *Good Morning America*, his panic attack was actually a (very public) wake up call.

When he returned home from covering the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Harris was so depressed he could barely get out of bed. He’s said quite publicly that he coped by turning to drugs like cocaine and ecstasy, which he later learned contributed to his televised freak-out.

After the panic attack, Harris discovered meditation through self-help gurus and brain scientists—and learned ways to finally understand and rein in the voice in his head. His findings inspired his book, *10 Percent Happier*, which is like your cool uncle’s guide to meditation—all the facts, none of the “bull\$#%*” (his word, not ours).

Harris is the first to admit that meditation can’t solve all of your problems—but his tips for how it can make you a tiny bit happier are certainly a start.

You were skeptical about meditation before you started practicing. What do you wish you knew then that you know now? I wish somebody had pointed out to me that meditation—what

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Ideas or comments are welcome.

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THE FEAR VIRUS

by Steve Goodier

What are you afraid of?

Are you frightened of rejection? Do you find yourself trying to please people so they won't dislike you?

Or are you afraid of loss? Do you sometimes hang onto situations or even people too tightly?

Do you, like many people, have a strong aversion to physical pain? Do you avoid even routine pain whenever possible?

Or do you perhaps have an excessive fear of embarrassment or shame? Many people do. They fear speaking in public or acting in any way that might cause them to feel self-conscious.

Everyone knows fear in one form or another. In fact, unreasonable fear just may be the most powerful enemy of humanity.

A woman traveled by plane with her infant daughter. When they landed, they were met in the waiting area by her father, who took the baby while she proceeded to the baggage claim area. Standing there alone waiting to claim her luggage, she was absentmindedly holding the baby's pacifier. She noticed a flight attendant staring at her, then at the pacifier in her hand. The flight attendant finally spoke: "Excuse me, Miss. Is this your first flight?"

She wouldn't be the only person afraid of flying. Fear has kept countless people from fully enjoying life.

Sometimes fear is disguised. It can look like anger. Or hurt. Here is an experiment. Next time you feel hurt or angry, just stop everything and ask yourself, "What am I afraid of?" If you look carefully enough, you will see that

Maybe fear is an insidious virus. But each time we choose to be courageous, we inoculate ourselves against it.

fear lurks in the background most of the time you become upset.

Astronomer James Bell says, "Fear is an insidious virus. Given a breeding place in our minds...it will eat away our spirit and block the forward path of our endeavors." And that's the problem, isn't it? Fear...eating away our spirit and blocking the way forward.

But fear does not need to infect a mind. We can actually teach ourselves to be braver. A little bit of courage, strangely enough, can inoculate us against the fear virus.

I know a woman who was terrified of public speaking. Granted, making some kind of speech is highly fearful for many people; and especially when relating something personal to strangers. But this woman agreed to speak to a group of people she did not know simply because she felt afraid. This is what happened.

I asked for a couple of volunteers who would share with

the group the next day something about their own personal spiritual journey. One of the volunteers was a young woman I had only just met.

During a break she found me and explained why she agreed to speak. "I was terrified when you asked for volunteers to share their stories with the group," she said. "Because of that, I realized that this was something I had to do. So I raised my hand and volunteered. I just knew I had to do it. I had to face my fear." Later she said to me, "You know, it wasn't at all bad!"

She did not do it because she would enjoy the experience. Just the opposite. She offered to be one of the speakers simply because it frightened her to think of doing it. She innately knew that her antidote to fear was not to give in to it.

Maybe fear is an insidious virus. But each time we choose to be courageous, we inoculate ourselves against it. In time, we find ourselves boldly acting in ways we never dreamed possible.

Small doses of courage, drawn on a regular basis, is all we need. It's medication for happier and healthier living. †

Have faith in yourself. But have faith in your friends and neighbors too. I know life is competitive - but it isn't a jungle. Like begets like. Faith inspires faith. People give back substantially what we give them.

--Bethany College Commencement Address

10 Ways to Forgive Yourself and Let Go of the Past

By Megan Hale

Have you ever noticed how you can hold on to past mistakes long after they occurred? Some of us hold on to things for years!

Forgiveness is a process. It does not happen overnight and the process will be different for everyone. But no matter how long it takes, there's hope! Here are some steps you can take toward that journey:

1. Become clear on your morals and values as they are right now.

The reason most of us feel guilt or shame for actions done in the past is because those actions are not in line with our current morals and values. Our past wrongs can actually clue us in to what we hold important. By identifying our morals and values, we start to get a clearer picture as to "why" we're hurting over what we've done, or what others did to us.

2. Realize that the past is the past.

This seems fairly straightforward, but when we can really wrap our head around the fact that we can't undo the past, the past is done, those things happened, we open ourselves up to more acceptance. Increased acceptance can lead to the emotional healing we are all looking for.

3. Create a "re-do."

Never underestimate the power of a "re-do". Write down how you would have done things differently if you could go back and do it again. In doing so, we affirm that we not only learned from our past mistake, but that if we had the skills we have now, back then, we would have done things differently.

4. Realize you did the best you could at the time.

The way we respond depends on the skills we have, the frame of mind we're in, and how we perceive the situation at that moment. Maybe we didn't have as much objectivity, or acted out of survival or protection mode. Maybe we'd let stress build up, which put us at a higher risk of responding poorly. Whatever the factors, cut yourself a break. If you learn from it, it was never in vain.

5. Start acting in accordance with your morals and values.

The best thing you can do for yourself in order to forgive is start replacing the negative behavior and thoughts with more appropriate ones that are congruous with your morals and values. By so doing, you reaffirm to yourself that you can handle situations in the way you want to. This can lead to a sense of pride, which is a huge part of building self-esteem.

6. Identify your biggest regrets.

When I work with clients on moving on from their past, it can be very overwhelming for them because they see so many regrets. It's often helpful to categorize these things because people often only hold on to a handful of big categories/patterns. Working on patterns of behavior is often more helpful than working on individual regrets.

7. Tackle the big ones.

There may be some regrets that don't seem to improve, and they're going to require some extra work. I call it "clearing your conscience." This means it might take bringing this regret into the room and apologizing for your past mistake.

8. Turn the page.

At some point, you have to accept that the past has happened and you've done everything in your power to amend past mistakes. It's now time to turn the page and accept those events as part of your story. They've all contributed to making you who you are. Being grateful for those experiences allows you to move on and truly forgive yourself.

9. Cut yourself some slack.

When we learned how to ride a bike, most of us realized it would probably take a few tries before achieving perfection. New behavior and thinking patterns are no different. They're both skills. Cut yourself some slack while you're on a new learning curve. Realize that you're going to make mistakes. We all do.

10. Move toward self-love.

The last step in building self-esteem is moving toward loving yourself. Think kind thoughts toward yourself and show yourself some compassion. If we can learn to think of ourselves as our best friend, to speak to ourselves with love and kindness, and put ourselves as a priority, it reaffirms that we believe we are worth it. Engage in psychotherapy or coaching if you need some outside perspective in this area. Seek books on this subject. Surround yourself with supportive people.

You are more than your past mistakes, and I promise you, you are so worth it!! †

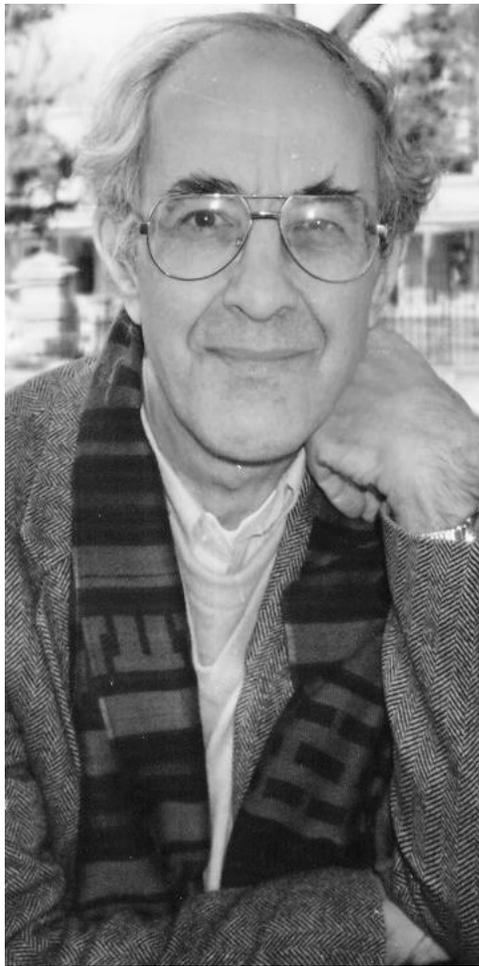


Photo: F. Hamilton

“Over the years, I have come to realize that the greatest trap in our life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection. Success, popularity, and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality often comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions. The real trap, however, is self-rejection. As soon as someone accuses me or criticizes me, as soon as I am rejected, left alone, or abandoned, I find myself thinking, “Well, that proves once again that I am a nobody.” ... [My dark side says,] I am no good... I deserve to be pushed aside, forgotten, rejected, and abandoned. Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the “Beloved.” Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence.” †

— Henri J.M. Nouwen

Meditation Secrets continued

many of us think is (useless)—is based on scientific research proving that it lowers your blood pressure, helps your immune system, and rewires parts of your brain. It’s most likely going to be the next big public health revolution.

How can someone who knows nothing about meditation start a practice?

There are four ways you can learn about it: Google the basic meditation instruction. You can buy an app like Headspace. Read a book about it—I recommend *Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation*, or you can go to a class.

Then when you actually meditate, follow these steps. Sit and close your eyes. Keep your spine straight and focus on the feeling of your breath coming in and coming out. Then, most importantly, notice when you’ve gotten lost and started thinking about your to-do list—or anything—instead of your breath. When that happens—and it will happen a million times—you have to start over.

What do you say to people who claim they don’t have time to meditate (guilty) or are scared of it? When I talk about meditation, I am talking about secular, simple, mindful meditation.

You don’t have to join a group or believe in anything.

As far as time, you can start with two minutes a day, and then work up to five or ten minutes. I now do it for 35 minutes a day. In the beginning, it’s more about making sure to do it daily. Like anything else in your life, you won’t ace it right away. Getting lost and starting over is like a bicep curl for your brain.

I can make time for two minutes!

What do you think meditation accomplishes? It’s a daily collision with the (negative voice) in your head that’s suggesting terrible things at every turn, like trying to get you to check your email while you’re with your kid, or engage in road rage.

[Meditation] helps you rebuff those terrible suggestions. Over time, you’ll be able to sift through your thoughts so you’re acting only on the good ones, not the bad ones.

You’re very practical about the benefits of meditation. At what point did you realize it was making you slightly happier? When I started to do it, I saw the effects quickly. It improved my focus—getting lost a million times and starting over a million times helps you focus, especially in an era when we are so distracted.

It also made me calmer, and more mindful. It gave me the ability to see what was going on in my head at any given moment, without being carried away by it. Meditation stops you from being yanked around by your emotions, which is the primary problem in most of our lives, whether we’re aware of it or not. †