



# MISSION ENRICHMENT

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

“In these days of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must and shall choose the path of social justice...the path of faith, the path of hope, and the path of love toward our fellow man.” ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 2, 1932

## 10 THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU FEEL LOST AND ALONE

By Marc Chernoff

“**T**his morning I felt lost and alone as I was driving home after a brutal breakup with my boyfriend. I turned on the radio and the Michael Jackson song ‘You Are Not Alone’ was playing. A few seconds later, at the exact moment the chorus began, I passed a huge billboard sign with big black letters that read, ‘YOU ARE NOT ALONE!’”

That’s the opening paragraph of an email I received today from a reader named Ella. It made me smile because I love when life delivers seemingly coincidental, positive messages like that, right when we need them most.

However, the rest of Ella’s email further described her ongoing struggle with feeling “lost and alone” in life. Which got me thinking...

Why do people have to feel this way? What’s the point of it all? Millions of people in this world, all of them craving connection, and looking for specific experiences and people to satisfy them, yet inadvertently isolating themselves in the process. Why? Was the planet put here just to nourish our loneliness?

### Prayer: May the Light of God Fill Your Heart

*(by John Johansen-Berg,  
England)*

As the sun in its shining  
brings glory  
As the stars in the night  
scatter dark  
As the moon gives us hope  
in its radiance  
So may the light of god  
Fill your heart and  
your mind and your life.

The more I’ve experienced and explored my own feelings of uncertainty and loneliness, the more I’ve realized how necessary these feelings are. It’s good for us to spend time exploring unknowns, alone. It gives us an opportunity to discover who we really are and what life is all about.

### Here are some things to keep in mind when you feel lost and alone:

#### 1. You are not alone in being alone.

Many of us are fighting the same exact battle alongside you. We are all in this together. So no matter how embarrassed or pathetic you feel about your own situation, know that there are others out there experiencing the same emotions. When you hear yourself say, “I am all alone,” it’s just your worried mind trying to sell you a lie. There’s always someone who can relate to you.

Perhaps you can’t immediately talk to them, but they are out there, and that’s all you need to know right now.

#### 2. Sometimes when you’re lonely, you need to be alone.

Sometimes you need to be alone, not to be lonely, but to enjoy a little free time just being yourself and finding your way. In other words, the moments you feel lonely are the moments you may most need to be by yourself. This is one of life’s cruelest ironies.



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Ideas or comments are welcome.

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IT IS REWARDING TO FIND SOMEONE YOU LIKE,  
BUT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO LIKE YOURSELF.

IT IS QUICKENING TO RECOGNIZE THAT SOMEONE IS A GOOD  
AND DECENT HUMAN BEING,

BUT IT IS INDISPENSABLE TO VIEW YOURSELF AS ACCEPTABLE.

IT IS A DELIGHT TO DISCOVER PEOPLE WHO ARE WORTHY OF RESPECT  
AND ADMIRATION AND LOVE,

BUT IT IS VITAL TO BELIEVE YOURSELF DESERVING OF THESE THINGS.

FOR YOU CANNOT LIVE IN SOMEONE ELSE.

YOU CANNOT FIND YOURSELF IN SOMEONE ELSE.

YOU CANNOT BE GIVEN A LIFE BY SOMEONE ELSE.

OF ALL THE PEOPLE YOU WILL KNOW IN A LIFETIME,

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE OR LOSE.

TO THE QUESTION OF YOUR LIFE, YOU ARE THE ONLY ANSWER.

TO THE PROBLEMS OF YOUR LIFE, YOU ARE THE ONLY SOLUTION.

~ JO COUDERT

## *From the Writings of the Founder--*

Letter dated September 18, 1844 from  
Bishop Eugene De Mazenod to  
Fr. Courtès at Aix



What you tell me my dear Courtès, about Father Rey goes beyond all limits of extravagance and folly. Fr. Rouvière had already mentioned

it to me and I take advantage of the evening to tell you once more that the whims which Father Rey has allowed himself cannot possibly be permitted, and that a superior, though not in anger, is obliged to reprove them so that they will not be repeated. I am far from concluding that such a man should be sent on mission. On the contrary, I feel he should not go. One does not bridle a horse which goes wild. There is no longer any discipline or submission. There are other things that I could tell you face to face, to remind you of your duties and rights as a superior, which I will not put in writing because the pen does not have all the resources of the word. There are so many of these aberrations that must not be tolerated, and to these disorders I add that of going away when the confessions of the poor are to be heard. As far as Father Rey is concerned, he should certainly be dealt with kindly because he is basically a good person and attentive to consideration; but he must be directed, closely supervised so that he does not give in to the simplicity of his character; do not allow him to deviate, I do not say from the Rule, but even from conventionalities, but get him quietly to listen to reason. †

## ARE YOU CIVIL IN THE WORKPLACE?

Six Questions to Ask Yourself *By Linda Leekley, BS, RN*



First step toward civility is self-awareness. You are responsible only for yourself and your behavior. So, keep asking yourself these questions until you can honestly answer “yes” to each one.

1. Can I feel and express anger or frustration without hurting others—and then let it go?
2. Can I accept (and even appreciate) that other people have needs and opinions that are different from my own?
3. Can I encourage and enjoy the successes of others?
4. Do I actively seek out ways to feel personally empowered and avoid trying to dominate people whom I perceive to be weaker?
5. Do I avoid participating in dangerous gossip and bullying behaviors?
6. Am I able to recognize when someone else feels angry or frustrating and keep myself from reacting impulsively in response?

We need solitude, because when we're alone we're detached from obligations, we don't need to put on a show, and we can hear our own thoughts and feel what our intuition is telling us. And the truth is, throughout your life there will be times when the world gets real quiet and the only thing left is the beat of your own heart. So you'd better learn the sound of it, otherwise you'll never understand what it's telling you. (Read *Quiet: The Power of Introverts*.)

**3. You have to be a little lost first to find what you're looking for.** Not until you are lost in this world can you begin to find your best path. Realizing you are lost is the first step to living the life you want. The second step is leaving the life you don't want. Making a big life change is pretty scary. But you know what's even scarier? Regret.

I can tell you from my own life experience that I've found love, lost it, found it, lost it and then I found it once again. But each time what I found was more incredible than the last. So remember that everyone suffers in life at some point. Everyone feels lost sometimes. The key is using your experiences to grow. When you apply what you're learning to your future choices and actions, you move forward not backward. You become stronger and wiser. It's not easy, but it's worth it in the end.

**4. It's all about accepting the reality of what is.** You cannot find peace by avoiding life. Life spins with unexpected changes; so instead of avoiding it, take every change and experience as a challenge for growth. Either it will give you what you want or it will teach you what the next step is. **And remember, finding peace in life does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, no challenges, and no hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things while remaining calm in your heart.**

Honestly, life is too short to spend at war with yourself. The biggest disappointments in our lives are often the result of misplaced expectations. Letting

go of needless expectations is your first step to happiness. Come from a mindset of peace and acceptance, and you can deal with almost anything and grow beyond it.

**5. In every situation, YOU choose your attitude.** Be determined to be positive. Understand that the greater part of your misery or unhappiness is determined not by your circumstances, but by your attitude. A happy person is not a person who's always in a good situation, but rather a person who always has a good attitude in every situation. So smile at those who often try to begrudge or hurt you; show them what's missing in their life and what they can't take away from you. Doing so doesn't mean forgetting or giving in; it means you choose happiness over hurt. (Read *Buddha's Brain*.)

**6. Being alone does not mean you are lonely, and being lonely does not mean you are alone.** The trouble is not always in being alone; it's being lonely in the presence of others. One can be lonely in the midst of a crowd. Wouldn't you agree? So keep this in mind and choose your relationships wisely. It's always better to be alone than to be in bad company. And when you do decide to come back for someone, do so because you're truly better off with this person. Don't do it just for the sake of not being alone.

**7. Everyone you care about does NOT need to support your decisions.** Friends and family won't always support your goals, but you must pursue them anyway. Follow your intuition. Following your intuition means doing what feels right, even if it doesn't look or sound right to others. Only time will tell, but our human instincts are rarely wrong. Even if things don't turn out as you anticipated, at least you won't have to spend the rest of your life wondering *what could have been*. So don't worry about what everyone else thinks; just keep living and speaking your truth. Ultimately, you know you're on the right track in life when you become uninterested in looking back, and eager to take the next step, regardless of what anyone else thinks.

**8. You are not who you used to be, and that's OK.** You've been hurt; you've gone through numerous ups and downs that have made you who you are today. Over the years, so many things have happened – things that have changed your perspective, taught you lessons, and forced your spirit to grow. As time passes, nobody stays the same, but some people will still tell you that you have changed. Respond to them by saying, "Of course I've changed. That's what life is all about. I'm still the same human being, just a little stronger now than I ever was before."

**9. The best you can do changes from day to day.** Always do your best. And realize that "your best" is going to change repeatedly. For instance, it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick.

Under any circumstance, simply do your best in the present moment and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret. And remember that no matter what's happening, you can efficiently fight the battles of just today. It's only when you add the battles of those two abysmal eternities, yesterday and tomorrow, that life gets overwhelmingly complicated. **It's necessary, therefore, to let yourself live just one day at a time – just today – just right here, right now. And do the best you can in it.** (*I discuss this in more detail in the "Self-love" chapter of 1,000 Little Things Happy, Successful People Do Differently*.)

**10. It all matters in the end – every step, every regret, every smile, and every struggle.** The seemingly useless happenings add up to something. The minimum wage job you had in high school. The evenings you spent socializing with colleagues you never see anymore. The hours you spent writing thoughts on a personal blog that no one reads. Contemplations about elaborate future plans that never came to be. All those lonely nights spent reading novels and news columns and comics strips and fashion magazines and questioning your own principles on life and sex and religion and whether or not you're good enough just the way you are. All of this has strengthened you. All of this has led you to every success you've ever had. All of this has made you who you are today. †

**It's a gift** to joyfully recognize and accept our own smallness and ordinariness. Then you are free with nothing to live up to, nothing to prove, and nothing to protect. Such freedom is my best description of **Christian maturity**, because once you know that your "I" is great and one with God, you can ironically be quite content with a small and ordinary "I." No grandstanding is necessary. Any question of your own importance or dignity has already been resolved once and for all and forever."

Richard Rohr, OFM

**You do not have to change for God to love you.**

**Be grateful for your sins. They are carriers of grace.**

**Say goodbye to golden yesterdays-- or your heart will never learn to love the present.**

~Anthony de Mello

# Spiritual Law of Giving and Receiving

(By Traci Pedersen in Spirituality & Health, July 7, 2015)

**T**he Universe is in a perpetual state of circulation. Whether it's the water cycle, the food chain or the changing of the seasons, everything is in constant motion, performing in a ceaseless give and take, and always seeking balance.

By observing these countless dependable cycles in nature, we can better understand the Law of Giving and Receiving, one of the Seven Spiritual Laws of Yoga as taught by Deepak Chopra. This law operates on the principle that nothing in the Universe is static, and in order to receive, we must continue to give. In other words, giving and receiving are simply two different expressions of the same flow of energy.

If we were to stop the flow of giving and receiving—by refusing to do one or the other—we would cause stagnation and cut off the flow of powerful energy. For example, what happens when blood stops flowing through our bodies? It begins to coagulate and clot. The same principle can be applied to energy; when it becomes stagnant, the flow is cut off, and it becomes difficult for the things we truly desire to come to us.

As humans, we tend to hold back when we perceive that we are running low in something. We believe thoughts like "I don't have enough time to volunteer" or "That person doesn't show me love, so I'll withhold my love too." We hang onto clothes we haven't worn in years; we hide the last piece of cake. Although we believe we are being safe or frugal, there is almost always some form of fear in these actions—fear that we won't have enough for ourselves. But if we truly understood the principle of giving and receiving, we would know that the more we give with an open heart, the more we will receive, as it truly is one constant flow of energy.

This, of course, doesn't mean that we mindlessly squander all of our resources on the precept that we will get more. There is no virtue in waste; and there is no beauty in giving because we want to get something back. Instead, the principle falls into action when we give with a heart full of love and joy—without fear (this is key!)—and with the intention of making both the giver and receiver happy. In this way, we keep the channel of life-giving energy wide open, and the blessings begin to flow in all directions.

As you go about your day, try your best to give something to everyone you meet. It could be a smile, a compliment, money for a snack, or some other simple gesture of kindness. **Remember to receive with a happy heart as well. If someone pays you a compliment, accept it. If someone wants to pay your lunch bill, let them. It will allow that person to give as well, and in turn, receive the blessings that come with it.**

As you continue to give without a fear of losing your resources—and simply enjoy the knowledge that what you give will come flowing right back to you—you will open up the door to a new and joyful way of living that you'll never want to close. †

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

—Anne Frank

