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God Is Doing What God Does

I Am Not A Sinner and You
May Not Be Virtuous

Idle Thought: Spending
Wasteful Time

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I Am Not A Sinner and You May Not be Virtuous

by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



If you follow me around, you may find me using the Internet or social media most of the time when I am not driving, taking shower, eating meals, socializing, running errands, talking to my wife and children, doing chores, visiting doctors,

exercising, watching movies, reading, writing or sleeping. One reason why you'll find me on the internet is my paperless way of life. I read books, newspapers and magazines on digital platforms. I don't carry voluminous dictionary or

thesaurus, I check the words on line. I do my banking and bill

payments digitally. I find that more convenient.

You will also find me on the Internet because I keep in touch with my readers, friends and relatives through email and social media. I don't find anything wrong in that. People complain that the Internet and social media have made us impersonal and detached with the rest of the

world. On the contrary, before the advent of the Internet and social media, I hardly kept in touch with my long lost friends and relatives. I am more connected to them now than I was ever before. We'll soon be entering the third decade of the twenty-first century. If we don't adopt to the new ways soon, we will be fossils.

Yes, I am completely dependent on the internet. I use the internet for learning, for entertainment and for working. I am learning new crafts, meeting fellow authors, business partners and clients through the new innovation. I am also learning new languages without any expense or hassle.

If you are one of the people on the planet who has the privilege of being able to access the network of networks, you must know that you have access to a tool that can bring about a great improvement in your life; provide health tips and instant knowledge on any topic under the stars. That is, of course, as long as we apply common sense when using it.

I know many folks who are getting online degrees. I taught online for the University of

Phoenix for years. My students were soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, air hostesses who logged in from wherever they were at the time and handicapped (yes, I prefer handicap instead of physically challenged) folks who were not privy to continued education before. Besides that, many universities including MIT have their courses online for anyone to peruse. I also love the way the Internet users are enriching the English language. Remember, language is dynamic. Those who do not adopt to changes die. English is a dynamic language. It has changed from Chaucer to Shakespeare to the modern day. I feel that writing or saying 'LOL' is more expressive than stating, "I am breaking into laughter." I have no qualms about using 'B2B' instead of "business to business." As a matter of fact, that sounds more slick and business like. For the same reason I don't say, "Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit" anymore (Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet). I prefer to say, "You'll lay on your back when you grow up." (A sexual innuendo to baby Juliet).

Unfortunately, it has become fashionable to blame social media for everything that ails our

society. Do you know how the social media is helping people in rural India? Facebook, the famous social networking site has helped to make a difference in lives of rural people. It saved many farmers of Maharashtra from perishing due to oversupply of turmeric. Using social media, 25000 turmeric farmers boycotted the distributors of turmeric. The boycott served its purpose as the prices doubled. Farmers were quick to point out the advantages of social media.

Social media networks have played a pivotal role in improving the health of rural people and creating awareness among rural people. Also, media has played a role of whistle blower in case of poor quality of mid-day meals provided to children in rural schools in India. I rather like to see those villagers hooked to the Internet than rustivating in the dark world of ignorance and antiquity.

Fear of technology is nothing new. Before we became the digitally-driven society we are today, fear of new technology commonly served as one of the greatest threats to innovation. What we see as dated and relatively harmless inventions of the past were once the new technology that people freaked out about.

When the telegraph was first introduced, critics insisted the new technology would ruin the poetry of the English language. The widespread belief was that by encouraging people to communicate in short, incomplete sentences, the telegraph would eventually train people to always speak in sporadic, choppy thoughts.

There was a fear that radio would turn people away from reading or having intimate conversations with one another. Sounds familiar?

So, the next time you follow me around and find me using the Internet or social media when I am not driving, taking shower, eating meals, socializing, running errands, talking to my wife and children, doing chores, visiting doctors, exercising, watching movies, reading, writing or sleeping, please don't call me an addict. *"Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall"*

Commentary

Trump's Foreign Policy: Too Many Irons in the Fire?

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



Mr. Trump has engrossed himself in too many dramas. It will be interesting to know how his end game will shape up. Seems like he has stretched himself too thin. Trump has opened up too many dizzying foreign policy battlefronts including an array of trade wars around the globe. Mr. Trump has a wide range of enemies compared to friends.

He is involved in major economic deal with China, while threatening them with incremental tariffs. He's having a war of nerves with North Korea's Kim Jong-un to try to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, an effort inextricably linked to China. He just wrapped up renegotiating NAFTA with Canada and Mexico, after threatening both countries with massive steel and aluminum tariffs. He's threatening the rest of the world to create a fair playing field for equitable

trade or else. He is threatening Iran to stop its nuclear ambition. He is trying to get a stronger deal with the Europeans and is striving for regime changes in Venezuela and Cuba. It seems that there are too many balls in the air for him to juggle all at once.

People are getting anxious specially fueled by media and leftist frenzy about uncertainties of the outcome of his maneuvers. One possibility may be that it is all work-in-process (WIP). Everything takes time to materialize. Wars are not won in a day. What matters most is the effectiveness of Trump's policy over time and its consistency with U.S. national interests, not the personal qualities his demeanor.

People also doubt his competency in foreign policy matters because he tends to make important decisions against the advices of his cabinet advisors. He has had unprecedented turnover in senior foreign and defense policy positions and already has had three national security advisors. It seems that there is no steady decision-making process within the administration because the president apparently does not believe that he needs one.

At the same time, there is no doubt that Trump deserves more credit than his critics give him, but less than his most fervent fans – and the president himself. After all, the Europeans are paying more for NATO as their share of the budget. He stood up to Syria against using chemical weapons against its citizens; He has gotten rid of ISIS; North Korea has not tested any ICBMs in recent months and China is paying as Trump keeps increasing tariffs on their products. The American companies are choosing to shift manufacturing elsewhere from China including Apple, Nintendo and Dell. They are going to Vietnam, Malaysia and India instead. Among Chinese companies themselves, electronics giant TCL is moving its TV production to Vietnam and Sialon Tire is shifting its tire manufacturing line to Thailand. Others are relocating manufacturing operations to more established, lower cost countries including Mexico. Yes, the American manufacture

rs will suffer too to some extent in paying higher consumer prices and loss of crop exports to China. But those losses will be far less for the US and can be managed in a short run. People can live by paying a little more for their TVs and iPhones but they cannot sustain themselves in lack of food and fuel that the United States has in plenty.

Trump's foreign policy is totally America centric. But this has been the case with the greatest foreign-policy presidents identified by the historians which include George Washington, John Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Nixon. All of the above presidents' primary concerns have

been the security of the nation, the prosperity of its people, and an understanding of the global situation at the time rather than pursuing idealistic fantasies all the time. America's interests change in different times and places, so realism means different things to different presidents, and encompasses a broad range of policies.



As the great

political philosopher of India, Kautilya said, a King should use four different policies in four different circumstances. A king may have to make friends with certain enemies such as North Korea; he may have to bribe and favor certain countries as Trump is doing to the opposition in Venezuela; certain enemies may need punishment such as Iran and Syria and the king may have to divide-and rule in certain conditions as our policies in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Yemen signify.

So, it makes sense to give Trump's WIP some more time to rip the benefit from his seemingly confusing foreign policy.



Americans with No Abilities Act

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



The freshman Congresswoman, Alexandra Cortez (AOC) is about to introduce a bill called "Americans with No Abilities Act" to be ratified and signed by our future President into law. So far, she has garnered the support of two-thirds of the presidential candidates including Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Cory Booker and Julian Castro.

"Roughly 50 percent of us, through no fault of our own, do not possess the talent necessary to be useful at the

workplace. What's wrong with that?" Asked Bernie.

"Our forefathers worked really hard to make this country great. Why can't we reap the benefit of our ancestors' hard work? If Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Monaco can do it, why can't we?"

AOC's proposal will change the landscape of our nation and will remove the income gap between talented and folks with no ability at all. It will provide benefits and protection for more than 150 million citizens like us who lack any real skill or work ethic.

"People with no abilities are leading a hamster-wheel existence of unrewarding, dead-end work such as copying documents written by others, stuffing mail-in rebates and processing bureaucratic forms that no one reads," added AOC.

"Sadly, for us (millions of Americans with no abilities), the American dream of goofing off and moving up the food chain without any ability is simply dead. Under the Americans with No Abilities Act, more than 25 million important-sounding middle-management positions will be given to citizens with no abilities," observed Bernie.

"Mandatory, nonperformance based raises and promotions leading to the board room will be reserved to create an opportunity of upward mobility for even the most nincompoop and utterly dispensable employees. As an added incentive corporations will be rewarded with tax breaks for hiring poor talent-less employees," Cory Booker emphasized during the second presidential debate in Detroit.

The Americans with No Abilities Act will contain new measures to prevent discrimination against the talent-less by banning prospective employers from asking questions like, "What can you bring to this organization?" or "Do you have any special skill that will make you an asset to this company?" Elizabeth Warren shouted in her usual emotional tone.

"Wait a minute, what about our union buddies in Detroit? They can't turn a screw or drill a hole correctly. Their jobs are being exported to Mexico. The Koreans and the Japanese are eating their lunches. Under the provisions of the Americans with No Abilities Act, the untalented and nonessential workers will finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. They'll be allowed to drink coffee, read girlie magazines and sharpen foul language skills all day," emphasized Julian Castro.

"I promise to you that if elected, I'll make sure that this bill becomes a reality. This is our duty to provide each and every American citizen, regardless of his or her lack of value to society, some sort of space to take this great nation and our standard of living to a new height." Shouted Bernie "Damn capitalists! (Caught off guard)"

In Praise of the Futurists

By Anil Shrivastava “Musafir”



Now that September 2019 is almost here, the year 2020 can't be far behind.

Although I personally don't have a 2020 vision in that matter, it is interesting to look at some forecasts in retrospect that were predicted for the year 2020.

- President Hillary Clinton will be a one-term President.
- The U.S. will not be a Democratic country, but a totalitarian one.
- By 2020, every road and street in America will be “replaced by a network of pneumatic tubes
- In the year 2020, the humans will arrive on Mars –Wired magazine in 1997.
- By 2020, “There will be no C, X, or Q in our everyday alphabet. - John Elfreth Watkins Jr.
- Nuclear-powered vacuum cleaners would become a reality by 2020 - CoAlex Lewyt, president of Lewyt vacuum company in 1955
- By 2020, the machines will be producing so much that everyone in the U.S. will, in effect, be independently wealthy. –Time magazine in 1966.

I am not trying to poke fun at the futurists or prove them ridiculous. On the contrary, I marvel their aspiration and enthusiasm that we're actually going to get to something which may sound far-fetched at the time. This also inspires the innovators among us to work on something that would one day overcome human boundaries and limitations.

Most of us don't know what we don't know. In order to know something we must know what we don't know. The futurists and innovators know what they don't know and they try to seek answers unknown realities.

Stanley Davis wrote in his book, Future perfect, “The newborn, for example, is not able to distinguish itself from its environment; it must sense the environment as “not me” before it can develop any distinct sense of “me.” The infant moves from not knowing that it doesn't know, to knowing that it doesn't know what is out there beyond itself, to knowing.”

“The child is father of the man,” penned William Wordsworth (1770-1850). This is true for the curiosity displayed by the futurists and innovators.

Unknown is a source of fear. The less we know, more threatened we feel. Lack of knowledge means we don't know what we need to know to protect ourselves. Therefore Neanderthal and our ancestors in Stone Age worshipped rain and thunder gods instead of inventing protection equipment such as umbrella and roof over their head. They didn't know what they needed to know to protect themselves

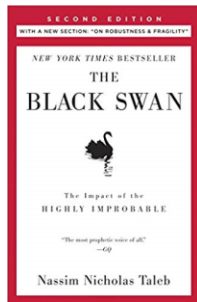
There is nothing funny about trying to visualize what lies around the next curve. Futurists, whether it's in books or movies, or experts predicting what may happen tomorrow are speaking to our innate desire we have for some control over our future, our fate, our survival. And even when they are wrong many a time, at least they give food for thought to innovators among us. One thing I know for sure that we humans will keep imagining and will keep reaching for the stars. So it be.

Book Review

The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable

Author: Nassim Nicholas Taleb

Publisher: Random House (400 pp)



Prediction is that our universe will come to an end in ten billion years. China will surpass the USA economically by the year 2030. Arctic will become ice free in another 25 years from now.

What if those predictions don't happen? Yes, improbable is possible and this is the theme of

Nassim Nicholas Taleb's book, "The Black Swan." People used to think that all swans are white until they found a black swan swims by in Australia. The improbable happened. At the same breath, Taleb gives the example of stock market predictions. According to him, stock market predictions are useless because no one can say accurately where the stocks are headed.

What experts predict are liable to be wrong because experts usually use bell curves where most distributions gravitate towards the center. In real life, this doesn't always happen increasing the chances of improbable happening.

The book cites examples of events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union or the fall of the Berlin Wall that very few foresaw. Taleb wants the readers to expect what may be unlikely to happen such as asteroids colliding with earth. Taleb's mistrust in academicians' forecasts is obvious from his ridicule of economists like Harry M. Markowitz and William F. Sharpe, winners of the 1990 Nobel Prize. He states that they are nothing more than quacks and swindlers.

The Black Swan is not an easy read. It systematically goes through examples and situations that are complex and sometimes difficult to comprehend. Taleb is painstaking, almost encyclopedic, in his enumeration of ways in which our understanding of information breaks down. He draws on ideas from Greek, Roman, Arab, French, and English thinkers spanning more than two millennia.

After reading "The Black Swan," I started feeling extremely skeptical of anybody who makes any prediction about the future. I don't know that's good or bad. **-Reviewed by Musafir**

The Art of Racing

Author: Garth Stein

Publisher: Harper Collins (338 pp)

"This was a good read... not in an ebullient way that I suspected at first when I picked it up, but on a different level. A bitter sweet story.

I loved the perspicacious dog Enzo, the true protagonist of the book, who tells the story and ruminates on the meaning of life, who longs to be a human being in his next life ("Here is why I will be a good person. Because I listen....") - ha!...; even though he wonders "...how difficult it must be to be a person. To constantly subvert your desires. To worry about doing the right thing, rather than doing what is most expedient" (hmm... indeed!); who discerns so well what people are all about: that "be it through intention or ignorance, our successes and our failures have been brought on by none other than ourselves"...; who likes "to live every day as if it were stolen from death, that is how I would love to live"... (much agree!); a dog who loves to eat pancakes and bananas!... And I truly don't think that the idea for this book is too uncanny - in my own experience dogs are extremely sensitive and intelligent creatures.

What I didn't care for was the "car racing" metaphor for "life", or, rather, I didn't care for the technicalities and history of car racing itself (I really felt like skipping those parts...). Even though it is so interconnected with everything that's going on in the book - Enzo's master being a car race driver... But for me, it didn't take away much from the novel. A case in point is this quote: "There is no dishonor in losing the race... There is only dishonor in not racing because you are afraid to lose" (even though it's a bit of a cliché).

This is not a book where you rapturously re-read this or that sentence, just for the beauty of expression. The characters are at times over-simplified in their description. But it's nevertheless, a good, fast, and even poignant read." **-Reviewed by Clara**

ESSAY

Victim of His Own

by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



*"When you
victimize yourself,
you rid yourself of
responsibility"*

The other day I got reminded of a story that I heard years

ago. It goes something like this:

A man moved to a new town and asked an old neighbor, "How are the folks in this subdivision?" The old man replied, "How were the folks where you lived before?"

The new neighbor replied, "They were kind, friendly and compassionate."

"You'll find similar people in this subdivision also," replied the old neighbor.

After a few years another person moved to the same neighborhood and asked the same old neighbor, "How are the folks in this subdivision?"

The old man asked, "How were the folks where you lived before?"

The new neighbor replied, "They were cruel, selfish and unkind."

"You'll find similar people in this subdivision also," replied the old neighbor.

The moral of the story is that we are the makers of our own world and today if the world is an ugly and nasty place, it's because that's what we are.

Hardly a day goes by that we don't complain, criticize, blame, gossip or compare ourselves to other people. Many of us live with a victim mentality which comes from the idea that we are not responsible for our actions and circumstances. Today, thanks to the internet and social media, this disease has taken the proportion of a pandemic. The so called victims portray themselves as unfortunates who demand to be rescued. My typical question to them is, "So what are you doing about this?"

The fact remains that most of us are not fighting to survive genocide, poverty, or daily street violence from an insurgent militia. We just have the gift of time to surmount negative emotions.

The Japanese are ingenious and hardworking folks. They rebuilt their country into an economic powerhouse after they were ruined in World War II. On the contrary, many countries in the Middle East are in a pitiable condition because they cannot rise above the victim mentality.

As a society, we are so quick to assign blame and pull out all the excuses as to why something did or did not happen. All the "He made me, she made me..." finger pointing are signs of victim mentality. Stephen Covey writes in his famous book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, "Dependent people need others to get what they want. Independent people can get what they want through their own effort."

Independent people work on things that can change their situation using positive energy whereas dependent people focus on concerns only without doing anything about it. They spend their time in blaming and accusing others with increased feeling of victimization.

It does us no good to shield ourselves from our own inertness and inability. Unfortunately, it is convenient to be lazy and blame others for our own plight. There are reasons why people do that. That way they avoid responsibility. They like it when others feel sorry for them and society feels compelled to help in getting what they want.

In fact, the world owes us nothing, so the folks with victim mentality should stop crying about entitlement and get out there and work for getting what they want. This will give them a push and will show them the reality of existence.

*"You saw what was coming,
You could have resisted everything,
It was our time to get up,
And that was our day to win,
You are victims of your own."*

What's the Fuss about Kashmir?

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



Introduction

Last week while I was asleep under the knife, the Indian government revoked special status for Indian-controlled Kashmir. Now that I am awake, I am trying to put the pieces together and understand what really happened that is so upsetting to the big powers and the Western world alike.

The Western world and China don't want to accept that India is a truly secular country. They have been painting India as a Hindu oligarchy to

demean her and put her at par with Pakistan forgetting that, unlike India, Pakistan was formed on the basis of hatred towards other religions prevailing in India. India is the home of around 200 million Muslims. The Indian Muslims are the most civilized and tolerant compared to the Muslims elsewhere in the world. So let us accept the fact that India's action in Kashmir has nothing to do with religion as falsely painted by India haters.

Though Kashmir has a majority Muslim population, it cannot be dubbed as a Muslim state in a secular India. It's just like asking the United States to declare Parts of Michigan a protected area because of the majority Muslim population there or ask China to declare Xinjiang, Gansu, and Ningxia as Muslim states with special privileges to their citizens. In the same context Great Britain should let North Ireland (a truly occupied area) break away from the empire.

History

India is an ancient country not artificially carved like many other nations around the globe. Before the partition of India in 1947, India had two different kinds of territories, one was directly ruled by Britain and others were princely states administered by local kings and princes who were under the British subjugation. But for millennia they were all a part of Greater India (Akhand Bharat). During India's independence, those princely states were given a choice to join the Indian Territory or remain as separate countries (British divide and rule tactics). King Karan Singh of Kashmir chose to merge with India. Pakistan, being an Islamic country wanted Kashmir to be a part of their country. As a result they attacked Kashmir and grabbed Gilgit-Baltistan part of Kashmir under their authority.

Another important point to understand here is that Kashmir was already there as a part of contiguous India. India didn't occupy by marching on to some other continent as the French have done to Guadeloupe, Martinique or Britain has done to Falkland, Gibraltar and many others. Remember, "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

Did India Kill Kashmiris?

India didn't kill Kashmiris On the contrary, extreme Kashmiri Muslims and terrorists from Pakistan killed Kashmiris. They also routed out the entire Hindu population living in Kashmir by killing, raping and snatching their properties. You never hear any mention of this fact in the West because of their hatred towards non-Abrahamic religion. On the contrary they side and sympathize with the Muslim terrorists in Kashmir who have been on rampage for the last 70 years.

India's action last week:

For the last 70 years India provided special treatment to the Kashmiris through Article 370 and 35A. The former meant having two different constitutions one for Kashmir another for most of India. Article 370 was a filter between the two constitutions. 35 A meant that no Indian could settle or buy land in Kashmir but the Kashmiris could buy land anywhere in India. No non-Kashmiri could be admitted in their schools while they could avail of any facility anywhere in India. Unlike colonial powers, India didn't take anything from Kashmir; it rather poured billions in Kashmir free of cost.

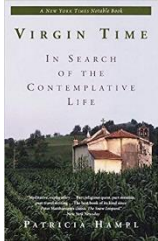
Now, tell the ignorant media and diplomats to allow any state, say, New Jersey, to oust the rest of the Americans from their state and snatch their properties or deny admissions to the outsiders in their schools while allowing the folks from New Jersey to own property and go to any school anywhere in the US. Sounds fair?

Fade up with this nonsense, the Modi government finally decided to end the special privilege for the Kashmiris. The changes the Indian government announced last week would overturn Article 370, as well as another provision that prevent nonresidents from buying property in then Jammu and Kashmir. The government also said it would reconstitute the state administratively and reorganize it into two federal territories. One of these — still called Jammu and Kashmir — would have a state legislature, while the other, a remote mountainous area called Ladakh, would be a union territory like Washington DC.

Conclusion

You may here about UN mediating in Kashmir or having a plebiscite to let Kashmiris decide their future. Yes, some blunders were made by the old leaders of India who were weak and obsequious to stronger countries. India is strong now and it considers its action in Kashmir as its internal matter and denies the UN or the US to intervene in its internal matters. The USA, China and Russia have done the same in the past to protect their own interest. Those days are gone when India succumbed to the pressure from others. This is a new India and it will protect its sovereignty at all costs. As for Kashmir, its future is bright. They will have new industries and opportunities so that they will also become like the rest of India very soon.

Basking in Death by Julie Booksh



Conscious Conversations: Short stories and other musings. This one is dedicated to those who so bravely teach us how die. May we learn how to die before we die so we can truly live. It is called "Basking in Death". I wrote it months ago after a hospital visit to a family friend. Tonight I

post it in honor of her, other dear friends lost and my husband's sweet aunt who passed away just minutes ago.

Basking in Death

There she was lying there hours away from dying. She was still breathing but not conscious. Her mouth was hanging open much like a person in deep sleep. My husband wanted to go and say goodbye to this kind woman he has known his whole life. Death is always hard to see. Watching someone who is usually so full of life even in her illness lying there, still breathing but mostly gone is jarring. Death feels like a haunting presence. It brings up a lot of questions, emotions and mystery.

After saying our goodbyes we ran into some family downstairs at the hospital. We visited for a while and for a few minutes talked about life after death each of us sharing our musings. One of our relatives talked about her belief in reincarnation and how right now our friend's soul could be traveling to enter a baby about to be born. One of my in-laws said, "That baby already has a soul. Maybe it's a baby about to be conceived". I added, "Yeah, maybe someone is taking a pregnancy test, and the result is confusing". Everyone was taking comfort in the idea that our friend lives on and laughing a little about exactly how that happens as if anyone really knows. After taking it all in I said, "Man, I hope she gets a long beach vacation or something first. It seems like a lot of work to have to immediately begin again". Everyone erupted in laughter. It was hilarious especially because I was serious.

The next morning we found out she passed away. In my sadness I giggled thinking about the pregnancy test possibly being clearer today. Then I found myself thinking, "I hope she gets to bask in death for a while." Death - the

point at which we stop completely. We are so afraid of it we make any kind of stopping the devil including stopping to simply to rest. We've got to keep moving, proving and

producing. We have to make our mark. We have to LIVE! Why is it that we don't wish people would "rest in peace" until they die? It is as if living and resting in peace can't coexist. Here on Earth it is all about doing for the humans anyway! At least that's the case where I live on Earth.

Have you heard the old adage, "A body in motion stays in motion. A body at rest stays at rest"? I don't understand what is wrong with that. Yeah, yeah, I know the saying is meant to promote exercise, but I am more concerned that it promotes "rest and you will die". You must keep going no matter what!! What the hell? A body that rests is a healthy body. Think about it. You get sick, you are told to rest. I have never heard of rest causing harm. To the contrary rest often cures what ails us when even traditional medicine won't. It's rest AND motion not rest OR motion. They are both necessary, but we marginalize rest. We have made real rest an unproductive thing, and I could not disagree more. Even phrases like "power through" marginalize rest even though they may not mean to. Producing and doing are revered and resting is lazy or somehow not enough. We walk around trying to prove how much we have to do as if it legitimizes us. Sadly, it does to many people. It places us higher in some strange hierarchy that we seem to accept as true.

Learning how to truly rest is one of the most productive things I have ever done! I am not only talking about rest when I actually stop, get still and breathe, play dead, nap or sleep. I am also talking about the rest that comes when I allow things to happen instead of reacting to every little thing and living in a state of brace. When I get my mind out of the way and die to the idea that there is certain way of doing things, I am able to tap into my own way of doing things (my own nature) and things happens so much more effortlessly. I get way more done in smaller amounts of time, and it often feels like my everyday self isn't the one doing things. It is like I have tapped into a bigger self. None of this would be possible without stopping.

We separate life and death just like we do everything else. We make one good and one bad. If one is happening then the other is not, which nature consistently disproves with her seasons. Nature, with her seasons, shows us life and death happening simultaneously all year long. In her own way she reminds us that, "Death is not the end. It is the release". [1]

[1] Hampl, Patricia, *Virgin Time* (Ballantine Books), p.14

How to Discipline Your Child

Written by Dr. Niru Prasad



It is our responsibility as parents to teach discipline, which means teaching and training our children while they are young and growing because:

A: Discipline is an ongoing process and begins early in a child's life.

A. Changes as the child grows older and continues until adulthood.

The aims of providing good discipline to the child are:

- A. To encourage appropriate behavior.
- B. Build self-esteem.
- C. Help the child develop self-confidence.
- D. Help prevent problems as they grow older.

Children misbehave at times because:

- A. They are tired, hungry or sick.
- B. They were not told of their misbehavior in the past.

By understanding the cause of misbehavior can help you choose an effective method of changing their behavior.

Here are some guidelines to discipline your child by encouraging positive behavior.

A. Give love, reassurance by hugging, kissing and praising your child.

B. Try to understand your child by listening to them – since they need attention, take some time off your busy schedule every day to listen to their problems.

A. Set limits by:

- 1. Reminding children about limits until self-discipline develops.
- 2. Share with your child the reasons for purposed limits.
- 3. Discuss with them their problems.
- 4. Give rewards when they do things right.
- 5. Promote independence by allowing your child to share in decisions.
- 6. Promote responsibility and praise them for completing tasks.
- 7. Set a good example.

What to do when your child misbehaves:

- A. Be prompt and act soon to make him realize that things are not right.
- B. Make sure your child understands why he is being punished.
- C. Control your emotions.
- D. Set a limit.
- E. Avoid physical punishment.

It is important to remember that love and understanding are the keys to a proper discipline for your child.

Here are a few more Safety Precaution Tips to keep your home safe and sound.

- 1. Stairs should be carpeted and protected with gates at the top and bottom of the staircase.
- 2. The door to your basement should always be locked.
- 3. If you have hardwood floors, don't let children run around in stocking feet.

4. Chemicals and poisonous products should be kept out of reach in their original containers.
5. Have proper smoke detectors installed in your home.
6. Put plug protectors in all electric outlets.
7. Place a barrier around the fireplace or other heat source.
8. Keep matches and lighters in locked cabinets.
9. Cover the sharp corners of your furniture and coffee table.
10. Make sure extension cords are adequate for their electric load and make sure they cannot be reached by your toddler.
11. Make sure television and other heavy items are secure so they can't tip over.
12. In the kitchen area, store knives and other sharp utensils in high cabinets with safety latches.
13. While using the cooking range, use the back burners of your stove and always turn the pot handles towards the back of the stove if you have a toddler at home.
14. Keep the toasters and other electric appliances unplugged and out of reach.
15. Keep all appliance cords tucked away so your child cannot pull on them.
16. Select a highchair with a wide base and seat belt and don't place the highchair near a counter or table since a child might push hard and the chair will fall
17. DO NOT warm baby bottles in microwave ovens since the milk might get too hot and burn the mouth of the baby.
18. Always keep a working fire extinguisher in your kitchen.
19. Never leave your child unattended in the bathroom or bathtub.
20. Place non-skid rugs on the bathroom floor.
21. Use a rubber mat in the bathtub.
22. Set your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent from scalding burns.

How to protect yourself against common colds

The common cold is a viral infection that cannot be treated with antibiotics. The symptoms of a cold could also be allergy related and here are a few surviving tips:

1. Get rest and drink a lot of fluids.
2. Increase humidity in your house.
When you have a fever, you are losing water through perspiration so replace your fluid loss by drinking fluids.
3. Warm drinks can soothe a sore throat and help relieve congestion. Salt water gargles work magic for a sore throat.
4. Take vitamin C supplements since they reduce the severity of symptoms.
5. It has been reported by the Annals of Internal Medicine that by sucking on Zinc gluconate lozenges the severity of cold symptoms are reduced.
6. See your doctor if your symptoms are not relieved or are getting worse in a few days.

Here are some safety precaution tips to prevent slips, trips and falls.

Accidental injuries and falls can cause temporary or permanent disabilities in any person, so here are some guidelines for prevention:

1. Always have a light switch close to your bed that you can reach without getting out of bed.
2. Check your carpets frequently for any sharp objects or loose corners.
3. Use bath mats with suction cups in the bathtub.
4. Wear slippers that fit snugly and don't walk around in your stocking feet.
5. Tack your rugs so they lie flat and replace rugs or runners that tend to slip or attach a non-slip backing to them.
6. Check your medications frequently by your pharmacist since some over-the-counter Medication can make you drowsy and dizzy.

Brainy Quiz

1. The two locations in the brain known as Broca's area and Wernicke's area are related to vision.
True or False?
2. Which of the following functions is NOT controlled by the brain stem and the limbic system working together?
a. Blood sugar? B. Blood pressure? C. Hair and nail growth? D. Emotions and behavior?
3. What term refers to the three protective layers located under the skull?
a. Vertebrae? b. Neurons? c. Thalmi? d. Meninges?
4. All humans have four lobes in the cerebral cortex. Which answer includes the correct four?
a. Serotonin, pituitary, temporal, myelin? b. fFrontal, parietal, endomorphic, corticalal? C. Frontal, parietal, occipital, temporal? d. Thalmus, hippocampus, occipital, mitochondria
5. Which term refers to the brain not getting an adequate supply of oxygen?
a. Axon? B. Anoxia? c. Amnesia? d. Autism?
6. The brains of people suffering from Parkinson's disease usually have low amounts of what substance?
a. Epinephrine? b. Aspartate? c. Glutamate? d. Dophamine?
7. Natural painkillers produced in the brain are known as what?
a. Escadorphins? b. Ectodorphins? c. Endorphins? d. Estrodorphins?
8. Consuming too much alcohol can affect memory because it interferes with the brain's capability to use which of the following?
a. Vitamin K? b. Vitamin B₁? c. Folic acid? d. Magnesium?
9. Which term refers to the groups of dendrites and axons that transmit messages from body parts to the brain and spinal cord?
a. Nerves? b. Myelin? c. Synapses? d. Peptides?
10. What is another newer name for manic-depressive illness?
a. Alzheimer's? b. Schizophrenia? c. Dementia? . Bipolar disorder?

Answers

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. false | 7. c |
| 2. b | 8. b |
| 3. d | 9. a |
| 4. c | 10. d |
| 5. b | |
| 6. d | |

Idle Thoughts

Spending Wasteful Time

by Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



I am going for a major surgery tomorrow (written on August 4, 2019). I had the same surgery done on me fifteen years ago. So, what has changed? I am retired now while after my first surgery, I went to work. Now I have more goofy time to waste everywhere. One thing for sure, I am not planning to plant trees every day

or attend non-value-added office meetings anymore.

Another major difference between the two surgeries is that this time I have less time left on this earth. I read everywhere that this should give me a different perspective on life. I don't exactly understand what does that mean. Should



I spend less time on the Internet and social media? Should I read more than I already do? That will be quite boring I believe. Should I renounce all attachments and join Dalai Lama and convert to Buddhism? I am confused.

I enjoy leading a life that is completely kind of random, silly and uneventful. That's about, how much I can think of doing until I get some better idea. The fact is that life is like our favorite movie that we have seen many times. Similarly, no matter what happens, we repeat the same cycle in life just like the New Year resolution which generally expires on February 28.

Whether I have a little bit of time or a lot of time, the only thing that really matters is how much of my time I can give to other people. That's what I think I can do best without breaking a sweat or missing

my favorite chair in the house. Plus, it's free!

I know a lot of folks who live in isolation which is one of the under-reported miseries of humanity. I am pretty sure that I can make them happier with my company. I can start by helping someone in my family (say, my wife)

in a small way – do the dishes, pick up after her, listen more and be extra kind.

I'll indulge in the pleasure of doing small things instead of trying to reinvent the Internet or redesigning a better light bulb. I'll live in the moment and be what I really am. Simplicity and honesty are like horse and buggy that keep the wheels in motion until we reach the last stop.

If I start giving my time with intention, every day, it can make a real difference in my life too. May be people will start to treat me differently because I will treat them differently. I'll start to ask "how" can I do this, rather than "why." Hey! That's a nice idea. With that good thought, talk to you when I wake up after surgery. Good Night!

Short Story

Dreamland

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Prabha Devi sat motionless and unattended in a corner of the family room. The room was crowded with Kiran and Vijay's friends. She wondered why people were consoling Kiran and Vijay instead of her when, as a matter of fact, it was her husband who had passed away. Kiran was her daughter and Vijay, her son-in-law. "Bring some water! Kiran is fainting," shouted one of her friends. Prabha Devi gathered her old weakened body and proceeded to fetch a glass of water for Kiran. She was numb and just moved involuntarily to do what she had been doing for so long, that is attend to Kiran and Vijay's needs. Prabha Devi was 65, a small framed woman who left her native India a year ago, not long enough to erase the memories to which she had clung all this time—memories that became a dream of past happiness that was no more, or so it seemed to the old lady who preserved her memories as her only treasure. Golmudi in India, where Prabha Devi's family had lived was not a rich place by American standards, but it was her own place where she had lived with her husband happily and freely. That was the place where Kiran, their only child was born and raised. She lived like a queen in her home. Her husband was a shopkeeper who always remained occupied with his business. It was Prabha Devi who took care of matters at home. She remembered how her husband used to tease her by saying, "You're the Indira Gandhi of our house. I am a mere member of the opposition bench." Prabha Devi and her husband satisfied all the needs and demands of Kiran. Kiran always remained the focus of their attention since her birth. Kiran got married to Vijay, an IT (Information Technology) professional and when the chance came and it seemed like a big chance, Kiran and her husband migrated to the U.S. Although Prabha Devi felt

sad that her only child had moved oceans away, she was happy for her daughter's good fortune and delight. Kiran called her parents regularly and told them about their affluent lifestyle in the new land. Prabha Devi proudly narrated those stories to her neighbors and friends at great length. Prabha Devi and her husband waited for Kiran's phone call every Sunday morning. It was Sunday morning in India. Prabha Devi was waiting in anticipation. Finally, the phone rang. Yes, it was Kiran at the other end. "Ma, I have to give you a very special news. We went to the doctor yesterday and he confirmed that I am in the family way."

"God bless you my child. I am delighted. Take care of yourself and eat well."

"But Ma, I need you. I am not able to take care of my job, health and Vijay all at the same time. Ma, can you come to us please?" "Listen Kiran, I've to take care of your father. He has a heart condition. Moreover, it costs a lot of money to travel to America. You know that we live here comfortably within our means but we don't have the resources to travel abroad." "Ma, come for my sake, please! Why don't you take some time to think about it. I'll call you again next Sunday." Next Sunday morning, the phone rang again. This time it was Vijay on the line. "Ma! We want you to come and bless us. Don't you worry about the expenses! After all, Kiran and I earn more than the prime minister and the president of India combined. We'll send you the ticket. You'll enjoy staying with us. Moreover, this will break your monotony also." There was no mention or

concern shown for the health of her husband. Prabha Devi couldn't snub Vijay's request so she came to America to stay with them for six months. She didn't cook the first day. On the second day, Kiran wanted her to cook her favorite dish. Prabha Devi gladly obliged. Kiran and Vijay liked her cooking. She cooked again the next day. On the fourth day she took it easy. When Kiran returned from work, she asked for dinner. Her mom looked astonished and said, "Kiran, aren't you going to cook anymore?" "Ma! You know my condition. Do you expect me to cook? One thing led to another and Prabha Devi soon became their housemaid. She cooked, cleaned the house and washed dishes. Prabha Devi shouldered all the household chores that were thrust upon her and nobody thought that she was not only too old to take on such a burden, she had a sick husband living alone in India. Whenever Prabha Devi raised the topic of returning to India, Kiran made her feel guilty by whining about her condition, "How could you think of that? Look at my condition! Ma! I need you." Prabha Devi thought about Kiran's plea and her husband's condition at the same time. Her heart was flooded with contradictory emotions. Six months passed. Prabha Devi's ticket had expired. Soon it was time for the childbirth. Prabha Devi felt happy for the first time in months to see her grandson. After the birth of her grandson, Prabha Devi begged and pleaded to be sent home. She struggled to describe her inner tug-of-war but all in vain. Now she had one more chore added to her list—taking care of the infant. She was virtually a prisoner in a foreign land. Every plane she noticed in the sky, she thought it was going in her direction, but she was helpless and penniless.

Prabha Devi remembered all that with tears in her eyes. She looked around and glanced at Kiran's friends. There was something common among them. Most of them had called their

parents from India to work as house servants for them. One of Vijay's friends was different. His name was Bihari. Bihari noticed Prabha Devi's predicament and went up to her to console her. He was moved by the old lady's tears and noticed scars on her thin malnourished body and recognized that they were recent. Bihari immediately approached Vijay and threatened to report him to the authorities. It was a obvious case of abuse, exploitation and emotional torture. Prabha Devi's expressions betrayed an untold story.

Vijay got scared and put Prabha Devi on a plane to India the next day. When she arrived in Golmudi, two of her nephews came to the railway station to pick her up. The nephews were beaming with joy. "Welcome back to India," they shouted. Prabha Devi was astonished at their inappropriate exuberance. "How did he die?" Prabha Devi asked in a sorrowful but controlled tone. "Wait till you reach home," answered her nephews. On reaching home, Prabha Devi saw her husband standing in front of their house with a garland in his hand. Prabha Devi fainted with shock. When she regained consciousness her husband explained to her, "This was the only way to get you out of America." The reunion was joyful. She embraced both her nephews and asked her husband, "Baaki, howz zindagi? (Nevertheless, how's life?)," the American English came tumbling to her lips mixed with Hindusthani. "Get your aunt something to eat," shouted her husband. "Don't bother, let me do it. This is my house and I am the Indira Gandhi here. I'll do here what I want!" Everyone cheered and smiled. Prabha Devi looked at her husband and uttered, "Apna ghar phir apna ghar hai, na? (There is no place like home, isn't?)." She was finally re-living her dream away from the dreamland.

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