

Seeking contentment and inner peace

by Mark Pavilons

I prayed for riches and achieved success; All that I touched turned into gold. Alas, my cares were greater and my peace was less, when that wish came to pass.

I prayed for glory ... but ah, the hurts that came with fame.

I prayed for a contented mind at length ... A great light upon my darkened spirit burst, great peace fell on me also, and great strength. Oh, had that prayer been first!?

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Answered Prayers

I agree that we are all on a journey to mastering our inner peace. Unfortunately, I think the majority never find it.

Some get fleeting, glorious moments of inner peace and then reality sinks in and you're just a human being trying to make it through the day.

According to one of my favourite sources, The Dalai Lama, true peace begins within oneself. By nurturing compassion and cultivating inner peace, we can create a powerful ripple effect that extends to our families, communities, and beyond. The Dalai Lama encourages us to embrace our own suffering and transform it into an opportunity for positive change.

As you breathe in, cherish yourself," he advises, encouraging us to recognize the precious nature of each day.

Lately, given my health issues, I've had to break free of the overwhelming mental anguish. Yes, I succumbed for a couple of weeks, feeling quite numb and pessimistic. But I had to shed that dark cloak and replace it with some sort of serenity, or ease. It wasn't easy. There were days when my burdens felt so heavy I thought I was going to be crushed by the weight.

My family members helped me see the light and I found I had to be busy and distracted, to carry on.

Through this ongoing journey of releasing my demons I have learned that I had it all wrong all these years.

Our species stopped eating from the tree of knowledge, instead clawing at the bark of the wrong trees. For those who've reached the upper most branch, what do you see? Was it worth the scramble to the top?

During my wave-like slumps, I also realize that very little really matters in our lives. I'm talking about the stupid little things, like material possessions, cable TV, sports cars, wi-fi, pizza toppings, organic shampoo, reusable shopping bags, junk food and dandelions.

We all realize at some point that what matters is the present, being next to your soulmate, petting the dog in your lap, and hearing your children laugh. These are fuel for the soul to be sure.

I hate the fact I've frittered away so much time on useless pastimes, or in search of happiness, when it was always right under my nose.

I thought I had more time to get it right.

My friend the Dalai Lama says many of us live life as if we're never going to die. ?And then we die, having never really lived.?

I would hate that to be my legacy.

Optimism, I'm reminded, feels much better than pessimism. It's true, believe me on this. ?The inner peace of an alert and calm mind are the source of real happiness and good health,??he says.

I've been told by other cancer sufferers and those in the medical field that a positive outlook ? hope ? can be just as strong as any pill.

I?truly hope that's true.

Now, how do we achieve this in a few easy steps? Meditation, yoga, religion, spirituality, Tibetan singing bowls and Vitamin D? Maybe a combination of all those things. I have pondered the afterlife or some strange, new existence on another plane of reality.

I'm not going to make the switch to Buddhism or Hinduism any time soon, but different perspectives on the notion can offer some sort of comfort.

Also, love and compassion are powerful things and maybe human beings are the only souls in the universe capable of such things. If you can name a handful of friends or people who have touched you emotionally or spiritually, you're in good shape.

Family members, friends, even Facebook acquaintances can carry us through and support us.

Even a virtual hug can hit home, especially on those stormy days.

While happiness is still elusive, I am beginning to understand to grasp every single moment of joy, no matter how small.

Some amazing memories have floated through my brain recently, as I?search for this sweet spot of calm.

I?recall, with clarity, the night I?proposed to Kim on the deck of the Empire Sandy as we cruised Lake Ontario. I remember the birth of each child. From time to time, I?think of my mom's voice, dad's smile and sister's laugh and wonder how they're doing in Heaven.

Father's Day celebrations at our house and the in-laws were definitely welcome nutrition for the soul. A good steak holds a world of goodness!

This past weekend, I?soaked it all up and felt very much at ease. There were moments on the weekend when my little world seemed perfect, almost blissful.

I?enjoyed every minute, even though my wife and I were sore after some extensive yard work.

A discussion with my son on the unfathomable creation of the universe wrapped up the Father's Day evening.

So many wonders to behold.

I continue to set my sights on a contented mind and inner peace.