

Learning to Live Well - I

Attitude - The first three important concepts

Learning to live well is an important process for our well being. Some of the most striking concerns that come to mind are: Where did I come from? Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? While I do not pretend to have the comprehensive answers to these and other life questions, I do offer some thoughtful information that may help address these and other questions. I wish to present and investigate three important words that I believe are an essential concepts to get us started; Probabilities, Possibilities, and Productivity.

Probabilities:

The Psalmist declares, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of God's hands." (Psalm 19:1) When we search the heavens today we begin to understand the concept of probabilities. The dictionary uses terms like, "the state of being probable", or "something likely to happen" and "mathematical likelihood of event". These clearly suggest to us that the word probable suggests that something is highly feasible, credible and apparent.

Why do I start with probability? Because those in science and math tell us that "probability lies at the heart of nature, and the inner workings of a myriad of phenomena and processes are unlocked to the human mind only by understanding the fundamental principles of probability. In particular, the entire field of thermodynamics, statistical mechanics and quantum theory are described by concepts and ideas from probability theory. Probability is that part of mathematics which gives a precise meaning to the idea of uncertainty, of not fully knowing the occurrence of some event. We often hear that there is a good chance of a shower; people bet with different odds, say 1 to 5, that a football match will be won by some team and so on. In each case, we are making a guess as to what will be the outcome of some event. Probability theory is the science that quantifies our ignorance, and spells out the likelihood of our guess being realized for a particular case." <http://srikant.org/core/node5.html>

Obviously if nothing is probable then we cannot have much hope that anything would be possible. When any person is without hope they are in serious trouble. Too many people speak about hope and have no firm idea about what hope really is. Hope is not just a good feeling nor is it about dreams for the future. If hope offers no tangible and realist element in your life then you are really without bona fide hope. To help you understand how concrete **hope** can be on one's life I offer this acronym:

Habitual Open Productive Exploration.

Everyone develops habits, good and bad. It should be obvious that good habits are best. Routines that are good lifestyles create good behavior and bring satisfaction and success. To make the best of all possibilities it is important to develop good habits.

Being open is essential for growth in every area of life and for stimulating hope. People who are closed and resistant to change cannot grow or have hope. It is impossible to take advantage of the unlimited possibilities that life has to offer if one is resistant or afraid to change and grow. Remember the acronym for FEAR (False Evidence Appearing Real) or those who worry about the IF in life (Illicit Fact). It may be appropriate to be careful in moving forward slowly but not stubborn or obstinate to

have anything remain the same. Remember, change is inevitable since everything in our universe is constantly changing.

Productivity and exploration go together. Efficiency of production works best with study and discovery. The probability of joy, happiness and satisfaction in life comes from being habitually open to productive exploration. When we develop the habit of being open to all our senses and faculties and are engaged in productive exploration we possess the continuum of hope everyone desires.

You should realize that hope is not a feeling or wishful thinking. Hope does not come from pleasant dreams nor is it made possible by the tooth fairy. Hope is very real and probable when one is fully engaged in a living and changing universe with all their being - body, mind, and emotion. If you live hopefully you have the probability of a great life.

Possibilities:

You may have heard people say, "all things are possible, only believe". There may be more truth to this sentiment than you realize, but not without thoughtful involvement and investigation. As we have noted, rational hope is a great start but there is more to living well than hope. We also need more than probability because we certainly do not want to keep guessing nor trying to live our lives merely by trial and error.

Faith and belief are two nouns that come to mind as a foundation for forming possibilities. Believe is the verb that speaks of our placing into action what our faith and belief might propose. I think that learning to live well comes from a faith that is wholesome and honest, derived through research and investigation. Living well comes from a hands on involvement with all of ones being - body, mind, and emotion. Authentic faith and belief come from a comprehensive perspective and awareness of our universe and our world including the past, present and future. Because change is inevitable possibilities might be a normal part of being and growing.

I like to use acronyms to aid in expanding an understanding of words. I think acronyms help to go beyond a definition toward an expanded comprehension.

FAITH (Finding Authenticity In Today's Happenings)

BELIEF (Balancing Enthusiasm Level In Educational Formation)

To me life becomes more exciting when we are wide open to discovery. To have eyes to see and not look or to have ears to hear and not listen is a sad state of affairs in my opinion. We are wonderfully equipped to discover new possibilities for the future and enjoy being partners in the creative energy of living well. It is important to acknowledge that change is inevitable and that nothing stays the same. It is our opportunity to find authenticity in today's happenings. There are certainly lessons that we need to learn from and remember in history. The stories of the past enable us to learn from that which was good and bad. Hopefully we have taken what was good and even made it better and have been careful to note what was bad so that we do not repeat it. The philosopher, essayist, poet and novelist, George Santayana, in his Reason in Common Sense, wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." I believe that many problems people have today come from trying to live in the past while resisting change to ways of today and tomorrow. In doing so they actually prevent new possibilities for refreshment and growth in their lives.

Belief is something we all have in almost every area of life. Some hold tenaciously to their beliefs and are frightened to consider any change in their beliefs. I believe that this attitude of stubborn resistance to change is the root cause of many calamities in people's lives. It is imperative that we continually acknowledge that old things are passing away and that all things are becoming new. As so many have told us, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life". Each day is a new beginning to move forward and make progress by finding and creating new possibilities. This is how one's faith grows as one finds the authentic in today's happenings.

It is important that our beliefs are balanced and informed by learning. We live in a time when new knowledge and understanding increases constantly so it is also important to find what is authentic. Not everything newly presented is proven nor fully understood. It is just as much a mistake to leap toward everything that is new as it is to hold on tenaciously to the past. Our lives must be balanced between the past and the future. The certainty of change forces us to move forward but it does not require that such movement be instant and without knowledge and understanding of the past.

Basically what prevents possibilities in our lives is clinging to the past as if it were eternal and neglecting the resources necessary to our future. Balance comes when we remember the lessons of the past that may help us to learn from our mistakes as we move ahead. Focus is important to maintain the progress needed to move us to the possibilities of tomorrow – one day at a time. Remember, life is like a trip or a journey - Where did I come from? Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? It helps a great deal to have a destination in mind and to have a map or GPS to enable proficient progress. An example may be like driving a car. To move safely forward one should look mainly in the windshield, glancing peripherally from side to side, and seldom looking into the rear view mirror unless backing up. In life we cannot go back to yesterday – it's over and gone. We cannot move to tomorrow until it arrives, so we live in the present – today! We learn from the past, we make plans and dream for tomorrow, but what we accomplish today will make all the difference. Possibilities are what are happening now!

What are you doing today to enable your potential for tomorrow? That is the question. Probabilities for you are as vast as the Universe we live in because change is inevitable. All around us stars and planets are dying and fading away, but all around us new stars and even new galaxies are being formed. As a part of this magnificent Universe we have our part to play. We may not be able to make dramatic changes in the overall scope of things, but we certainly have a significant amount of control in our individual lives as well as in those who are family and neighbor. There is much in this globe we call Earth that is affected by who we are and what we do each day.

Productivity:

Now we need to talk about our ability to produce. We have shown the existence of probabilities and discussed our part in developing a multiplicity of possibilities but to affect our personal advantages of these tremendous opportunities we need to discuss our productivity. Other words that help us to identify are: aptitude, skill, capacity, facility, talent, and gift. Here, we might say, is where the rubber meets the road. It is easy to talk about faith and belief, as these words are nouns. While nouns are important to the construction of a sentence one must remember that verbs are also essential. These are the words that indicate or state the action of what we are intending to say or explain.

Your work ethic is crucial to this phase of success. What actions will you take to find authenticity in today's happenings? How will you keep a good balance between your enthusiasm and learning? How will your ethics, set of principles, be coordinated between what is etched in your mind and acted out ethically in the etiquette of your social interaction and daily living? Will you be fair in doing to others, as you would have others to do to you? Everyone has been gifted with talent and the capacity to learn and become, but not everyone discovers these in themselves and actively works to develop them throughout the whole of their lives. The aptitude and facility to work consistently each day on who you are, what you have to offer, and being conscientiously available to perform is vital and necessary to success in productivity.

SUCCESS – Serving Ultimately and Consistently Causes Excellence, Stability and Security

There is no reason why anyone cannot be successful if they understand, as suggested in the acronym above, that success is an activity. We each have been blessed to be the person we are, but unless we are involved in a life of success it will not automatically happen. Perhaps this is the challenge given to us in Scripture when we are encouraged to work out our own salvation? Most people hope to be successful but too many do not realize that success only comes to those who make it their life's practice.

Realize that Success begins with Serving! Self-serving individuals will hardly ever make it in life. Service to others is our highest calling and duty. When service is not our first priority we are not true to basic principles of life together and to ourselves. Our life of service should be our ultimate goal and must be practiced consistently. Living ethically with this first principle in mind and heart is what causes excellence, stability and security for our communities and us.

Without this understanding of success we can never become secure. Security comes from within each of us and need not depend on outward circumstances. It is only in the way that we live and perform that we obtain security in body, mind, and emotions.

SECURE – Staying Extremely Comfortable Under Reoccurring Experiences

Security is a personal matter and comes from within. It is a part of one's character and understanding of life. When you are aware of the numerous probabilities of the universe and realize the scores of possibilities available each day you can sense that security is part of it all. Once you become extremely comfortable with these universal principles you can begin to stay comfortable under reoccurring experiences.

This is the first in a series of articles that I hope will be helpful in Learning To Live Well. The next series will present thoughts on Persona, Persistence, and Perseverance. Hopefully you will begin to see that we need to grow and develop into a maturity that will enhance and enable us to live well.