

New Perspective, New Story

All the Difference in the World by Marc Chernoff
Every Sunday morning I take a light jog around the park near my house. There's a lake located in one corner of the park. Each time I jog by this lake, I see the same elderly woman sitting by the water's edge with a small metal cage sitting beside her.

This past Sunday my curiosity got the best of me, so I stopped jogging and walked over to her. As I got closer, I realized that the metal cage was in fact a small trap. There were three turtles, unharmed, walking around the base of the trap. She had a fourth turtle in her lap that she was carefully scrubbing with a spongy brush. "Hello", I said. "I see you here every Sunday morning. If you don't mind my nosiness, I'd love to know what you're doing with those turtles." She smiled. "I'm cleaning off their shells," she replied. "Anything on a turtle shell,

like algae or scum, reduces the turtle's ability to absorb heat and impedes its ability to swim. It can also erode and weaken the shell over time." "Wow, that's really nice of you", I exclaimed.

She went on, "I spend a couple of hours each Sunday morning relaxing by this lake and helping these little guys out. It's my own strange way of making a difference."

"But don't most freshwater turtles live their whole lives with algae and scum hanging from their shells?" I asked. "Yep, sadly they do," she replied. I scratched my head. "Well then, don't you think your time could be better spent? I mean, I think your efforts are kind and all, but there are freshwater turtles living in lakes all around the world. And 99% of these turtles don't have kind people to help them clean off their shells. So, no offense... But how exactly are your localized efforts here truly making a difference?"

The woman giggled aloud. She then looked down at the turtle in her lap, scrubbed off the last piece of algae from its shell, and said, "Sweetie, if this little guy could talk, he'd tell you I just made all the difference in the world."

The moral: You can change the world – maybe not all at once, but one person, one animal, one good deed at a time. Wake up each morning and remember what you do makes a difference.

Lois Wilson, in her biography, written by Janice L. Meighan, emphasizes that, "We can all be better", at being human, at the way we understand and live with each other.

So examine how you learned what you know, how you developed the values, the beliefs, the rituals and societal processes that govern your thinking and being. Then observe others and see what you can learn. We can all do better at being together ♡



The Healing Oasis Program

Welcome to our Ninth Annual Meeting

Where: Little Bethel Community Church,
320 Paling Ave. Hamilton

(off Barton St., east of Kenilworth, use parking lot entrance)

When: Wednesday, March 30, 2016 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Rev. Lynn Godfrey,
Director of Larch Community Hamilton

Come and help us celebrate new personnel...
and our spreading work!

For more information about – The Healing Oasis Program
contact Chaplain Mary Jackson at 905 966-0468 or
See our website at – www.thehealingoasis.org
Charitable Number 84969 4799 RR0001

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Anthony de Mello, an Eastern Orthodox priest, in his *Meditations on The Way to Love*, says that our beliefs, our values and perspectives of life are influenced by four truths. By accepting these truths we may find happiness.

#1 Truth You must choose between your attachment and happiness. You cannot have both. The moment you pick up an attachment, your heart is thrown out of kilter and your ability to lead a joyful, carefree, serene life is destroyed. How does this apply to your dearest attachment to someone or some thing?

#2 Truth When did your attachment develop? You were not born with it. It sprang from a lie of should-dos that your society, your culture, your family or you yourself convinced you that you could not live without. For example, without this person, I would die. Do you want your freedom and happiness or your attachment? This does not mean that we should not care about things, nature and people and be irresponsible. It means that our caring is not obsessive or controlling but is freeing to the other.

#3 Truth If you wish to be fully alive, you must develop a perspective of life that is infinitely greater than the person, thing, religious concept, or societal ritual that governs your way of being. If you truly live long enough your own experience will confirm that these are actually trifle. Think of tremendous triflers that were so important to you years ago. Grandparents know that it is more important to enjoy each other than it is to always have a clean house.

#4 Truth No person or thing outside of you has the power to make you happy. It is completely your choice whether to be happy or not. So look outside the box of norms in which you function. When we accept that these attachments, only as we know them are binding, the refashioning of our hearts is the beginning of grasping the grateful, carefree life of a child. Some call this state heaven. We are free to be all that we are meant to be. And we allow others the same freedom- those we love and those we don't yet understand.

To whom or what are you attached or cannot live without? How has that influenced your view of life, your relationships and your behaviour? Recently, two hours after boarding a cruise ship, it was mandated that every passenger take part in an emergency debarkation exercise. We had 20 minutes to reach a designated zone, in case lifeboats were needed. My cabin number required me to enter a zone separate from my family and new friends. I met a couple from Ohio and we discussed, if this were a real emergency, what would we deem important enough to grab. We decided our passport would identify our country of origin and return us to our roots. We hoped we would be wearing clothing with pockets. We also realized that our identity was reduced to a number. Nothing material mattered and we were separated from family and friends. I can't imagine the sacrifices that refugees endure. Attachments become minimal.

Archivist, Melanie Dolva, saw her views of indigenous people change while collecting records for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She was raised as a pure white child in Winnipeg, learning that indigenous people are lazy, ignorant, usually drunk and dispensable. Her research took her through stages of shame and pity, which is a more insidious form of racism and harder to fight. By listening with respect and compassion (passion with) she was actually accepted as an indigenous daughter. Melanie calls herself a recovering racist.

The following poem explains how, step by step we can learn to see life differently

Learning to Learn

I learned to be persistent,
never give up
Like riding a bike, always get up
Like swinging a bat,
many times you'll strike out
Or building a tree house,
that keeps falling about
But I learned as I grew up
to never give up.

I learned to write by learning to print
Learned to tell stories
by listening ears lent
Learned to count money
by learning to add
Learned to hope by the dreams
that I've had
It didn't come quickly but it came in
time, and I never gave up.

By looking around,
I learned to foresee
By taking my time,
I learned patience in me

By not hiding tears, I learned honesty pays
By reaching my hands,
made compassion my way
But even though hard I never gave up.

I learned in battles we kill to win peace
I learned society hides truths in a crease
I learned that the stout are
the pagans in life
I learned I can't save everyone's life
I try to correct these, I never give up.

Why can't I learn the aspects of me
And the love that has left, I cannot set free
And those that have hurt me
I cannot forgive
And afraid to return to the life
that I've lived
Afraid to walk forward but stayed
behind bars
Afraid to see life and to look at my scars
When will I learn to fight the fears
within me?

M.A.J. White