



Becoming Happily Discontented

I recently read a story about Fred - an average hardworking guy who made just enough to pay the bills. One summer the head of his company invited him and the other employees to a huge party at his home and while there, they had an opportunity to tour the house. Although, the palatial house and the equally impressive estate on which it sat seemed way beyond Fred's reach, he was in awe and a little envious of the luxurious comfort in which his boss lived. Images of the house kept floating through his head. The spacious living room, bordered on one side with a huge window looking over an irregular shaped pool with a cascading waterfall, gave the effect of a lakeside villa. Fred equally admired the way the house was tastefully decorated with expensive furniture and ornaments.

As Fred compared his lifestyle to his boss' he became despondent and began to wonder why some people had everything while others scraped through life with the bare necessities. As he pondered this injustice it dawned on him that he had no need to be unhappy. He surmised that he could in fact enjoy the lifestyle that his boss was living. Within an hour he could drive to the lake and enjoy a more picturesque view than his boss could ever enjoy from his window. And although his home was far more modest than his boss', he certainly enjoyed tasty, nutritious meals and slept in a comfortable bed. As Fred continued to make the comparison between himself and the man he envied he discovered that he was not too bad off, and in that moment became grateful for what he had.

Abundance and lack exist simultaneously

We've all visited that place that Fred found himself, acutely aware of all that is wrong in our lives and oblivious to the goodness that is ever present. As Sarah Ban Breathnach said, "When we choose not to focus on what is missing from our lives but are grateful for the abundance that's present - love, health, family, friends, work, the joys of nature and personal pursuits that bring us pleasure present - the wasteland of illusion falls away and we experience heaven on earth." This doesn't mean that the things that are lacking in your life suddenly show up. What I know for sure is that as you focus on your problems and the things you don't have or haven't done, you magnify them and, therefore, remain where you are. The universal law of attraction dictates that whatever you focus on, whether positive or negative, grows.

Avoid bitterness or complacency

Fred chose not to remain bitter about his circumstances. He found that he had several things in his life for which he could be grateful. Notwithstanding, he decided that he wouldn't be complacent either, but rather that he would become happily discontented. He was happy for the

good things in life but discontented to stay where he was because he recognized that he had the ability and potential to do better. With his new found attitude of gratitude, Fred began to think in terms of self improvement. He began to set more challenging goals and saw himself as more successful and prosperous. In time his employer noticed the “new Fred” and gave him several promotions. Eventually he became the Vice President of the company and now lives in a very fine home himself.

Acceptance vs. resignation

To begin a journey of improvement in all areas of your life you must first accept your current situation. Please note: ACCEPTANCE not RESIGNATION. To *resign* yourself to your current situation means that you have determined that there is no hope for improvement. To *accept* it means that you acknowledge that this is your starting point. Acceptance means that you do as Fred did and take responsibility for your current situation; as this empowers you to make the necessary changes to improve your circumstances. An unwillingness to accept things as they are leads you to blame someone or something else, rendering you powerless to change it. It is impossible to change that which you do not accept responsibility for.

“The seeds of discouragement cannot take root in a grateful heart” Joel Osteen said. Becoming happily discontented is a mindset which you must develop. It is expressing gratitude for all your blessings while remaining alert for the opportunities and ideas as to how they can be improved. In the end, you improve not only your life, but positively impact someone else’s as well.

Keep on Pushing!