

A DIFFERENT VOICE



June Stepansky

*Poetry, opinion and the
exploration of happier lifestyle*



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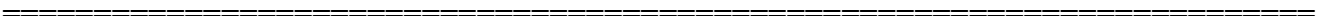
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To everyone
who has ever tried to make their lives
more meaningful and more joyful,
I dedicate this book.

*Happiness is like those palaces in fairy tales
whose gates are guarded by dragons:
we must fight in order to conquer it.*

Alexander Dumas



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Insight

I will dip into the
depths of my self
Am I not marvelous?
I am one with the grass
and the crustacean.
Are they not marvelous?
I know that in me
Is that which I do not know,
and can only guess,
but I marvel that I am the key
and the gate.

Viewpoints

There is a search today for more meaningful lives. A meaningful life may mean a different thing to each person who seeks it. What it must ultimately mean is that each person follows his own honesty, as long as he harms no other person. So the first step must be to look at our lives and see what we want to change, what is possible to change, and how we can start to make these changes.

Part of this search, and one of the reasons for it is that happier people make better wives, husbands, companions, and parents. Our responsibility, then, is to be more in touch with ourselves, to make a better environment for ourselves, our families and our communities.



One must know oneself. If this does not serve to discover truth,
it at least serves as a rule of life, and there is nothing better.

Blaise Pascal

Getting in touch with your true self must be your first priority.

Tom Hopkins

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Balance

A juggler knows
the importance of
balance.

A tight-rope walker
understands
the necessity of
balance.

I, too, try to
balance the days
the weeks, the years,
into a kind of
symmetry.

Planning

A life that has balance can be a happier life, because we can plan into it all the elements that we need to make our lives uniquely our own. The important word is planning. In order to have balance, we need to develop the skills of self-understanding, choice, and planning.

We need, therefore, to look at each day, each week, each year, and put into them the elements of balance, rest, recreation, work, growth, and then re-evaluate what is no longer working for us and make the changes needed that might make our lives better.



Whatever failures I have known, whatever errors I have committed,
whatever follies I have witnessed in private and public life
have been the consequence of action without thought.

Bernard M. Baruch

It's not the plan that's important, it's the planning.

Graeme Edwards

Loving

They will love me,
if I speak
what they want to hear.
They will love me,
if I become
their vision of me.
They will love me
if they can be my Pygmalion,
and I their Galatea.
They don't think
they demand much.
They only ask
that I give up
myself.

Dependency

We all want and need love in our lives, but how much of ourselves are we willing to sacrifice to meet this need. Our dependency for someone to love us comes from childhood, when we couldn't take care of ourselves, and actually needed others to help us survive.

As adults, it is nice to have someone in our lives who cares, but we have or can develop the skills we need to survive and even flourish by ourselves. Many relationships are based on fear and neurotic need which can be ultimately destructive. We need to be sure that respect for the individuality of the loved one becomes part of every really loving relationship. This is, however, not an easy process. We must make the effort to learn more about ourselves: to evaluate our temperament, our skills, and our enthusiasms before we are ready to make the necessary decisions that can bring us to the discovery and fulfillment of our own particular destiny. Understanding ourselves is an adventure that is ultimately exciting and Joyful



Resolve to be thyself, and know, that he who finds himself loses his misery

Mathew Arnold

Running

We run in
different directions
to escape from
our inner demons.

We run to travel,
drugs, music, religion.

We run to running.
We even run to poetry.

Inevitably,
our demons outrun us,
and we must confront them
face to face.

Confronting Problems

Problems do not disappear. If we don't confront them, they may hide for a while, but sooner or later they will re-appear. Eventually we will be forced to face them and take some action. Whether that action is in the form of solving the problem or accepting it is not important, but rather that we consciously come to a decision about what we are going to do. It is that decision that gives us the ability to again move forward in our lives with added strength and the possibility of happiness.

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It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.

Sally Kempton

The best way to escape from a problem is to solve it.

Alan Saporta

Circling the Wagons

It is time
to circle the wagons
for a while.

I have been too long
in hostile lands,
pushed by
menacing winds.

Like a child
in its mother's arms,
I need to feel again
the illusion
of safety.

Rest and Re-evaluation

There are times in our lives when we need to pull back from our day to day responsibilities to get a larger view of our present situation.

Rest and re-evaluation give us some breathing space, and provide us with a way to view our lives from a different perspective.

When we feel that our lives are becoming too hectic, it is perhaps wise to pause for a while to review and re-evaluate our circumstances, and to make those changes which might help us to cope better with the present and plan more effectively for the future.



The idea is to make decisions and act on them.
To decide what is important to accomplish,
to decide how something can next be accomplished,
to find time to work at it and to get it done.

Karen Kakascik

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Green Things

There were always
green things in my life.
Small wild flowers,
Lilac bushes,
arboretums
where lovers walked
and children came to play,
forests edging round a lake
where we would go on Sundays.

And loving so these wild things,
I planted in my yard a forest too,
which now, full grown,
repays me
with its healing.

Nature

Observing and participating in nature helps us in many ways. We are thrilled by its beauty, awed by its power, and humbled by its tranquility. It provides us with a closeness to eternal values and a better understanding of our human place in the universe. It has inspired poets, writers and artists to produce works which have enriched all our lives.

When life's problems become too difficult, we can be grateful that it is always possible to escape to nature and benefit from its comfort and its healing.



See one promontory, one mountain, one sea, one river and see all.

Socrates

Nature has been for me, for as long as I can remember,
a source of solace, inspiration, adventure and delight:
a home, a teacher, a companion.

Lorraine Anderson

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Monday

On Monday
I begin again.
The dreams of Sunday
disappear,
enveloped in the fog
of Monday's realities.

My hands, my feet,
and one small part
of my brain
move through Monday,
savoring Tuesday.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities are part of everyone's life. How we handle them makes the difference between feeling overwhelmed or feeling a sense of accomplishment. We need to be able to organize our thoughts to deal with a manageable amount of problems at one time, and to put the others aside for the future.

Learning to use our organizational skills makes life more manageable and ultimately more productive and rewarding, and gives us the confidence that we will always be able to cope with our responsibilities.



Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power.

Josiah Gilbert Holland

Nothing strengthens the judgement and quickens
the conscience like individual responsibility.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Thoughts

My thoughts
move me
in a multiplicity
of directions.

I think I shall.
I thought I should.
I won't. I will.

My thoughts,
the harbingers
of my future,
propel me
somewhere.

Directions

Our thoughts and decisions determine our lives. It is empowering to realize that if we are not content with the direction of our lives, we can change that direction by changing our thoughts. The decision making process is difficult and requires examination because so many outside forces affect those decisions: our families, our communities, the prevailing thinking of the day. All these put pressure on our ability to make wise decisions.

Because of this, it is important that we understand ourselves well and learn to examine our thinking and our decisions carefully so that they reflect the life that we really want for ourselves.



The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings
can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

William James

Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you
as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you
as by the way your mind looks at what happens.

John Homer Miller

Change

Everything will
in time
change.

You will change
and I will change.
Friends may disappoint.
Children will grow up
and move away.

Everything will
in time
change,
except oceans
and mountains
and the solace
of sunsets.

Inner Strength

Change is inevitable. It may not come this year or next, but it will come, and our reaction to it can make the difference between happiness and disappointment in our lives.

To focus on what is still available to us, rather than on what is past, helps us to look for new possibilities, and to understand that each phase of life requires inner strength, new creative adjustments and the desire and determination to find that contentment that is still possible for us to discover and enjoy



Everything changes, nothing remains without change.

Buddha

Change is difficult, but often essential to survival.

Les Brown

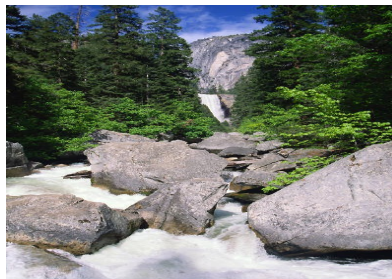
Quest

Belief is not truth.
Everyone believed
that the earth was flat
until Columbus
discovered
the new world.
Millions believed
in Zeus and Hera
until a new belief
replaced the old.

The search for truth
can itself be
a kind of faith,
powerful and
liberating

Truth

Through the ages, there have always been a few individuals who have looked for the truth. Because of their vision, our lives have been enriched. Galileo, who discovered that the earth moved around the sun, was arrested for his discovery. Louis Pasteur and Sigmund Freud fought not only the powers in control but their own colleagues as well, until they were finally able to prove their theories. Because of the contributions of these men and others like them, we have a better understanding of our planet. We have a more complete knowledge of science and of the nature of physical and mental illness. We are fortunate that there have always been a few courageous truth-seekers to expand our knowledge, and hopefully there will be others in the future who will continue to try to unlock the still unknown secrets of our universe.



What we need is not the will to believe, but the wish to find out.

Bertrand Russell

The pursuit of truth will set you free; even if you don't catch up with it.

Clarence Darrow

Colors

When I was young,
I loved my crayons:
first the boxes of five,
bright primary colors.
Later the jumbo boxes
opening me up
to the wonderful
world of color:
pinks and yellows
the colors of pretty dresses,
greens and yellow-greens,
the colors of grass and plants.

Now when I see a hillside
covered with wildflowers,
I think of the crayons
which invaded my youthful soul
with the captivating colors
of life.

Enthusiasm

Children view the world with a sense of wonder and discovery. As we grow older, it is important for us to try to maintain some of the same excitement and enthusiasm in the world around us that comes so naturally to children. It is that childhood vision of the world that gives to us a special kind of happiness and makes each day of our lives a continuing adventure.



The worst bankruptcy in the world is a person who has lost his enthusiasm.

H. W. Arnold

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At Risk

We are all at risk
all the time.
Children, too, are at risk,
but they are protected
by their teddy bears
and their blankets.

We grown-ups
also need our blankets
and our teddy bears.
How else could we
live our lives
at risk?

Vulnerability

We all need something to help us cope with the unpredictability of living. For some of us, it can be religion. For others, it might be a supportive family structure or a loving connection with all human beings who share our mutual vulnerability, or it may even be our own unique system.

Whatever it is, it's vital to have some coping system that gives our lives the necessary stability and strength to deal with the difficulties of daily living.



No vision and you perish. No ideal, and you're lost.
Your heart must ever cherish some faith at any cost.

Harriet Du Autermont

A faith to live by, a self to live with, and a purpose to live for.

Bob Harrington

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