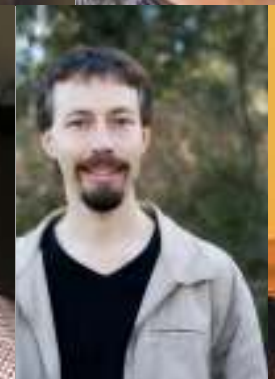


connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 37, No. 10, November 2013



Connection Blessings (From the Editor)

"Count your blessings, name them one by one." Have you ever noticed how songs we learn when we are children pop into our head in unexpected moments? Here I am, getting the November *Connection* ready to go off to the proof-readers and this song is running the "loop cycle" through my mind. It could be triggered by the fact that this is the season when people in Canada have just celebrated Thanksgiving and those of us in the United States at getting ready to celebrate, at the very least, the meal we've been planning for several weeks. It could be because several of you have sent in your blessings and I appreciate and enjoy reading them. It could be that I, personally, have been showered with blessings (see, there's those songs on loop cycle again) through these last twelve months of life transitions. It could be because I have been thinking how much the *Connection* is blessed by the people who help get every issue to you. We have a great team that is consistently wonderful; I would like you to know who they are. **Jacquie Hegarty**, and **Carrol Grady** are our primary proof-readers. Jacquie helped us find *The Columbia Guide to Standard American English* (Kenneth G. Wilson), 1993, which defines the rules we use to keep our copy consistent. How many of you even know about that resource? I didn't. It's a "little" thing that makes us more professional. When I send our copy to them, Carrol looks it over first and then sends her corrections to Jacquie. She meticulously peruses the text to see if there are more corrections to be made. Jacquie says, "I'm just thankful I can work in my pajamas within the refuge of my warm living room while I watch the autumn winds blowing outside in a foggy sky...." Carrol also edits anything I write. Even editors need an editor.

To be continued on p3

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WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a non-profit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 2,500 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

REGIONS AND GROUPS WORLDWIDE

www.sdakinship.org/regions-groups

CHAPLAIN

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SUPPORT KINSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)



PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA
or visit Kinship's website www.sdakinship.org/resources
for information about

- Find a Gay Friendly Church
- Homosexuality, Can We Talk About It?
- Living Eden's Gifts
- Previous Connection issues
- ... and more.

RESOURCES

www.someone-to-talk-to.net
www.buildingsafeplaces.org
www.itgetsbetterforadventists.org
www.sgamovie.com
www.facebook.com/sdakinship
... and more

Continued from p1

Floyd Pönitz, Kinship's international coordinator, makes sure I have spelled names correctly and remembered cultural issues that should be noted. **Yolanda Elliott** and **Ashish David** screen us for political gaffs. **Ivan van Putten**, **Mike Lewis**, **Joachim Deuerling**, and **Stefan Pietruska** provide most of our photos from Europe. **Denali Daniels**, **Debbie Hawthorn-Toop**, **Peter Stickney**, and **Pearl Pangkey** have shared their photos to cover Kampmeeting. Many of you generously share the gifts of your cameras (smartphones, iPads) to make sure our various events can be "seen" by all of us. When electronic preparation is completed **Linda Wright** gets the final copy onto our website and sends an email with multilingual links out to all of you with Internet access. The wonderful people at Doolittle's Print Serve in Claremont, New Hampshire, make us look beautiful on paper. We have talked with them so often, we know the sound of **Mike Stankevich's** and **Debbie Bond's** voices on the telephone. **Rena Otieno** keeps us up-to-date with news from Africa. **Ben Reuter** and **David Coltheart** are our regular reporters from Australia. And then there's **Ruud Kieboom**. Just thinking about what he does and who Ruud is to this project made me stop and take a deep breath before I began to type again. Every time you see a beautiful layout or you find an article more interesting because of the graphics embedded in it, that's Ruud's work. He interviews Kinship members from Asia, Africa, and Europe. He advocates for topics on which we should focus. And this is just what he does for the *Connection*.

Looking over the backgrounds of the people I just mentioned, I see we have ties to India, Malaysia, the Philippines, the United States, The Netherlands, Great Britain, Kenya, Australia, and Germany. I am personally thankful for each person on our team. More importantly, the reason they do what they do is because you are the one who is vitally important to them. I want to reiterate that. Take good care of yourself—for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine



Letter to the Editor



Pleasant greetings.

I am Tazio Forrest and I'm a 22-year-old young adult from the Lauderhill Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I am grateful for SDA Kinship.

My question is, why is it so hard for the General Conference and the branches of division to give us, as children of God, unconditional love? It is really hard for me to be who I am at my church. There is no safe haven where I can go to worship and be me. I was outed by my cousin. When my congregation was informed they removed me from the usher board and ended my contribution as a young adult Sabbath School teacher. They said all of this was because my mother had cancer.

I still go this church. It's my family church and I have difficulty going anywhere else. It's hard. ▼



Pictures on the cover from top left to bottom right and page 3: Debbie Bond and Mike Stankevich, Joachim Deuerling, Stefan Pietruska, Denali Daniels, Debbie Hawthorn, Pearl Pankey, Rena Otieno, Linda Wright, Jacquie Hegarty, Peter Stickney, Ben Reuter, Ashish David, Ivan van Putten, Ruud Kieboom, Mike Lewis, Carrol Grady, Floyd Pönitz, Yolanda Elliott and David Coltheart.

Nothing makes you
like other human beings so much
as doing things for them.

—Zora Neale Hurston



Affirming diversity within the
Adventist community since 1978



By Claude Steen

Baptism on the Outer Banks

Seldom do I step into baptismal waters as a pastor without thinking about the work of John, son of Zechariah and Elizabeth of Judea. I can see this rough but deeply spiritual man, strong in body and spirit, standing waist-deep in the muddy waters of the Jordan River, working long hours in the hot sun to accommodate the seemingly endless line of people waiting to wash their sins away. I can smell the sweating bodies and feel the wet hands anxiously grasping the preacher's in this unfamiliar experience of being gently pushed under the water.

Looking back over nearly a half century of pastoral ministry I have many memories of my own. Some are set amid light streaming through stained glass and enhanced by heartfelt singing and rich organ music. Others are more reminiscent of the Jordan, complete with muddy water and slippery footing. But every memory is tinged with a deep joy—joy on wet faces savoring spiritual cleansing. And joy in the heart of the preacher at being able to help another of God's children move closer into His loving embrace.



Last September's baptism on the Outer Banks of North Carolina was another joyful occasion, so similar to many others, yet unforgettably unique. On that narrow ribbon of land curving out into the Atlantic, with the pounding surf on one side and the placid waters of the sound on the other, it occurred during a weekend retreat called Book and the Beach. More than twenty people gathered from Florida, Massachusetts, California, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, and New Mexico to make new friends, renew relationships, laugh and eat, revel in a

dolphin watch, study the Bible, talk, and sing. The fact that most of the group were gay or lesbian, that most of the couples were same-gender, was evident, but seemed a non-issue in the comfortable give-and-take, the songs of worship, and the enjoyment of good food.

One of the couples attending was Carol and Gay, smiling grandmotherly women, obviously content in their warm relationship. Gay is an Adventist from several years back; Carol's faith tradition was Roman Catholic. As they worshiped and prayed together in their home, Carol became increasingly attracted to her partner's spiritual views and practices. And after studying the details of Adventist belief with Gay and starting to attend an Adventist church, Carol decided she wanted to be baptized by immersion and become an Adventist herself.

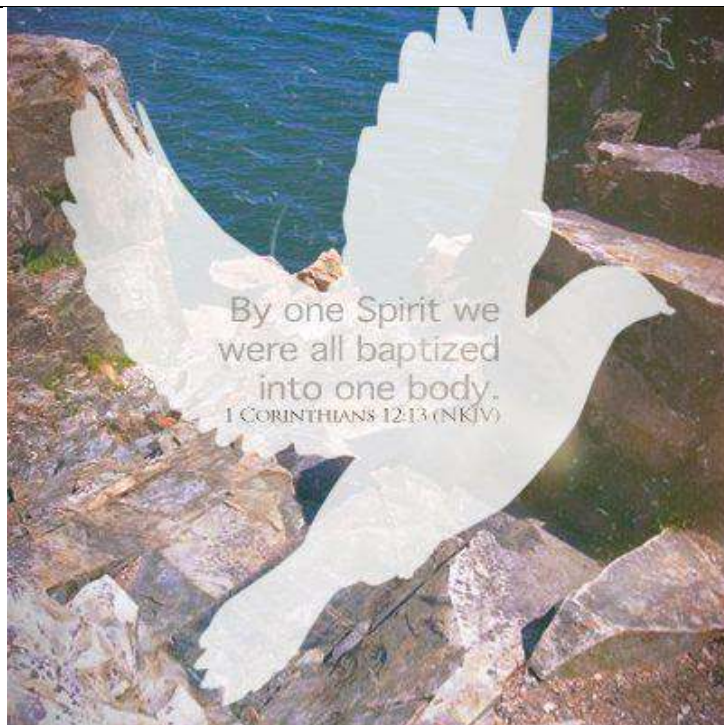
Would I be willing to baptize Carol, a woman in a lesbian relationship? That question revived others. Why had my wife, Donna, and I agreed to attend this weekend retreat with a group of openly gay and lesbian people? Would we be encouraging and approving what God had clearly said is detestable to Him? How could I, as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, under oath to preach "the whole counsel of God," participate in several days of worship and fellowship with people considered blatant sinners of the most extreme kind by the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians?

In all this questioning still another question came quickly to mind. "What would Jesus do?" He was notorious to the legalists of His day for mingling and eating with "sinners." But to those of us who recognize our sinful fallenness, He is the one bright hope in our sin-darkened lives. We rejoice in His willingness to spend time with us, to eat our food, forgive our sins, and show us His magnificent love!

And if I were to try to judge the people at this ocean-side retreat with their same-sex partners—something my Savior sternly warned me not to do! (Matthew 7:1-5)—how could I determine which is the worse disobedience: To choose to live in a loving, intimate covenant relationship with a same-gender person, when it has proven virtually impossible to sustain such a relationship with an opposite-sex person? Or to choose to remain single and alone in this fallen world, when God has clearly declared a life alone to be “not good” (Genesis 2:18)?

Is it my responsibility as a minister of the gospel to make such huge personal decisions for people whose experience is so totally foreign to mine, or to condemn them for their choice if it differs from mine? Or is it my sacred duty to seek to obey the one command that both Jesus and His apostles taught as the most important—to love my neighbor as myself and to do for her what I would want if I were in her place? (Matthew 22:34-39; 7:12). Could it be that my pastoral oath to declare the whole will of God (Acts 20:27) and to seek out the wounded and wandering sheep of His pasture (Ezekiel 34) requires me, rather, to take them in my arms and both show and tell how much Jesus loves them and is preparing a place for them in His kingdom? And where repentance is needed in their lives, as it is in every life, could it be that by demonstrating to them the kindness of God they may be led into the repentance they need? (Romans 2:4)

So on that windy Sabbath at the beach, after a morning spent in worship and Bible study, we prepared to walk across the sand together to bury Carol’s old life of loneliness and fear in the salty surf. A few years before I had baptized a strong, young surfing instructor along this very coast and it had been such an exhilarating experience! But now we realized that the waves were too rough for this old preacher and the grandmotherly baptismal candidate. What could we do?



Another baptism in this same vicinity came to mind. Just three months before I was privileged to baptize twelve-year-old Isabella, whose faith had brought miraculous healing from her Savior after many months of crippling pain, fruitless surgeries, and hospitalizations in the best medical facilities of the land. She and her parents lived only minutes away near the secluded spot on the sound side of the outer banks where she had been baptized so recently.

A quick phone call and we weekend “retreaters” were piling into cars and heading for a different baptismal venue. We found the bumpy dirt track that leads to the secluded spot. By now, stormy clouds hid the sun and the wind was whipping even the usually placid waters of the sound into little white caps. Younger hands helped us navigate the uncertain footing hidden beneath the dark water to find a place of appropriate depth. Songs of praise and devotion rose from the group at the edge of the water—a loving, makeshift family for Carol, gathered from far and near, to confirm with smiles and hugs that she had been reborn into the family of God. Tears of joy tinged my voice as I invoked the names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and lowered this newest member of God’s vast family into the cleansing, muddy water.

Would John the Baptist have done the same? In my heart I knew he would have. And though we saw no dove descend from the stormy clouds nor heard any heavenly voice proclaiming Carol as God’s beloved daughter, just for a moment I knew I heard the voices of an angel choir joining the singers on the shore. ▼

Kinship Europe

Mike Lewis, our 2014 European Kinship Meeting coordinator, has just confirmed our speaker for EKM! Reverend Cecilia Eggleston is currently the pastor at Newcastle Metropolitan Community Church in the north of England and is a gifted, dynamic, and enthusiastic speaker. We will be richly blessed!

Dates : August 28 — September 1

Location : Saint Marks’s College

Saffron Walden near Cambridge, England

Kinship Blessings



Andrea Roth

This year I have had many blessings. The most important one was my baptism into, and acceptance by, the Glendale City Church. Words cannot express how much God is on my side and with me at all times.



A.K. Ross

First, we were impacted in Calgary and southern Alberta this past June 2013 with the worst flooding in our history! Many peo-

ple lost their entire homes and possessions. Luckily, living in a second floor condo, we only lost everything stored in the underground parking garage and locker. This included 99% of my client files from my home-based accounting practice. Our storage area flooded with river water right up to the ceiling. The upside of this disaster is that I have gone paperless. The resources God has led me to are astounding. The transition is progressing slowly but surely. *Thank you, Lord!*

Second, my Mom was admitted to the hospital on August 12 with congestive heart failure. She has recovered well, and six weeks later she was able to move to a long-term care facility with a semi-private room, after only one week on the official waiting list, versus the normal time of several months. The new place is much closer to where we live than her previous residence. I am able to now visit her twice a week, instead of only once. She is doing well, and I thank God that He has worked out things as well as He has. She is slowly becoming more comfortable with her new home. *Thank you, Lord!*

Third, I was going to take June, July, and August off from my business and devote the time to writing a book that looks at life on earth from God's perspective. Needless to say, with the two former events happening, this planned desire was greatly interrupted. However, it has been for the better. With all of the resources God has led me to during July and August (a new iPad, apps that would help me with my pro-

ject, among other hardware and software items), I am now devoting my Sabbaths to the project and have completed the first two chapters. I am close to finishing the next two chapters. I see His hand throughout all of this. It will be about a year in the writing. I think in taking a longer time to write, the principles will become more a part of me by the time the book is finished. *Thank you, Lord! You are absolutely awesome and wonderful!*

All in all, 2013 is going down as a "most interesting" year! ☺ God bless.



Arielah

Recently I went back to my home state and told people I know there that I am bisexual. Since I have been married to men four times, most of the friends and family to whom I came out were somewhat shocked. My amazing blessing is that I was received with love. I have survived being rejected by the women with whom I was in love. I am getting to write my journey in a book I

will call, *What Two-Spirit Means to Me!* (It is my Native American journey of discovery.) I want to thank SDA Kinship for being here for me as I continue to “come out.” God bless you. Be encouraged on your journeys because I am in my middle 50s and finally acknowledging who I am. It is never too late.



Dallas

Blessings are everywhere and, just like love and energy, are in the fourth dimension—the dimension that is heaven on earth. Everything we see is like a pattern of energy that is put into the realm of matter. The whole universe is the expression of either our thoughts or those of God. It is for that reason that we need to guard the gate of our thoughts and ensure that our defenses are always on attention to express our love purely and with the Spirit of God for what we think we are.

Collectively, SDA Kinship is the real “church within the church” of God, for those of us that believe in a totally inclusive love that celebrates the return of Jesus, the blowing of the Revelation trumpets, and the love that is the glue in the marriages of our relationships even as with Jesus and the Holy Spirit and each other before the Father.

As we prepare for our King’s return let us embrace people of all persuasions and beliefs and focus them on the light of God, for

therein we can start each day illumined as the stars on the stage that is this amazing earth, that will be shaken and purged of all the things that stop us from being constantly aware of the grace of our most amazing Father.

Let us in each breathe a prayer of thanks for the ministry of SDA Kinship and ask that God’s Spirit fill each of us. Let us express love and love harder and more unselfishly than ever before.

SDA Kinship is a huge blessing that helps me to take baby steps back to the heart of God. I am grateful for the love and ministry of the men and women of our “church within a church.” I give special thanks for the amazing grace and forgiveness of our Father, Who sees us in the now as though we are perfect. Gay, straight, or bent we are all just colors in the rainbow light of His creation. That’s pretty amazing.



Crystal

2013 has been a year for me of many transitions and much unexpected travel. I had to really lean on God, have a deep leap of faith that all is well, and believe that everything is working out just as it is supposed to. I am grateful for this new-found faith, even though this weekend I missed a special event and logged on to my online course chat a week early. I am taking myself less seriously. I laugh more. I feel more joy. I am less judgmental with others. My

greatest blessing is that somehow God found a way for me to go to all my harp therapy modules.



Mike

So many blessings! I retired at the end of 2012. What to do in retirement? Start a master of theology course. Obvious, really! So now I’m being mentally and spiritually stretched, lectured to death, and am way behind in readings. And I’m on the course with a bunch of eager young would-be theologians, taught by experts in the field. It’s a blessing to be part of a community of enthusiastic young Christians who are passionate about their faith in and love for Jesus. Who could want for more? So much to be thankful to God for!



Carrol

Corporately, it’s been a blessing to see the growing acceptance of gays and lesbians, even in our church, despite the accompanying backlash. Personally, it’s been a blessing to see my growing family heritage of three sons, 15 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and the great joy they bring me.



Gabriele

It is a blessing for me that you and Kinship work to achieve equality and understanding among the members of our church. I think those two qualities surpass any issue of sexual orientation. Whatever changes you can make will only do well for our "family."

Steve

I suspect I speak for many who are grateful for the film *Seventh-Gay Adventists* and the effect it is having here in the United States and around the world. It's gratifying to see how prejudice is being broken down, and how people who are serious about reflecting the character of Christ—love, inclusion, justice, equality—are making the church a safer place for our LGTB friends and family members. I'm also grateful for the progress regarding this issue being made among local, state, and federal government agencies, not to mention media, entertainment, and sports. This amazing progress would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. We are blessed!



Debbie Hawthorn-Toop

My blessings: my wife, kids, grandkids, and my Kinship family. I treasure the love and support from each of you.



Elias

Blessings are numerous. Time of life. Peace with God. First time at a Kinship meeting this year. I am looking forward for what next year holds.



Jana

My mom asked me, "Why do you want to go to a Pride Parade?" I knew I wanted to go, but I never considered *why* I wanted to go. What a blessing to have this connection with my dad, to experience his quest for more openness in his life, a life that had been hidden from me up until a few years ago. I was incredibly blessed to walk in the 2013 Atlanta Pride Parade not only with my dad, but also for what it represented to others. I was blessed to help carry the SDA Kinship banner, showing support to Seventh-day Adventists along the parade route; several thanked me for coming, wanted to take a photo of the banner, or just had a shout out with a friendly wave. Sometimes taking a step toward "being the change I want to see in the world" is all the "why" I need.

DAVID

I am blessed to have a roof over my head, food to eat, good friends to share it with, and a church to worship with that accepts me the way I am. 🙏



12 Things Happy People Do Differently

By Jacob Sokol 

—and Why I Started Doing Them

A lot of people have midlife crises. Me, I had a quarter-life crisis a few years ago, when I turned 24. There was no impulse purchase involving a red Mustang or electric guitar, but as my iPhone alarm woke me up bright and early for work one morning in my two-bedroom New York City apartment, I pondered, “Do I have everything—or nothing at all?”

My gut said that there had to be more to life than the rat race of what I was doing (IT consulting). But I just wasn’t sure what it was or who I could turn to for wisdom, outside of “the Matrix.” I decided to embark on a journey to find out. I quit my job, minimized my expenses, went to Hawaii, and got very serious (in a wild sort of way) about discovering what made me tick. I found out there are a lot of people like me—young, energetic, intense, purpose-driven, but frustrated with the status quo and a little freaked out about our prospects for the future. I decided to dedicate my life to seeking out the wisdom we need to create extraordinary lives with a deep sense of purpose in a world of immense uncertainty.

Early on, I stumbled across this quote from Dan Millman:

I’d always believed that a life of quality, enjoyment, and wisdom were my human birthright and would be automatically bestowed upon me as time passed. I never suspected that I would have to learn how to live—that there were specific disciplines and ways of seeing the world I had to master before I could awaken to a simple, happy, uncomplicated life.

That about summed up where I was and what I was discovering. I couldn’t just wait for happiness and satisfaction to find me; I was going to have to make my own. So I’ve been doing that and coaching others on how to do the same ever since.

One of the coolest things I found early on is that studies conducted by positivity psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky point to 12 things happy people do differently to increase their levels of happiness. Here are a dozen things that any of us, at any age or stage of life, can start doing today to feel the effects of more happiness in our lives.

1. Express gratitude

When you appreciate what you have, what you have appreciates in value. Kinda cool right? So

basically, being grateful for the goodness that is already evident in your life will bring you a deeper sense of happiness. And that’s without having to go out and buy anything. It makes sense. We’re gonna have a hard time ever being happy if we aren’t thankful for what we already have.

2. Cultivate optimism

Winners have the ability to manufacture their own optimism. No matter what the situation, the successful diva is the chick who will always find a way to put an optimistic spin on it. She knows failure only as an opportunity to grow and learn a new lesson from life. People who think optimistically see the world as a place packed with endless opportunities, especially in trying times.

3. Avoid over-thinking and social comparison

Comparing yourself to someone else can be poisonous. If we’re somehow “better” than the person that we’re comparing ourselves to, it gives us an unhealthy sense of superiority. Our ego inflates—ka-boom!—our inner Kanye West comes out! If we’re “worse” than the person that we’re comparing ourselves to, we usually discredit the hard work that we’ve done and dismiss all the progress that we’ve made. What I’ve found is that the majority of the time this type of social comparison doesn’t stem from a healthy place. If you feel called to compare yourself to something, compare yourself to an earlier version of yourself.

4. Practice acts of kindness

Performing an act of kindness releases serotonin in your brain. (Serotonin is a substance that has tremendous health benefits, including making us feel more blissful.) Selflessly helping someone is a super powerful way to feel good inside. What’s even cooler about this kindness kick is that not only will you feel better, but so will people watching the act of kindness. How extraordinary is that? A side note is that the job of most anti-depressants is to release more

serotonin. Move over Pfizer, kindness is kicking ass and taking names.

5. Nurture social relationships

The happiest people on the planet are the ones who have deep, meaningful relationships. Did you know studies show that people's mortality rates are doubled when they're lonely? Whoa! There's a warm fuzzy feeling that comes from having an active circle of good friends with whom you can share your experiences. We feel connected and a part of something more meaningful than our lonesome existence.

6. Develop strategies for coping

How you respond to the "craptastic" moments is what shapes your character. Sometimes crap happens—it's inevitable. Forrest Gump knows the deal. It can be hard to come up with creative solutions in the moment when manure is making its way up toward the fan. It helps to have healthy strategies for coping pre-rehearsed, on-call, and in your arsenal at your disposal.

7. Learn to forgive

Harboring feelings of hatred is horrible for your well-being. You see, your mind doesn't know the difference between past and present emotion. When you "hate" someone, and you're continuously thinking about it, those negative emotions are toxic for your well-being. You put yourself in a state of suck-erism (technical term) and it stays with you throughout your day.

8. Increase flow experiences

Flow is a state in which it feels like time stands still. It's when you're so focused on what you're doing that you become one with the task. Action and awareness are merged. You're not hungry, sleepy, or emotional. You're just completely engaged in the activity that you're doing. Nothing is distracting you or competing for your focus.

9. Savor life's joys

Deep happiness cannot exist without slowing down to enjoy the joy. It's easy in a world of wild stimuli and omnipresent movement to forget to embrace life's enjoyable experiences. When we neglect to appreciate, we rob the moment of its magic. It's the simple things in life that can be the most rewarding if we remember to fully experience them.

10. Commit to your goals

Being wholeheartedly dedicated to doing something comes fully equipped with an ineffable force. Magical things start happening when we commit



ourselves to doing whatever it takes to get somewhere. When you're fully committed to doing something, you have no choice but to do that thing. Counter-intuitively, having no option—where you can't change your mind—subconsciously makes humans happier because they know part of their purpose.

11. Practice spirituality

When we practice spirituality or religion, we recognize that life is bigger than us. We surrender the silly idea that we are the mightiest thing ever. It enables us to connect to the source of all creation and embrace a connectedness with everything that exists. Some of the most accomplished people I know feel that they're here doing work they're "called to do."

12. Take care of your body

Taking care of your body is crucial to being the happiest person you can be. If you don't have your physical energy in good shape, then your mental energy (your focus), your emotional energy (your feelings), and your spiritual energy (your purpose) will all be negatively affected. Did you know that studies conducted on people who were clinically depressed showed that consistent exercise raises happiness levels just as much as Zoloft? Not only that, but here's the double whammy: Six months later, the people who participated in exercise were less likely to relapse because they had a higher sense of self-accomplishment and self-worth.

So there you have it. No new flashy car or leather jacket needed—just simple, scientifically grounded wisdom for long-term happiness. These are all things you can start implementing today—with or without a career change—so I hope you pick one thing and commit to rocking it.

[References ►](#)

12 Things Happy People Do Differently

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1. Millman, D. *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. H.J.Kramer, 1984.
2. Lyubomirsky, Sonja. *The How of Happiness: A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. New York: Penguin Press, 2008.
3. Tiger, Lionel. *Optimism: The Biology of Hope*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.
4. Loehr, James E, and Tony Schwartz. *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal*. New York: Free Press, 2003.



Over the October 4-6 weekend, for the first time in a few years, we held our Kinship Kampmeeting Australia. We met in Nelson Bay, a scenic tourist area in the state of New South Wales.

Friday night we relaxed and shared our stories and journeys.

We had three speakers for our meetings on Sabbath. Dr. Ross Cole spoke on Jesus' use of the Genesis creation account to teach constancy and exclusivity in sexual relationships, even as the Master simultaneously affirmed the reality of the status of third-gender people, eunuchs, who didn't fit the gender binary. Indeed, he even upheld them as models for what his disciples might become (Matt. 19:1-12)!

Dr. John Wallace spoke of the latest scientific perspectives on the biological factors undergirding differences in sexual orientation. He shared the implications of these perspectives for a Christian understanding of sexual orientation.

Dr. Ian Wilson, a certified sex addiction therapist, gave helpful and up-to-date perspectives on sexual addiction, relevant to people of any orientation.

On Saturday night our group got to see the movie *Seventh-Gay Adventists*.

Sunday we climbed Tomaree Mountain for some the most scenic views imaginable. Some of us also visited local beaches, toured Avondale College, went to see the kangaroos, and indulged in other tourist activities. Because this weekend was our Labor Day holiday, many participants stayed over Sunday night.

We are already looking forward to our next Kampmeeting! ▼

Kinship Older Adults

Purpose of Life: Older Men Speak

The intent of this study was to describe how very old men experience and reflect on the "purpose in life." Conducted in northern Sweden, researchers invited individuals aged 85 and over to participate. This article describes the results of the study for the 69 men who filled out questionnaires and were interviewed.

A majority of the men lived alone, five lived in an institution, ten were independent in activities in daily life, two had impaired reading vision, and ten of the men had impaired hearing.

The participants talked about purpose in life from various perspectives. Work was a theme that dominated their lives, when describing life's purpose. Forming a family was also a main purpose in life—both living with a loving spouse and feeling that the marriage was a success.

Some men focused on the present. Making the most of one's day was expressed as a purposeful act: "I see the positive in every day, and tomorrow is a new day." Finding joy in everyday situations and taking each day as it comes were important for purpose in life.

To have confidence in relation to other people, society, and a higher power was stressed as important for experiencing purpose in life as a whole. The confidence in God was expressed as the ability during life to rely on God and place everything in God's hands.

Being able to adapt to bodily changes, to continue to feel satisfied in life despite functional decline, and maintaining everyday activities were also mentioned as contributing to purpose in life.

Continuing with hobbies was also stressed as giving purpose in life; it was still important to feel that they could do their duty to make life meaningful: "I have to fill in my income-tax return and do my duty." In general, the men believed what was important to leading a life of purpose was: Living an honorable life, being good to others, doing their best, and being decent. ▼

From: "Purpose in life among very old men," by Pia Hedberg, Yngve Gustafson, Christine Brulin, & Lena Al  x, *Advances in Aging Research*, 2013, 2, (Article ID:35355,6 pages. DOI:10.4236/aar.2013.23014 - See more at: <http://www.taosinstitute.net/2013-julyaugust#sthash.RJrt3Gg8.dpuf>.)

Historian

By Billy Glover



I grew up a Methodist but have not supported the church in years. I like the idea of Methodist Affirmation, as I do Kinship, but I chose to work for the cause in another way. Because I had family support, I was able to spend the majority of my "career" doing work that provided no income and still have a good life. Because I did some "temp" work for extra funds, I accidentally got Medicare. I didn't plan my life, with one exception: I knew I wanted to live in Los Angeles the moment I saw it as a teenager on a family vacation.

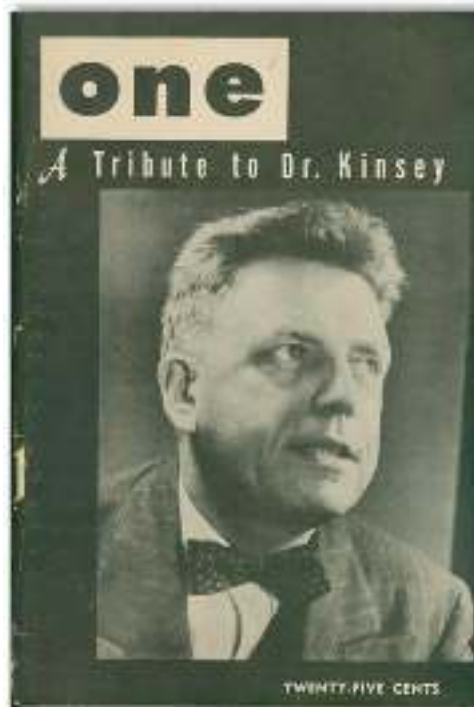
In September 1956 I got kicked out of the army for being homosexual. I took my wild red, white, and black Pontiac convertible back to my home in Louisiana. I left it at the family residence with a note that said, "Don't worry about me. I am doing what I want to do." I knew I couldn't keep the car because I only had about \$ 200 on me and no job. I didn't want my family to deal with my sexual orientation, but I had no problem with it.

From a religious point of view I thought the Bible, or the way it was interpreted, had been wrong. If something supported slavery, like the United States Constitution, it was not perfect; it was just human.

I had gotten poor grades in college. The dean of men at Louisiana State University called me in to tell me to stop doing so much *outside* work because it hurt my grades. As my life developed, that "outside" work ended up being my life work. I started out dealing with racial issues because the YMCA/YWCA and the Methodist Wesley Foundation recruited white students from LSU and black students from Southern University to

meet each other. This was the 1950s, when LSU "desegregated" by admitting one black graduate student. 1950 was the year of the first bus boycott in Baton Rouge.

I moved to Los Angeles when I was 24. It was the first time I had ever been on my own. I got on a train in Shreveport and got off in L.A. I bought a newspaper and looked for jobs and place to live. Today there is no such thing as ads for room and board. In 1956 I found a cheap place with just a bed on Mariposa, near Normandie and Third. I never told the company who hired me for a clerical job about my Undesirable Discharge. They did get my LSU transcript but decided to employ me anyway. I joined the First Methodist Church. The transfer process let my folks know where I was. My father visited. Enough said.



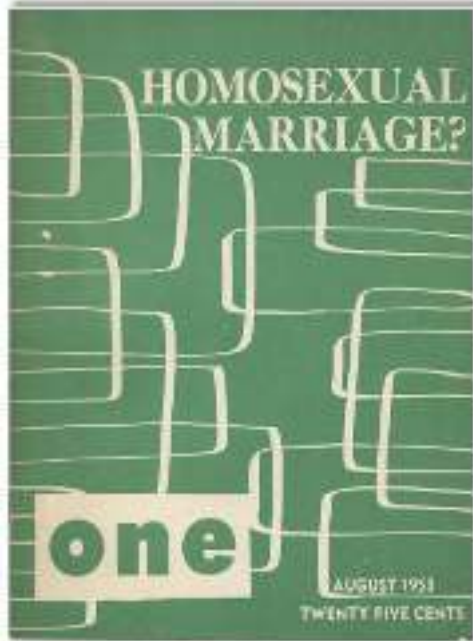
I took advantage of a time when my job ended and took a bus tour of the country. When I got back to Los Angeles I went to the offices of ONE. In 1952, ONE,

Inc. had begun publishing *ONE Magazine*, the first pro-gay publication in the United States, and sold it openly on the streets of Los Angeles. In October 1954 the U.S. Post Office Department declared the magazine "obscene." ONE sued and finally won in 1958, as part of the landmark First Amendment case, *Roth v. United States*. The magazine continued until the 1970s.

In those offices, Jim Kepner told me of the Mattachine conference set in Denver. Jim was a journalist, author, historian, archivist, and leader in the gay rights movement. His work was intertwined with One, Inc. and *One Magazine* and eventually contributed to the formation of the Archives. The Mattachine Foundation was formed in the winter of 1950 by a group of seven gay men. The name refers to the medieval Mattachines, troupes of men who traveled from village to village, taking up the cause of social justice in their ballads and dramas. By sharing and analyzing their personal experience as gay men, the Mattachine founders radically redefined the meaning of being gay and devised a comprehensive program for cultural and political liberation. In 1951, Mattachine began sponsoring discussion groups. Years before women's "consciousness-raising groups," Mattachine provided lesbians and gay men a similar opportunity to share openly, for the first time, their feelings and experiences.

I went to the conference, stopped in San Francisco for a

week, and then returned to Los Angeles. I began to volunteer in the office at ONE. Eventually I became paid staff, though what we were paid is almost a joke.



Because of my interest in preserving the history of the gay and lesbian movement, I founded the Homosexual Information Center with Don Slater, Joe and Jane Hansen, Jim Schneider, Tony Reyes, and Melvin Cain. The Center included a collection of manuscripts and correspondence generated by *ONE Magazine*. That collection included letters from famous writers of the day, such as Norman Mailer and Christopher Isherwood, who were asked to write for the magazine.

I have just been a soldier in this work. The credit belongs to founders and leaders such as Harry Hay and for all of you who have been part of the movement to bring civil rights to our lesbian and gay community. As early as 1952 there was even a "Church of One Brotherhood" dedicated to the idea that we needed a place for older homosexuals to live as well as a center to help people, and groups to help with legal affairs, etc.

Kinship is a part of this remarkable history. ▼

Stinky, Stinky, Stinky

©Arlene R. Taylor PhD

Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles and all the years you have lived. —Helen Keller

"No, no, no! Stinky, stinky, stinky!" cried my little brother. Red-faced and puffing he tugged frantically at winter clothing that had just been released from their moth ball infested cardboard prison. Watching his discomfort jump-started my interest in the sensory systems, sensory preference, and eventually in synesthesia.

The odor of moth balls didn't particularly bother me. My brain cringed if a moth ball failed to release itself from my clothing and I accidentally sat or stepped on it. Oh my! The sound of crunch was right up there alongside the grating screech of fingernails across a blackboard. (Yes, I grew up with blackboards!)

Not sound, sobs, or odors seemed to bother our mother. How we looked, did. She would calmly continue stuffing us into winter clothing saying, "Well, we wouldn't want you to go out in public with moth holes in your clothes now, would we?" My brother for one certainly didn't care. Clearly he was more invested in how things smelled. And if he became ill? Oh my! Then, he was beyond sensitive to how things smelled. And there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest



that smell **may be the first sense to** be impacted when a person doesn't feel well.

Human beings relate with each other, the world, and with nature through the senses. If there is any other way to do so, I don't know what that would be. Unimpaired, people can use all sensory systems. Typically, each will have a sensory preference, although a nonpreferent system may predominate in specific situations.

Sensory preference may be observed from birth, or perhaps even before, in some (e.g., kinesthetic babies sucking a thumb or finger in utero). Very young kinesthetic children may be seen touching anything that is soft such as the satin border on a blanket and being especially sensitive to the feel of something against their skin and to odors or flavors.

The Smell Survey of 1.5 million participants done by the National Geographic Society in 1987 showed that age brought with it little decline in smell ability among respondents. That's good news since **much of taste is contingent on the sense of smell.** The study also reported that:

- Woman can smell more acutely than can men
- During pregnancy women may experience a diminished sense of smell
- Nearly two persons in three have suffered a temporary loss of smell
- 1.2% of individuals cannot smell at all

Odors do impact human beings for good, bad, and indifferent. And they're powerful. Just pay attention to quotes about smell. Here are a few of my favorites:

- Benjamin Franklin: Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days.
- Diane Ackerman: Nothing is more memorable than a smell. One scent can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting, yet conjure up a childhood summer beside a lake in the mountains.
- Doug Coupland: Try not thinking of peeling an orange. Try not imagining the juice running down your fingers, the soft inner part of the peel. The smell. Try and you can't. The brain doesn't process negatives.
- Margaret Thatcher: I seem to smell the stench of appeasement in the air.
- Oliver Wendell Holmes: Memories, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel.
- Shakespeare: What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.



I like that last one especially. Perhaps because my middle name is Rose (a favorite family name stretching back for several generations on my mother's side).

And then there's all the complex routing of the sensory data entering through the brain stem to the correct decoding centers in the cerebrum and in the limbic area. Without the decoding process

your brain would be unable to make sense of the sensory data. In that case you might be diagnosed with specific anosmia, the label for a condition described as odor blindness.

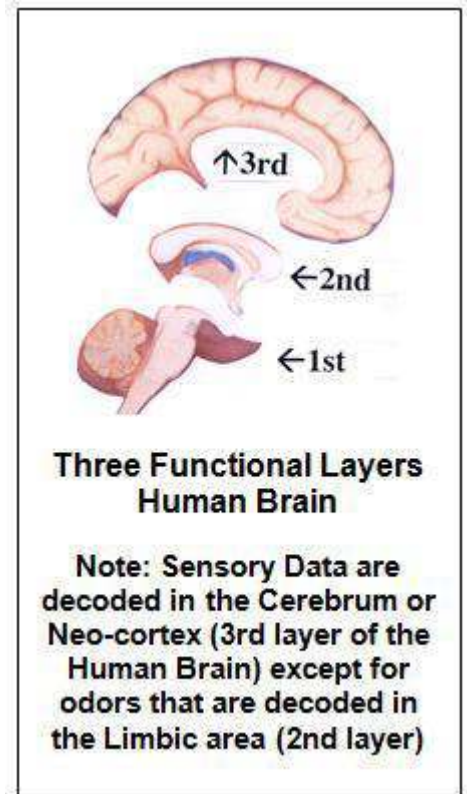
As I grew older, I kept looking for information and research related to the sensory systems, sensory preference, and the phenomenon of synesthesia, a condition in which the stimulation of one sense prompts a reaction in another sense. Here are some of the things I discovered.

- Studies by Weiner and Brown in 1993 found that certain aromas inspire individuals to set higher personal goals, take on greater challenges, and get along better with others.
- Neurologist Alan Hirsch discovered that groups exposed to the aroma of peppermint solved puzzles 30% faster than the unexposed control groups. Basil, lemon, cinnamon, and rosemary seemed to have a similar stimulating effect.
- According to Richard Restake MD in *Mozart's Brain and the Fighter Pilot*, smell, more than any of the other senses, provides the surest way to enhance your emotional memory.
- Candace Pert PhD in her audio presentation *Your Body is Your Subconscious Mind* pointed out that smell passes through only one synapse (the space between two neurons) to arrive at appropriate decoding centers. Hearing passes through three or four synapses, while vision passes through seven.

Olfactory receptor cells—neurons in your nose that allow you to smell—are neurons that can regenerate throughout life. Although these cells are continually being born and dying, they maintain the same connections as their ancestors. The result is that once you learn a smell, it always smells the same to you despite the fact that there are always new neurons

smelling it! According to Rita Carter in the book *Mapping the Mind*, smell is the exception to the brain's *cross-over rule*. That is, odors are processed on the same side of the brain as the nostril that senses them.

The work of Bandler and Grinder related to Neurolinguistic Programming or NLP, along with that of others, has added a great deal to the sensory-systems information base and the impact of the senses on communication, learning, and behaviors. In their book *Reframing* they reported that, due to the way smells are processed neurologically, they have a much more direct impact on behavior and responses than do other sensory inputs.



Sensory preference was especially fascinating to me. What lay beneath the concept that some types of sensory data appeared to register more quickly and intensely in a person's brain? There seemed no consensus, however, about the underpinnings of sensory preference. Did triggers involve Epigenetics (cellular memory), heritability, learning, all of

these or something else altogether?

Studies by Kaisu Keskitalo and colleagues in Finland have provided data that shines an interesting and potentially helpful light on these questions. According to the researchers, human beings have an innate preference for sweet taste, but the degree of liking for sweet foods varies individually. They decided to study the proportion of inherited sweet taste preference and performed an analysis of a genome-wide linkage to locate the underlying genetic elements in the genome. An article outlining results of their work was published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* under the title: "Sweet taste preferences are partly genetically determined: identification of a trait locus on chromosome 16." This paragraph appeared at the end of the article:



"In conclusion, individual differences in sweet taste preferences appear to be partly heritable. A locus on chromosome 16 was found to affect the use frequency of sweet foods. This result can be considered to be very significant, because a sweet taste preference has not been previously shown to be heritable in humans. This observation broadens our understanding of human food choice. "

If an aspect of kinesthesia (e.g., sweet taste preference) is at least partially heritable, additional studies may reveal that other aspects of sensory preference also have some heritability.

Stay tuned!

And the anecdotal saga of familial sensory preference? My brother, no longer little, continues to be highly sensitive to odors, tastes, and how things feel against his skin. Up until her death, our mother consistently was interested in how things looked. I am aware of sounds usually before any other type of sensory data gets my attention.

Have fun exploring this information. I certainly do!

Note: Multiple resources related to the senses, sensory processing, and sensory preference, are included on my website under Brain References. The *Sensory Preference Assessment* is available free of charge at www.arlenetaylor.org. ▼



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