

Counting Our Blessings

Written by Brian Johnson

Monday, 01 March 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 15 October 2013 09:40

Getting used to our blessings is one of the most important non-evil generators of human evil, tragedy and suffering.

—Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality

Here's a ritual of mine. Often, when I pay a bill, buy something or enjoy a meal, I pause for a moment to appreciate the incredible array of people who made that experience possible.

Think about it the next time you sit down for a meal. Look at the spoon or fork you're using. How did it get there on that table of yours? (And how did the table get there? And the floor? And...) Contemplate for a minute or two just who was involved in getting that spoon to you. Imagine the interconnected web of cooperating people who produced the raw materials, then those who shipped them to the manufacturer and then those who created it (and all those who financed all that activity to begin with). Then, of course, the spoon had to get from the manufacturer to the store where you bought it. (Who built the trucks and boats and planes and trains used to ship it?) And on and on and on and on. It is truly staggering when we see just how fortunate we are to have so many people supporting us in every moment of our lives.

We are so incredibly blessed. And it is so incredibly easy to forget how fortunate we are and just how much we depend on the love and service of others to do the most basic things in life.

As Albert Einstein wrote in a letter in 1950, "A human being is a part of the whole, called by us 'Universe,' a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle

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of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Similarly, Marcus Aurelius, the 2nd century Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher, said, “Think often of the bond that unites all things in the universe, and their dependence upon one another.”

I echo Aurelius’ mojo: Think often of the bond that unites all things in the universe, and their dependence on one another. How can you do that a little—or a lot— more today?

About the Author:



As the chief philosopher of PhilosophersNotes, Brian is responsible for studying, embodying and sharing the universal truths he’s so passionate about. He’s also the chief evangelist and responsible for inspiring the world to get their wisdom on! Read more about PhilosophersNotes at philosophersnotes.com.

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This article appeared in [Pathways to Family Wellness](#) magazine, Issue #25.

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