

Life^{equipping} *News*

Volume 3. Issue 4. 2013

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GREENER ON YOUR SIDE**

***TRUTH vs FACTS*
MINDFULNESS
*BOUNDARIES***

Imparting HOPE

Igniting PASSION

Inspiring LIFE

WELCOME....

The LIFE newsletter is produced quarterly. We hope it inspires you to pursue a life that is free and driven by purpose and passion

Our desire is that the articles will inspire, encourage and equip you on life's journey.

We all have one life to live and the choices we make today will impact all our tomorrows.

Today choose to live and love your LIFE!

We would like to acknowledge Pam Visscher as copy editor.

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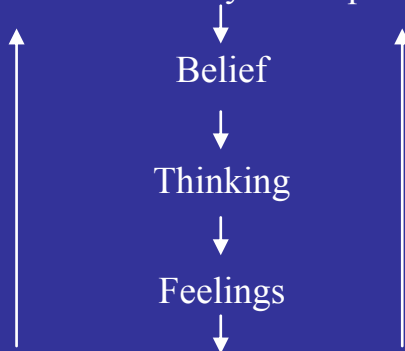
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Melbourne - Australia

How one event can impact my life

Event + Memory + Perspective



Physical/Emotional Behaviour

We are defined by what we believe. Our beliefs stem from events in life. It further impacts who we are and how we choose to live. If what you believe about yourself is holding you back or not equipping you for your future? It's time for change!

Often we don't realise that there is a difference between what we believe and what we actually know or think. At times we may know the truth about something, yet we choose not to believe it or shape our thinking and live according to the truth.

The truth about you and me is that God loves us unconditionally, each of us has a purpose for our lives, and God desires for us to believe the truth of His love for us. to be free from all that is holding us back, and to live a life of purpose and passion.

Greener Grass

As I was driving past some gardens I noticed how some gardens were dry, some had green but it seemed to come from all the weeds, then there were gardens that had lush green grass.

As I admired the beauty of the gardens that had been taken care of, I began to appreciate how much effort must have gone into keeping them looking this good. I wondered who had the green thumb or did they get assistance to keep it this way? Regardless, time, money and great effort has gone into the up keep of these gardens.



Then there were the gardens with the weeds, dead plants etc I wondered as to where the people who lived there were? What is stopping them from looking after their gardens? Are they okay?

All this got me further thinking about the saying “the grass is always greener on the other side.” What I realised is that we can often look over the fence at someone else's life and or situations and wish for what they have.

Regular maintenance is required to maintain a lush garden. In the same way a lot of hard work goes into maintaining the life one has and desires. Nothing comes easy and the chances are, if it did, most often it will not be appreciated.

For the third time this year Melbourne, Australia has been ranked the world's most liveable city. As one who lives in Melbourne, I count it a blessing to live in this city and country. But what makes it the worlds most liveable city? I am sure there are many things.

Every country and city has strengths and challenges, spectacular views, weather patterns (but only in Melbourne can you have four seasons in one day) and many other things that makes each place unique. However, nothing can be appreciated if people were missing to enjoy it.

Our lives are the most valuable asset we have and we have a responsibility to take care of it. Wishing will not get us what we want, but hard work will. We all have a cost to pay and it's different for everyone. We must take the responsibility seriously about maintaining our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing if we want to avoid the consequences.

I have come to realise that it is better to appreciate and be grateful for my own life rather than wishing to live someone else's life unaware of their challenges. After all each of us has been given the tools we need to live our life, we just need to discover them, fine tune them and put them into good use. Life has to cost us something to be appreciated and enjoyed fully.

Candy Daniels

I would like to write this piece around the life of my Grandpa, John William Christians.

I was privileged to know a great man, an icon and a legend of his time. John William Christians lived a full 90 years. As I reflect on his life and how he lived I am privileged to have walked with him. I lived with him most of my childhood time and teenage life; he legally adopted me as his child when I was 10 years old. My grandpa was a very strong man; he lived with no hypocrisy, and he always used to believe that the best thing one can give someone is a straight answer and the truth. He also used to teach us that if you tell someone to their face what you think and feel that they will have more respect for you than speaking behind their backs.

My grandpa had to leave school at the age of 12 to work so that his siblings could be looked after. Even though he didn't have a formal education, he became very successful. He was nominated as the Mayor of a small community in Cape Town in South Africa. He always believed and taught us that "Whatever you make happen for someone else, God will make happen for you". Growing up that became my motto. The wellbeing of people was my grandpa's first priority. He was always

busy in his capacity as the mayor to ensure that people in the community had homes. He planted the first police station in our community. The first library, the swimming pool for the kids, and he increased the schools from 1 primary school to 4 schools now existing and from 1 high school to 2. He stood up against very powerful people, but he knew who he was and whose he was.

I have been so honoured to have known him. The lessons he has taught us is living on inside of me. I have become what he has taught us, that people should be my priority. Isaiah 61 was his favourite scripture, he always used to tell me, 'Danolene if you live by that then you will live with passion, because you have been called to bind up the broken hearted, set the captives free.' Today, I am walking in his footsteps, helping destitute children, binding up their broken hearts with the love of Christ. We feed the hungry and clothe the naked, provide shelter for the outcasts. I am richer for knowing him and his legacy and memory will live on in my heart and mind forever.

So today I salute and say rest in peace dearest grandpa, you are my icon, and my legend.

Danolene Johanessen

Truth VS Facts

Pontius Pilate is quoted as saying "What is truth?" Jack Nicolson in the film 'A Few Good Men' tells us "You can't handle the truth" It has also been said that truth is subjective; what is true for you may not be true for me. Then we have truism; a self-evident or accepted fact. Truth in the dictionary is: a verified or indisputable fact or principle. Our brain operates in truism. It takes fact or incidents, adds thoughts and feelings, and then reasons it out to be true. From this point all the brain needs to do is pull out this created truth in a similar situation in the future, allowing reduced reasoning, giving a quicker reaction time.

An example: A few years ago I had a small car accident in the wet. My car was towed away and I was without a car for a week. Here are the facts. It was raining, my car didn't have ABS braking (Anti-skid Braking System), and I was in a hurry, so not driving as carefully as I could.

When I got my car back I became nervous driving in the rain and apprehensive about cars braking in front of me. What my brain is saying is "You're going to crash" It was

taking the facts of the past and projecting them into my everyday life. My new truth was that my car wouldn't stop when I braked and I was going to hit the car in front.

My husband brought me new tyres. However, this did little to change my truth. He finally brought me a new car with ABS braking and all these years later he is still dealing with a wife who doesn't like driving in the rain.

So what have I done about this? I don't condemn myself as being stupid or tell myself to just 'stop it.' I allow myself grace and acceptance of who I am. I understand where my thoughts are coming from and why my brain believes this, so I capture my thoughts and redirect them into a positive direction while endeavouring to modify my behaviour. I take my negative thoughts and turn them into positives.

Are you living with feelings and thoughts that your brain is telling you are true? Are there things in your life that you need to ask "Why?" Why do I believe/behave this way? Is this what I have become?

Believe + Behave = Become.

Jodie Chambers

In Celebration of life - Eric H. Liddell (1902 – 1945)

Eric Liddell was born January 16, 1902, in north China, to parents who were Scottish missionaries. At school his headmaster described him as being "entirely without vanity". In 1920, Eric joined his brother Rob at Edinburgh University to read for a BSc in Pure Science.

Eric entered the 1924 summer Olympics that were hosted in Paris. As a devout Christian he refused to run in any heats that were held on a Sunday as a result of honouring the Sabbath. His decision meant he had to forego the 100-metres race, his best event! The schedule had been published several months earlier, and his decision was made well before the Games. When the day of the Olympic 400 metres race came, Liddell went to the starting blocks, where an American Olympic Team masseur slipped a piece of paper into his hand with a quotation from 1 Samuel 2:30: "Those who honour me I will honour" He won a gold medal for the 400 metres and a bronze medal for the 200 metres at the Paris Olympics.



After the Olympics and his graduation from university he returned to North China where he served as a missionary from 1925 to 1943. In 1934 he married Florence Mackenzie. They had three daughters; Patricia, Heather and Maureen.

In 1941 life in China was becoming so dangerous that the British Government advised British nationals to leave. Florence and the children left for Canada. During 1941 – 1943 Eric stayed in Tientsin, then in 1943 he was interned in Weishien camp. Liddell died on 21 February 1945. According to a fellow missionary, Liddell's last words were, "It's complete surrender", in reference to how he had given his life to God.

In 2008, just before the Beijing Olympics, Chinese authorities revealed that Liddell had refused an opportunity to leave the camp, and instead gave his place to a pregnant woman. Apparently, the Japanese and British, with Churchill's approval, had agreed upon a prisoner exchange. News of this final act of sacrifice surprised even his family members.

Eric Liddell on principle of his beliefs and faith in God refused to compete on a Sunday. Because of his actions, his story lives on and has inspired millions of people around the world about the power of God. Eric's Olympic training and racing are chronicled in the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*. To all those whose life has been inspired by Eric it will be a joy to know that another movie will be released in 2014 depicting life after *Chariots of Fire* – titled "Absolute Surrender".

Info Compiled by Amritha Perera

BOOK LIST

Behind the Veils of Yemen

Audra Shelby

I am My Beloved's

Esther Dorflinger

The Brain that Changes itself

Norman Doidge

The Gift in You

Dr. Caroline Leaf

LIFE health - wellbeing MINDFULNESS

It is and has been over the years the practice of emptying one's mind. Some call it meditation, today some refer to it as mindfulness. The new rage that appears to be the up and coming therapy. Mindfulness is about renewing one's mind.

The thing about emptying one's mind is that it is then left open to anything. What grows in a empty field but weeds, even if the flowers look very pretty.

Most of our battles in life that end up causing health issues stem from our mind; identity issues, fear, shame, guilt, bitterness, hopelessness, lack of self worth etc.

Mindfulness is about self discipline and self control, it is a spiritual practice that assists the individual to take control of their thoughts. Which in turn aids you to manage and control your emotions in a healthy manner. Mindfulness helps us to realise what we focus on and where or what we put all our energy into.

If you are wondering how to practice mindfulness without giving room for weeds to grow, the following tips can be used.

- ◆ Set time aside daily (at least 15-20 minutes) for the renewing of your mind. Focus on what you have control over rather than what is going on around you that you have no control over. Romans 12:2
- ◆ Fix your thoughts on Jesus and what He has done for you. Your value is measured by the love God has for you. Hebrews 3:1
- ◆ Focus on the present. Our thoughts often take us to the past or the future. We can't change the past and we can only plan for the future. Matthew 6:34
- ◆ Focus on what you have and be thankful for all of it rather than what you hope or wish for. Romans 8:6
- ◆ Think of things that are true, noble, reputable, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. Philippians 4:8
- ◆ As a person thinks so they become. Keep in mind that your thoughts drive your emotions. Proverbs 23:7.

Being mindful is about entering a place of peace and contentment. Knowing that each of us are in God's capable hands. Believing that He will never leave us nor forsake us despite what it might feel like. My hope is that as you practice being mindful, you will grow to believe and become and behave as one who is blessed knowing who you are to the One who loves you most - God.

Candy Daniels

LIFE force – Wholeness

Monty & Me

It was the morning of the 2nd of April 2009 and I was heading off to Seymour in country Victoria. It was such a beautiful morning and there was excitement in the air as my younger brother was driving me to pick up a greyhound who was in adoption as part of the Greyhound Adoption Programme in Seymour.

We could not get there any faster, but still stopped to have a break during the drive and enjoy a morning cup of coffee on the way. What was all this excitement about a greyhound?

Well, when my family decided to have a pet, we looked at the opportunity of getting a greyhound, as a means of giving them a second chance in life. Whilst looking at the agency's website to choose the pet, we came across many beautiful dogs. But after looking at the myriad of dogs, we were drawn to one who really stood out.

It was Monty, a two year old male ex racer, whose caption read "Monty thinks he is very handsome". I had to admit it was something about the caption and Monty's looks.

We enjoyed having Monty as part of the family and enjoyed many long walks with him. He was the most contented of dogs and had such an air of confidence about everything in life. He just knew he was loved and that he would get his treats and his pats. He knew he lacked nothing. Talk about a healthy self-esteem!!

Sadly Monty contracted cancer and had to be put down on the 4th December 2012. He still enjoyed his treats and pats until it was time for him to say goodbye to us and the world around him.



I have to admit that we will always miss Monty, but when I look back over the three and a half years I spent with him, I see that God brought Monty into my life for a purpose. In the months before I got him I was living with no hope in my soul. I had to resign from my job because I was very sick and was suffering from severe pain in my neck and back. This crushed my spirit.

Monty coming into my life was an avenue for God to get me outdoors and enjoy His creation and spend time communicating with Him. He used that time as a blessing for me to concentrate on the good things I had around me, like Him and my family and friends and not to concentrate on what I did not have.

Today I realise that God can use anything to get our attention for our good. He used Monty to help me to step out, look up, and learn to have a thankful and contented attitude.

I have learnt to only take one day at a time. Just try it for yourself, you will enjoy your day better.

Amber Ferrier

We all need to have Boundaries...

When I think of boundaries I'd like to make the following distinction:

- ♦ A Boundary is a property line – the fence around my house or property to keep the **baddies** out and the **goodies** in. It is very visible and says very clearly: THIS IS WHERE MY PROPERTY BEGINS AND ENDS.
- ♦ My personal boundaries can resemble a property line – but it is not as visible as my property line around my house and that is what makes it difficult to identify. With personal boundaries, we require **responsibility** in regard to our own as well as others' feelings, behaviours, and attitudes. This is the *invisible* defining that each of us has in our relationships with our spouses, our children, our work, our family etc.

So what is the big deal about boundaries?

They enable us to have a clear and well-defined sense of who we are, they give us the ability and the freedom to make the right choices. They allow us to be certain of consequences when we don't act within the boundaries set in our lives, and accept the responsibility for our own life. In other words, we can take ownership of our behaviour, our internal thoughts and feelings.

Boundaries sound restricting but in actual fact are not. If I can compare it to my dog Jessie who is confined to a yard - she knows that is her area, she is in charge there and she feels *safe*. The moment I let her run into the street with no lead or no boundaries, the dog doesn't know what to do, runs around aimlessly without direction, and may end up getting hurt.

So this shows how having boundaries actually allows us to have a freedom within the area that we live and are responsible for, this includes our responsibility towards others and ourselves. Based on these boundaries, we have expectations about how others are going to react to my boundaries, and how I can expect to be treated. It is a safety mechanism and there is a factor of predictability in there.

What about our children?

As adults we have boundaries. We model these to our children in the way we treat them and others, we then cultivate within our children this sense of appropriateness of what is acceptable and what is not. So we have boundaries, our children have boundaries, the local council has boundaries, my partner has boundaries etc. etc. and the list goes on.

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By having boundaries, we actually build character within our children and the following list of desirable characteristics are from the book on ***Boundaries for Kids*** by Dr Henry Cloud and Dr John Townsend.

Loving - Loving people realise that the world does not revolve around them. They consider the consequences of their behaviour.

Responsible - Responsible people are owners of their life and know that they are accountable to God and others. They learn to be respectful of others' boundaries.

Free - they know that they can make choices but have to live with the consequences.

Initiating - Taking responsibility for their life and the outcome of their goals.

Respectful of reality - experiencing the consequences of our actions in the real world.

Growing - To face the obstacles of life with an orientation toward growth. To develop abilities and gaining knowledge as well as facing negative things about oneself that need changing.

Honesty- to be truthful in all things.

Acknowledging a higher power- Being grounded in God gives direction and meaning to their existence allowing them to transcend life, problems, their own limitations and mistakes.

Remember: A child's character will determine much of the course his life takes. To develop a child of good character, we must be parents of good character.

So to be a parent of good character sometimes takes some reflection in our own lives and our own boundaries. But that is not the only reason to have well defined, clear boundaries. It is part of everyday life. That sounds so clichéd but there is a reality there.

The following are a couple of examples to make this clear for you.

Example 1: When you have brought up your children and they are in their teens, they make the choice to not submit to your 'boundaries' in the home anymore, they decide to run away and live at a friend's house... What will you do? Will you be strong enough to stick to your guns, keep on loving your child unconditionally? Or will you go into a depression, feel sorry for yourself or kick your teen out of the house? Or will you allow the teen back into the house, to live by their own rules, disrupting your boundaries and thus determining the atmosphere in your household and setting a bad example for the younger children? Many couples end up in divorce because of situations just like this.

What if you determined what your boundaries are beforehand and then when you are confronted by a situation as sketched above, you are able to deal with it in a more effective and calm manner? What if you sat down with your spouse and worked out what will be the consequences beforehand. Then, should your teen not agree to live by your boundaries, you are prepared and can lovingly make the consequence known to them whilst still ensuring your household is still a safe place for the other siblings, and you yourself not going into a depression and doubting yourself?

Example 2: Your teenager is self-harming, and you only discover this after many months of them not being able to deal with their emotions. You have allowed them unlimited time on the internet and thus created a situation where their social networks have dumped all their pain and emotions onto your teenager, leaving them unable to deal with life. What about the internet boundaries in place for access to social media, and having the mobile phone next to the bed at night being accessible to your child's friends and the internet at all hours of the day/night?

What do you do? Do you now confiscate her/his mobile phone? Do you cancel all internet access and lock them up not allowing them to go out at night? Or even during the day, and start home-schooling them? I am sure that must have been a thought when this mother found out about her teenager?

What if You and your spouse sit down, re-evaluate your boundaries and plan a strategy to help your teenager to create a safe space for them selves, to enable them to get to the place where they can make decisions based on their character and not on their emotional state at the time. Perhaps new boundaries have to be set in place about internet usage, about social media access, and ensuring that any mobile phones are on a dining room table after 10 pm to allow your child to get the rest they need for school in the morning. Perhaps setting new boundaries, re-evaluating what might not have worked and what might work now will be the best course of action. Remember, this is a learning curve; it is a reality for many of us.

Life is tough! Part of being alive today is making mistakes. Having boundaries doesn't make it easier to make difficult decisions, but it gives us confidence and a freedom to decide, to re-evaluate, try again until we get it right. We will have a certainty that enables us to make decisions and to live with the consequences, the courage to say: let's try again.

Having boundaries is a safe-guard; it is not a GET OUT OF JAIL FREE guarantee, no. This article is also not about putting the reader into bondage, but rather it is to encourage all of us to contemplate and adjust our boundaries where needed, and know that it is by God's grace that we live each day.

Anna Marie Steyn



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