



A Taste of Enchantment - June 2003



"Dedicated to helping you attain joy, happiness and well-being."

Produced by Dr. Barbara Becker Holstein, Psychologist, Steps-to-Happiness Coach, and Originator of *THE ENCHANTED SELF®*



... to the monthly publication of The Enchanted Self's newsletter! The following is what you will find in this month's issue.

- *Quote of the Month*
- *Article:* Group Breakdown in America, Its Consequences and Cure
- *Recipe for Enchantment*
- *How to Order* Books, Audio Tapes & more
- *E-group:* Connect with others like you!
- *Sharing Enchantment!*
- *Blessing of the Month*
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Quote of the Month

"When I stopped waiting for something 'significant' to happen, and instead began noticing what was happening, not what I wished was happening, a series of small miracles occurred ... When I trusted I was doing something of value, goals and timetables had a way of taking care of themselves ... Today, stapled on a telephone pole crowded with other posters, I saw: 'Allow for the possibilities.'"

– Page 129 from *Everyday Sacred, A Woman's Journey Home*, by Sue Bender

Group Breakdown in America!, Its Consequences and Cure by Guest Writer, Paul Weinberg

Imagining a Wonderful World of Optimists! I am always delighted to share this wonderful article written by Paul Weinberg. He is a member of a national organization dedicated to practicing the art of optimism. I hope you enjoy reading his reflections on our society and the positive influence that the Optimists have exerted all across the country—in fact the world! I encourage you to use Paul's article as a jumping-off point for yourself to dare to connect more actively and in positive ways in our wonderful world. After reading Paul's article, come 'play' for a couple of minutes with the thought activity that follows.

Recently Professor Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University wrote an important article on a seemingly minor phenomenon in America today: the loss of bowling leagues in most communities.

Once upon a time America was a country where people joined all types of groups. Bowling leagues, Masons, fraternal organizations, political clubs, bridge clubs, and almost anything that brought people together. Today most of these groups have seen their numbers either plummet or disappear. Thus the loss of bowling leagues is a sign of what is happening to all volunteer groups today.

Like the extinction of the dinosaur, the question of why this has happened is framing the research of social scientists who study the recent changes in America today. One can posit things like television, computers, video, a consumer driven lifestyle, as well as a lack of historical ground-ness in dismissing the past outright, but whatever the cause may be, it is a dangerous sign for the well being of a happy, cohesive society.

In the 1950's Richard Cloward of the Columbia

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School of Social Work described the major differences between a slum community and a healthy neighborhood as one which was made up of no volunteer groups (the slum community), and the other (the healthy neighborhood) which was. Unfortunately, today we seem to be going in the direction of the slum community. People go to malls to buy their way out of anomie, and to see crowds to give them a sense of belongingness. That this sense is false is seen by the record numbers of people now on anti-depressive drugs, and in therapy. There is a lot of aloneness and loneliness in too many of our lives today.

Back to the Future: Can we recreate the past in the context of today? The answer is a resounding "YES!" Many of these groups are still active in many parts of the country, and always welcome new members. I speak from personal experience as one who was tired of being alone and joined one such organization: Optimists International.

Six years ago, I decided that I needed more adult interaction. I was working alone in a rural part of Central New Jersey, with most of my friends in New York and elsewhere. Aside from my wife and kid, the only human interaction that I had during the day was on the telephone. One day I decided I was going to seek some fraternal group that would have me. I called our local chamber of commerce to find out what was out there. They put me in touch with the president of the local Optimists Club. Within two days I was a member attending my first meeting. I felt like I had been admitted to an exclusive club with the winners of society. People from all walks and stations of life came to meetings, and accepted all as members and eventually as friends.

What has the optimists done for me? It became one of the highlights of my week. We had fund raising drives to honor high school students entering vocational lives. For the past couple of years I've been a model at our yearly fundraising fashion show. We have had a garage sale, craft shows and a County Fair to raise money for youngsters. I even roped my wife into judging an essay contest one year and an oratorical competition the following year. It's fun to belong and it's great to have access to a wider circle of people. The adage that giving is receiving is so very true.

What a wonderful antidote to the aloneness and soulless-ness of modern life, with a credo that would make any twelve step group green with envy. Does this mean that membership in the Optimists or other fraternal groups will solve all the problems of society? Probably not, but it will significantly improve your life;

enriching it with friends, healthy activities, and helping others. For information on how to join OPTIMISTS INTERNATIONAL call 800-678-8389.

I hope you enjoyed the above article. Here is a short play-date with Enchantment to practice some of the above: Even if you never join the Optimists International, what are three ways that you can make your life more connected to others in positive ways? Make one of the suggestions very easy, one a little more involved and the last stretch mentally to a solution that would involve some work and perhaps pre-structuring in your life. Write all three down and look at them again in a month. If they spark your 'soul', go for any or all. If not, that is fine. A play-date with positive thinking can have benefits whether the exact action is taken or not.



Blessing of the Month

May you always realize that every time you dip your little toe into the ocean of life, and take the tiniest of positive steps, ripples are felt around the world. May you always have the 'contagious' smile or positive idea.



Recipe for Enchantment #35

This recipe is based on a minor accident that happened in a national park. *A woman hurt her knee and could only walk slowly. She discovered her slowed pace helped her look at the world as if through a microscope."

Right behind ... was a single hiker with a big camera. Every time (she) stopped to examine a wildflower, he would stop and look at the wildflower too—as if she were discovering something for him. Finally the hiker came up to her and said, "You're seeing so many wonderful things."

"I'm seeing these wonderful things," she told him, "because I can't walk very fast."

Now here is a recipe that doesn't involve having to hurt your knee:

Try walking very slowly around your neighborhood. Literally drag through space each foot and then stand a few seconds before you take another step. Slow down your breathing as you walk by trying some belly

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breathing—in and out slowly from the belly rather than the chest area. Listen to the sounds around you. Smell the aromas. Look at everything—blades of grass, cracks in the sidewalk, children's faces, front windows, trees, and cars. Feel the bark of the tree that so faithfully puts its leaves out for you—maybe even hug it! Talk to children, neighbors, strangers and animals. Use this recipe whenever you wish to connect, come home to yourself and to the wonderful gift of life!

* Quoted from page 39 of Everyday Sacred (below).



Join the E-group

Find out "what's right with you—not what's wrong!" Chat with others at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/encself>. Membership is free and you will have access to our on-line calendar, message board, chat room, and more. It's a great way to connect with others who are exploring, creating and sharing their own positive and satisfying lives.



Sharing Enchantment

Share your positive stories and questions about enchantment with us and other Enchanted Self readers around the globe! Our mid-month newsletter focuses on YOU and reaches a subscriber list of almost 700 people from the US, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and many other countries! Please send stories, comments, and questions to DrBarbara@enchantedself.com.



Announcements

We are attempting to add greater value to the messages that we send out on a regular basis. In the next mid-month issue of 'A TASTE OF ENCHANTMENT' we will be changing the format to give you a fun exercise to get your enchantment flowing. Be sure to look for the mid-month issue on June 16!

There is a free gift available to you from my web site at www.enchantedself.com/ordering.htm. Available for download is a picture of an enchantress in the background of a lovely poem that you can print out.

Whispers: Enchanted Self concepts are now available for you to read on Whispers, an online magazine for women. To access my latest article and enjoy the site, simply copy and paste the following link into your

browser window.

<http://www.cyberpathway.com/whispers/image7.htm>

The Bright Side: When life is too much for you, visit my new column, 'A Happier Me' on the-bright-side.org. Just copy and paste the following link into your browser window. www.the-bright-side.org/site/thebrightside/section.php?id=664

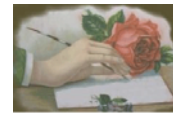


How to Order

How about some autographed copies of 'Recipes for Enchantment' with a free copy of The Enchanted Self's paper newsletter and a bookmark? Perhaps you would be interested in my first book, 'The Enchanted Self', which is also available on audio tape? Here's how to order:

- Web: www.enchantedself.com/ordering.htm
- Call Toll Free: 1-877-B-JOYFUL
- Amazon: www.amazon.com
- Barnes & Noble: www.bn.com
- 1stBooks: www.1stbooks.com

Tip: When shopping online use keywords "recipes for enchantment" and "enchanted self" to locate the books.



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I also encourage you to include this material in other publications, such as self-healing and professional psychology newsletters. However, I do ask that you contact me beforehand for permission and send a sample issue.



*Have an "enchanting" month.
I wish you all many enchanted moments!*

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