

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

activated

Vol 17 • Issue 6



THE POWER OF HAPPINESS

Being a bearer of joy

Hymn in the Gym

An unexpected encounter

The Common Denominator

Three people—one secret



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD AND YOURSELF

The Bible teaches that we are responsible to do our best with the talents and abilities that God has given us.¹ He has entrusted us with skills, resources, time, energy, minds, and spirits, and we'll find the greatest satisfaction when we invest them in things that please God and that are aligned with His plan.

There are many ways to do this, of course. God has different callings for each of us, and each of us will bring our unique personalities and circumstances to the table. The Bible gives us some ideas: "caring for orphans and widows in their distress,"² giving to the hungry, visiting those in prison,³ being an example of Christ in our workplace,⁴ etc. In addition, other avenues to serve, such as preserving and enhancing God's creation, can be deduced by what we know of God's character.

When we do these things, we can depend on God's promise that our work is not in vain. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."⁵

The articles in this issue of *Activated* give more ideas of how we can "be Jesus" to those around us. Meanwhile, remember that in addition to our responsibilities to our families and society, we also have a responsibility to ourselves. As author Eleanor Brownn puts it, "Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." It's a good reminder to cover all our bases.

Samuel Keating
Executive Editor

1. See the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14–30.
2. James 1:27 NLT

3. See Matthew 25:35–36.
4. See Colossians 3:22.
5. Colossians 3:23–24 NIV

For information on *Activated* and other inspirational products, visit our website or contact one of the distributors below.

www.activated.org

Activated Ministries

P.O. Box 462805
Escondido, CA 92046–2805, USA
Toll-free: 1–877–862–3228
Email: info@actmin.org
www.activatedministries.org

Activated Africa

P.O. Box 2509, Faerie Glen
Pretoria 0043, South Africa
Tel: 0861 888 918
Email: activatedAfrica@activated.org

Activated Nigeria

P.O. Box 9009, Aggrey Road P.O.
Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Cell: +234 (0) 7036963333
Email: activatednigeria@activated.org

Activated Philippines

P.O. Box 8225, Paranaque Central P.O.
1700 Paranaque City, Philippines
Cell: (0922) 8125326
Email: activatedph@gmail.com

EDITOR Samuel Keating
DESIGN Gentian Suçi

© 2016 Activated. All Rights Reserved.
Printed in China.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. Other Bible quotations are from the following sources: New Living Translation (NLT). Copyright © 1978, 1996 by Tyndale House Publishers. Used by permission. New International Version (NIV). Copyright © 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission. Common English Bible (CEB). Copyright © 2011 by Common English Bible. Used by permission. Contemporary English Version (CEV). Copyright © 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission. New Life Version (NLV). Copyright © 1969–2003 by Christian Literature International. Used by permission.



GETTING AN EARLY START

BY ROSANE PEREIRA

I RECENTLY TOOK MY TEENAGE SON to an ecotourism project in the big Complexo do Alemão group of favelas [slums] in northern Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There are cable gondolas that stop on all five mountaintops, from where we could see the entire bay and all the beautiful mountain ranges. Dotted the mountains, there are also thousands of small huts lacking decent roofs and with bare and unpainted brick walls. Those were the favelas.

At one point, my son commented: “It’s amazing how many more poor people there are than rich!”

On our way back down, we talked with a missionary who had begun working there before peace had been achieved, at the time when the police and drug cartels had been engaged in daily gun battles. Another woman described how she used to have to walk to the fountain to get water every day when she was younger, until her father and others had been able to dig a community well. Life in the area has improved significantly in the past few years, but the stories these women shared were a reminder of the dire conditions so many people live in. This excursion had quite an impact on my son, who is now showing more interest in helping destitute families in our city rather than being primarily concerned with having his own wants met.

I believe that teaching children from an early age to consider others and share is vital, so that this becomes part of their personality. I recently read that the children who survived WW2 learned solidarity through the dreadful circumstances they had to endure. Years of sharing every scrap of bread or meat helped to mold their characters for the rest of their lives and became part of their way of being.

For many years, I have taught children of volunteer workers in different countries, and the conditions have not always been ideal. Sometimes we had to rotate the didactic materials or toys that were available, so it was imperative that the children learned to take turns and cooperate in small chores, like putting away their things or clearing the table after a snack.

Children can develop compassion for others through participating in services for the community, scout groups, or helping the less fortunate, and if they have been taught these values from an early age, they will be more likely to hold on to them for the rest of their lives.

ROSANE PEREIRA IS AN ENGLISH TEACHER AND WRITER IN RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL, AND A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL. ■



THE POWER OF HAPPINESS

BY MARIA FONTAINE, ADAPTED

IN THE COURSE OF OUR LIVES AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, there are always ways to minister to others, either occasionally or regularly. The common denominator in each such activity or scenario is that the goal is to convey love and kindness.

Giving of your time above and beyond what is expected has a cost—often, only known to you and Jesus. But He doesn't ask us to make that extra effort of time or strength or whatever it takes lightly. He knows that the results in the lives of others

are worth the extra cost and may have a greater impact than we expect.

I was recently moved by a short video presentation of some Christian workers ministering in an orphanage. These folks were obviously having a wonderful effect on the children as they lovingly and positively interacted with them, teaching them songs, giving them hugs, and providing opportunities for fun and laughter, creating memorable experiences for all of them. I could feel their lives being

touched in a tangible way. God's love shone through them.

Of course, the *greatest* and *most permanent* happiness comes through accepting Jesus and getting to know Him, and we will want to share Him with others and lead them to receive Him. But even when that's not practical or feasible, He can still use our loving, kind, and caring actions to brighten the lives of those around us. These loving, caring actions are a manifestation of God's Spirit that attracts people and helps them feel happy and loved.

Following are a few things that can bring peace and happiness to someone. This is a big subject and I'm just touching lightly on a few of the positive effects, but you can do your own research and find extraordinary benefits that have been discovered as a result of medical and scientific studies in these areas.

1. Proverbs 17:22
2. Jennifer Welsh and LiveScience, "Why Laughter May Be the Best Pain Medicine," *Scientific American*, September 14, 2011; Melanie Winderlich, "10 Reasons Why Laughing Is Good for You," *Curiosity (Discovery Channel)*
3. <http://www.exhibithealth.com/general-health/health-benefits-of-human-touch-1345>, http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research.
4. <http://www.emedexpert.com/tips/music.shtml#ref29>
5. <http://www.businessballs.com/singing.htm#singing-introduction>
6. <https://suite.io/laura-owens/48ej266>



1. THE BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER

As Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs, “A merry heart does good, like medicine.”¹ He didn’t have all the scientific studies to back him up, but he sure did “hit the nail on the head” through the Spirit of God.

Sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy with others. Besides that, laughter has been shown in many cases to:

- Decrease stress
- Alleviate pain
- Reduce aggression
- Boost your immune system
- Boost your social skills
- Impact blood sugar levels
- Exercise many muscles in your body
- Enhance your coping skills²



2. THE VALUE OF TOUCH

Besides benefiting the immune system, many studies have shown that touch can lower depression and hostility and even boost survival rates of patients with some diseases. Neurologist Shekar Raman, in Richmond, Virginia, explains: “A hug, pat on the back, and even a friendly handshake are processed by the reward center in the central nervous system, which is why it can have a powerful impact on the human psyche, making us feel happiness and joy. And it doesn’t matter if you’re the toucher or touchee. The more you

connect with others—on even the smallest physical level—the happier you’ll be.” Research suggests that touch is fundamental to human communication, bonding, and health.

Dacher Keltner, PhD, when speaking of the benefits of touch said: “The benefits start from the moment we’re born. A review of research, conducted by Tiffany Field, a leader in the field of touch, found that preterm newborns who received just three 15-minute sessions of touch therapy each day for 5–10 days gained 47 percent more weight than premature infants who’d received standard medical treatment.”

Studies show that touching patients with Alzheimer’s can have huge effects on helping them to relax, make emotional connections with others, and reduce their symptoms of depression.³



3. THE POWER OF LISTENING

Listening to someone can have a powerful impact on their health, attitude, sense of self-worth, and whole perspective on life. You can show that you care by taking the time to listen, to understand someone’s heart, and that can do so much!

- Listening is a sign of respect.
- Listening makes people feel valued.
- Listening is a sign of love.
- Listening provides opportunity for change.

- Listening validates people.
- Listening breaks down barriers and draws people together.
- Listening can provide emotional healing.
- Listening to people can motivate them to get up and try again.



4. THE IMPACT OF MUSIC

Listening to uplifting music can have many physical healing elements, as well as make positive changes in a person’s emotional and mental state.⁴ There are even many advantages to singing.⁵



5. THE BENEFITS OF HUMAN/ ANIMAL BONDING

Sharing your pet with someone who is depressed or anxious can, in some cases, do much to help them. There is quite a body of study now by medical science about the multiple benefits of pet therapy and “human-animal bonding to promote child development, to aid elderly care, mental illness, physical impairment, dementia, abuse and trauma recovery, and the rehabilitation of incarcerated youth and adults.”⁶

A professional man who was no longer working due to a heart surgery followed by the onset of a chronic and debilitating disease revealed the protective role of his two Siamese cats. He said:

“When I wake up in so much pain, I really wonder *what’s the point of going on?* Then I’ll see one of the cats or they will jump across the bed and I’ll think, *They give us so much joy. They are so wonderful and I am their guardian. I am responsible to keep them alive and safe and happy.*”⁷



6. THE JOY OF CREATING SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH

Manual work—painting, knitting, woodworking, gardening, and any other activity that involves making or constructing things—is a useful tool for decreasing stress, relieving anxiety, and helping with depression. These types of activities can lead people to an improved state of mind and greater contentment. It has been said that busy hands can lead to spontaneous, joyful, creative thoughts.⁸



7. THE VALUE OF PLAY

Here are a few interesting highlights from some of those who have studied play. Playing with children and even adults bonds people together. An article in *Psychology Today*, reviewing the studies of the value of play, said, “[Play] also provides a state of mind that, in adults as well as children, is uniquely suited for high-level reasoning, insightful problem solving, and all sorts of creative endeavors.”⁹

“It is through play that children first learn how to make decisions, solve problems, exert self-control, and follow rules. . . . Most importantly, play is a source of happiness.”¹⁰

Play for adults can relieve stress, promote an overall sense of well-being, and can even temporarily relieve pain. Playful activities with family and friends can also help ward

off stress and depression, stimulate the mind, and boost creativity. Playing can boost your energy and vitality and even improve your resistance to disease, helping you feel your best.¹¹



8. THE HEALING POWER OF NATURE

There are numerous mental, emotional, and physical benefits in experiencing nature: It can encourage imagination and creativity, cognitive and intellectual development, and social relationships. As well, it can help to restore the mind when it’s fatigued from work and studies, contributing to improved performance and satisfaction.¹²

Whatever methods you implement to manifest God’s love for others, He can work through them to provide something priceless. God cares for the whole person and has provided many different methods for His Spirit to touch them through your words and actions. Therefore, “Let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.”¹³

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

7. <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/healing-together/2010/11/the-power-of-pets-in-the-recovery-from-trauma>
8. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-creativity-cure/201205/creativity-happiness-and-your-own-two-hands>
9. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/200811/the-value-play-i-the-definition-play-gives-insights>
10. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2011/10/all-work-and-no-play-why-your-kids-are-more-anxious-depressed/246422>
11. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>
12. http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_Mental.html#brain, <http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/content/21/1/45.full#sec-1>
13. Matthew 5:16 CEB

WORTH IT!

BY ISABELLE DE RIVE



WE RECENTLY ORGANIZED OUR FIRST PUPPET SHOW for children visiting their fathers in the toughest men's penitentiary in Mexico City, the prison for inmates who have lost all their appeals, even their plea to not be transferred to that penitentiary. There, they have nothing left to do but live out their sentence. The place also houses the toughest convicts who could not be controlled in other prisons. The average sentence is 30 years. 98% of the prison population is desperately poor. Over 50% never have visitors, which means no outside support and an urgency to find ways to earn money in order to survive (as they have to buy all their basic necessities themselves).

Upon entering, I am faced with clusters of skinny men all dressed in old, dirty, dark blue colors, with emaciated faces and empty, sad, desperate eyes. A pungent smell hits us and pervades the air everywhere we go, a smell of garbage, putrefaction, and sewage. A smell of anguish and desperation. I am overwhelmed with the feeling of despair around me.

Inside the penitentiary, little stands selling crafts line a main alley, as well as food stalls and small shops, all operated by prisoners. Visitors buy there when they come. Many men are standing against the walls, on their own, a vacant look on their faces, letting their life go by—the sentence, the sadness, and the depression.

Some offer their help to carry our luggage, to do something, to feel useful, to get a sense of belonging and perhaps a remuneration; many do so with broken spirits.

Others are enjoying the bittersweet experience of their family visiting.

The facilities are old, decrepit, and dirty; the paint is peeling; and the equipment is run-down. The entire universe of these men is painted in dirty shades of navy blue, gray and black.

We get to the auditorium, ready for the show, and display the books and crayons that will be distributed to the children. The presentation begins, and besides the 50 visiting children with their mothers and incarcerated fathers, a number of other prisoners join in. Little by little, they all let their inner child out, and laugh, enjoy, and forget for a moment their reality.

We leave feeling nostalgic. What we did doesn't seem much compared to the need, but it brought a bit of laughter, joy, and love.

ISABELLE DE RIVE IS THE FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF A NONPROFIT IN MEXICO WORKING WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND WOMEN AND THE INCARCERATED. ■

HYMN IN THE GYM

BY CHRIS MIZRANY

THIS MORNING I DRAGGED MYSELF OUT OF BED. The sun isn't even fully up, so why should I be?

As I mulled over that pithy logic, I dressed, grabbed my bag, and trudged out the front door.

Now I hope some of you will empathize with my feelings when you hear my purpose. I was on my way to the gym.

But hold on! you might say. *Gyming is such a wonderful, refreshing, exciting, thrilling, special time!* Well, I wasn't feeling quite that way on that morning. It had been quite a week, and

getting up that bit earlier was eroding my "happy ration" for the day.

Anyway, I got through my workout, and made it to the showers with just enough time before heading home. I was mentally distant, thinking of the day ahead, when I heard someone singing.

I don't know about other gyms, but generally, no one sings at my gym. If they do, it's usually between a hum and a breathless squeak. This was real singing, confident and clear. Someone was singing a song that I didn't recognize, and I heard the word "Jesus." Then he began a variation of "Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet."

I was, well, shocked. In a couple of minutes, this guy had

both inspired me and put me to shame. He was sharing his faith in a simple, powerful way. As Dwight L. Moody put it, he was "preaching from his Bible bound in shoe leather."

When he finished singing, he smiled and said, "I hope you have a great day!" Then he picked up his bag and walked out. You'd better believe my day turned upside down and inside out in a great way. I told my fiancée about it when I got home. I told my friends. I told my family. I told just about as many people as I could, and now I'm telling you.

What I took away from this experience is the following:

1. See Matthew 6:19–20.
2. www.HelpingHandSA.org

“Do all the good you can.

By all the means you can. In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can. At all the times you can.
To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”

— *Attributed to John Wesley (1703–1791)*

“The point of your life is to point to Him. Whatever you are doing, God wants to be glorified, because this whole thing is His.”

— *Francis Chan (b. 1967)*

“Who should we be trying to make the most proud? Our family? Our friends? Our teachers or bosses? What about the one who molded us out of the earth itself, who formed us like clay, and instilled within us the very breath of life that shaped the universe?”— *James D. Maxon (b. 1977)*

“Christianity is not the faith of the complacent, the comfortable, or the timid. It demands and creates heroic souls like Wesley, Wilberforce, Bonhoeffer, John Paul the Second, and Billy Graham. Each showed, in their own way, the relentless and powerful influence of the message of Jesus Christ.”— *Mitt Romney (b. 1947)*

1 There is always someone near you that you can influence in a positive way. There in the gym, this guy changed my outlook and blessed me through his willingness to honor God. He had no idea what I was going through, and he didn't have to know. Likewise, we're each continually meeting, interacting with, and influencing many people. If we can exhibit joy in a weary world and kindness in a “social”—yet socially inept—society, we can change lives too.

2 God knows how to encourage us when we need it most. He timed it so that I would hear that singing just in time. Timing is everything, and God is perfectly on time, every time.

3 Never judge by outward appearance. I think I've probably missed out on something great many times in my life because I was too quick to judge.

I've read that most people size up and mentally judge a stranger within 30 seconds or less of meeting them. One thing I learned from that is to always strive to be a good example, because others may not allow us a second chance to convince them that our faith is real.

4 Think of the big picture. One song, one kind word, one smile, one good deed, one note, one email, one tip, one pat on the back, one hug, one [fill in the blank]

can have a constructive impact far beyond the effort it takes to do it. Those eternal dividends cannot be measured by earthly standards. Let's be willing to invest more in the long-term results, even, and especially, when we cannot see them yet.¹

Let's be examples of Jesus, and let's do what we can to show Him at every chance ... even early in the morning.

CHRIS MIZRANY IS A WEB DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND MISSIONARY WITH HELPING HAND² IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA. ■



A LEGACY

BY ANNA PERLINI

HE WAS ONCE QUITE TALL AND CARRIED AN AIR OF CONFIDENCE and authority wherever he went. When he was young, he dedicated every spare moment, including his holidays, to Christian youth ministry. He had gone through a personal conversion in his early twenties and was very zealous in his beliefs and practices. He'd organize summer camps in the mountains for flocks of youth who had just gone through the hard years following WW2 and needed a father or an older brother figure.

Then came the challenging years when his own kids were growing up and turned into some idealistic but quite rebellious teenagers, determined to change the status quo and seemingly throwing all his teachings out the window. Not knowing how to react, he closed up to them, especially to his eldest daughter who left home very young and made choices he couldn't understand at all. His heart was broken, but he kept it all inside.

He decided he couldn't face her anymore, and so five long painful years went by. In the meantime, she got married and started having kids of her own. One day, he finally mustered up the courage to visit her and meet his son-in-law and two grandchildren for the first time. It was a very brief visit, but the first step had been taken, and the next ones were easier.

Family reunions soon resumed, like spring after a long, cold winter. Nobody wanted to talk about the past, and

mistakes on all sides were forgiven. It's not like everyone saw eye to eye, but a new sense of admiration and unconditional love was springing up, and along with that, empathy and wisdom.

I know this because I am that eldest daughter. When I spoke with my mom and other relatives, they all said they watched him go through an amazing transformation from a zealous but often intransigent believer to a zealous but more merciful and loving one.

When my own children grew into teenagers and young adults, guess who encouraged me more than once to stay close to them and show them sympathy and understanding? My dad. At the same time, I now knew firsthand what a big job he had had and felt more understanding for him.

Now he's almost 90, his back is hunching and he doesn't walk as fast as he used to, but he still reads, writes, prays daily, and helps the needy. He shows love and welcomes everyone in his home. He's moved to tears watching a sunset. He has five kids, 14 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

He has passed on a great legacy and we jokingly call him "the patriarch." But I think his greatest example was the day he said to me, "Please forgive me."

ANNA PERLINI IS A COFOUNDER OF PER UN MONDO MIGLIORE,¹ A HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION ACTIVE IN THE BALKANS SINCE 1995. ■

1. <http://www.perunmondomigliore.org>



BY KEITH PHILLIPS

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

I WISH YOU COULD MEET THREE PEOPLE WHO EACH MADE A BIG IMPRESSION ON ME THIS PAST YEAR. The first was a waiter's assistant who cleared my table from his wheelchair with such outgoing charm that I wasn't a bit surprised when the manager told me on my way out that he considered this young man to be his most valuable employee. "I think more people come back for him than for the food," the manager joked.

The second was a blind beggar whose smile and heartfelt blessing has me looking for him whenever I'm in the area. Jesus said that it's more blessed to give than to receive; my blind friend makes believers.

The third was a middle-aged cashier whose "Have a nice day"—after who knows how many hours on her feet—was so genuine that she completely turned my day around. Never mind that I know she said the

same thing to every customer before and after me; I was the one drowning that day and she was my lifesaver.

What is it about people like these three that leaves us envious—not of their circumstances but of their cheerful dispositions? Like angels in disguise, these unlikely champions of goodwill seem to say to us, "Join the team!"

In search of their secret, I looked for a common denominator—how they manage to not only rise above adversity, but to take so many others with them—and I think I found it. They're all so genuinely thankful for what they have that they don't waste time wishing things were different. That kind of victory comes only from knowing and feeling secure in God's love.

KEITH PHILLIPS WAS *ACTIVATED'S* EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FOR 14 YEARS FROM 1999 TO 2013. HE AND HIS WIFE CARYN NOW WORK WITH THE HOMELESS IN THE U.S. ■

"Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without compass, God's love encompasses us completely. ... He loves every one of us, even those who are flawed, rejected, awkward, sorrowful, or broken."
—Dieter F. Uchtdorf (b. 1940)



"There are two different kinds of people in the world. There are people who instinctively look for every chance to be a 'victim' and those who look for every chance to rise above—regardless of where they are in life and what's happening around them. ... We are all powerful individuals. Let's use that power to create something beautiful!"
—Christopher Hawke



BY JESSIE RICHARDS

A *Joyful* Work Environment

ON A RECENT DAY OFF, I spent the better part of the day at the zoo. It's been a long time since I've gone to a zoo. Animals are fascinating and a lot of fun to observe, and I learned some interesting information. What I noticed, too, which I don't recall feeling as much when I was younger, was sadness because of the animals' lack of freedom. I'm confident they are being well cared for at this particular zoo; but can any cage, however spacious, ever measure up to the wide-open spaces of their native habitats?

I've been thinking a lot lately about the factors that make a workplace either healthy and joyful, or toxic and miserable. I won't go as far as to make comparisons between

people in their cubicles and monkeys in their cages—though I do think that's the way some people feel.

Over the last couple of years I've read several books about organizational environments, and found a few in particular enlightening and inspiring. They all touch on similar key concepts from different angles. One of these is that having freedom or autonomy in one's work is one of the most significant factors in motivation and job satisfaction. Conversely, lack of freedom to make decisions that affect one's work is one of the most, if not *the most*, demoralizing factors in today's workplace.

*Reinventing Organizations*¹ looks at a number of organizations that in recent years implemented modes

of operation that challenge the industrial-era paradigms that many corporate operations are based on. These "futuristic" organizations are centered around self-management and wholeness—that is to say, bringing more autonomy and freedom into the workplace, and helping people to live a richer work life and thus a richer life overall.

I don't buy into the idea that everyone can and should find "work that doesn't even feel like work because we love it so much." That's a nice ideal, and if it works out for some people, I'm happy for them. But I'm a realist, and I know that we're not all going to get that. On the other hand, most of us spend eight or more hours a day at work; so I believe that even if we don't "love it," there should be some joy in it, some sense of purpose, of community, of achievement and fulfillment.

1. Frederic Laloux, Nelson Parker: Brussels, 2014

2. Dennis Bakke, PVG: Seattle, 2005

3. Daniel Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Riverhead Books: New York, 2010



One of the concepts that comes up repeatedly in the things I've read is that to change an organization from an "industrial machine" type of structure into a "people-based" structure takes buy-in from top leadership. I've been thinking a lot, though, about what someone like me—a middle manager, not a CEO or higher-up—can do to make his or her workplace a more enjoyable and positive and productive environment, with more of a sense of community.

*Joy at Work*² describes a company founded on four values—Integrity, Fairness, Social Responsibility, and Fun, defined as "rewarding, exciting, creative, and successful." The author says that "joy at work starts with individual initiative and individual control." While I may not have full control, I can still have initiative. I can do things that work toward creating a healthier and happier work environment. And one thing I always

have control over is how I act—specifically, how I treat people and how I attempt to motivate my team.

I have tried to take a closer look at my own assumptions about work in general, human nature, my role and personal motivation, and specific individuals. For example, do I base my interactions at work on the idea that "my coworkers put their own interest ahead of what is best for the organization and are selfish" or on the idea that "my coworkers want to use their talents and skills to make a positive contribution to the organization and the world"?

I know what motivates me. I know that it's "autonomy, mastery, and purpose,"³ or to expound in my own words: having enough independence to make decisions about work that affect me, being able to learn new skills and get better at the ones I have, and doing something that I feel is worthwhile. For the most part,

these same things motivate those I work with. I try to believe that deep down most people—especially those who, like me, work at a nonprofit with socially conscious goals—mean well, care about our organization and greater community, and are trying to do a good job. And if even just one person at the office—me—is happier and less stressed out because I'm looking at others charitably, giving them the benefit of the doubt, and trying to do my part to make things work well for all of us ... well, that's a start.

JESSIE RICHARDS HAD A ROLE IN THE PRODUCTION OF *ACTIVATED* FROM 2001 TO 2012, AND HAS WRITTEN A NUMBER OF ARTICLES AS AN *ACTIVATED* STAFF WRITER. SHE HAS ALSO WRITTEN AND EDITED MATERIAL FOR OTHER CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES. ■

BETTER TOGETHER



TWO PEOPLE ARE BETTER OFF THAN ONE, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help.
—*Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 NLT*

Servants don't know what their master is doing, and so I don't speak to you as my servants. I speak to you as my friends, and I have told you everything that my Father has told me.—*John 15:15 CEV*

No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it.
—*Halford Luccock (1885–1961)*

A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)*

If I could solve all the problems myself, I would.—*Thomas Edison (1847–1931), when asked why he had a team of twenty-one assistants*

Memories last forever,
never do they die.
Friends stick together
and never really say goodbye.
—*Unknown*

Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.—*Helen Keller (1880–1968)*

Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.
—*Henry Ford (1863–1947)*

No member of a crew is praised for the rugged individuality of his rowing.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Friendship requires great communication between friends. Otherwise, it can neither be born nor exist.
—*Saint Francis de Sales (1567–1622)*

The most beautiful discovery that true friends make is that they can grow separately without growing apart.—*Elisabeth Foley*

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then,

with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.—*Dinah Mulock Craik (1826–1887)*

No love, no friendship can cross the path of our destiny without leaving some mark on it forever.—*François Mauriac (1885–1970)*

No lapse of time or distance of place can lessen the friendship of those who are truly persuaded of each other's worth.—*Author unknown*

Friendship: To be a strong hand in the dark to another in the time of need.—*Hugh Black (1868–1953)*

With every friend I love who has been taken into the brown bosom of the earth, a part of me has been buried there; but their contribution to my being of happiness, strength and understanding remains to sustain me in an altered world.
—*Helen Keller*

What brings joy to the heart is not so much the friend's gift as the friend's love.—*Saint Aelred (1110–1167)* ■

FEEDING READING

Secrets to Success with People

BY CHRIS HUNT



THE BIBLE IS A RICH STOREHOUSE OF SPIRITUAL AND PRACTICAL ADVICE, and examples of strong relationships are one of the recurrent themes. In fact, Martin Luther commented that the entire Christian life consists of relating to people around us.¹

So what can we learn from the Bible about how to succeed with people?

LOOK FOR THE GOOD.

Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.—*Philippians 4:8*

1. "The Freedom of a Christian," *Luther's Works*, ed. Harold J. Grimm and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p. 365

TREAT OTHERS WITH KINDNESS, THE WAY YOU WOULD WANT TO BE TREATED.

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

—*Matthew 7:12 NIV*

We should not live to please ourselves. Each of us should live to please his neighbor.—*Romans 15:1–2 NIV*

Be gentle and kind to everyone.
—*Titus 3:2 CEV*

BE ADAPTABLE.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.—*Romans 14:19 NIV*

I am not anyone's slave. But I have become a slave to everyone, so that I can win as many people as possible. When I am with the Jews, I live like a Jew to win Jews. And when I am with people who are not ruled by the Law, I forget about the Law to win them. I do everything I can to win everyone I possibly can.
—*1 Corinthians 9:19–22 CEV*

ALWAYS FORGIVE.

Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"
—*Matthew 18:21–22 NLT*


BE SUPPORTIVE.

Share each other's burdens.
—*Galatians 6:2 NLT*

I am glad and rejoice with all of you.—*Philippians 2:17 NIV*

We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives.—*Colossians 1:9 CEV*

CHRIS HUNT LIVES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND HAS BEEN READING *ACTIVATED* SINCE IT WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1999. ■



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

TOUCH OTHERS WITH MY LOVE

Before you go to sleep, think about My love for you. If you count your blessings, you'll see how I have blessed you in so many ways, through so many things and so many people. Each of these is a token of My love for you personally.

I ask that you also think about how much love you have given. What did you do today to show love to others, so they too could be touched by My love? Remember that I have no voice but yours and no hands but yours to touch others' hearts and draw them to Me. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."¹

Every time you follow the leading of your heart, that little nudge I give you each time I put an opportunity to show love to those in your path, I repay you. You cannot give love without receiving a touch of My love in return. "Give, and it will be given to you."²

1. Matthew 25:40 NIV

2. Luke 6:38