
The Examined Life, July 2003

A free, monthly electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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Business & Personal Coach

Exner & Associates

Examine, Explore and Excel!

www.ExnerAssociates.com

IN THIS ISSUE:

- * Celebrate
- * Tip of the Month
- * Coming Events
- * Spread the Word

Celebrations

Years ago there was a Broadway musical (or maybe it was Off-Off Broadway), called I'm Getting My Act Together and Taking it On the Road. The story revolved around a woman who, on the brink of turning 39, re-invented herself and her act as the lead of a rock band. It was a 1978 musical, full of feminist empowerment and energy.

What I remember most was a song called Happy Birthday. It was a celebration — This is the day I was born, this is the day I begin... I've got this voice that can sing a celebration of me... — lyrics to be sung with exuberance and joy and energy. I loved that song. For a while, I belted it out every morning, as I got ready for work.

Now, I happen to love my birthday. I know that sounds weird to some people. Perhaps it was the influence of that tape that gave me a different attitude before I reached the age where having mixed feelings about getting older starts.

Perhaps it's time for a new tradition around birthdays. What if we used our birthday to look back over the previous year and take stock of the things we're proud of or happy about? In fact, what if we did that every day? Now, the challenge is that we spend a lot more time focused on the things we want to change, or the things we want to change in others. Maybe we need mini-celebrations every day of the year.

What would happen if you ended each day with the question "What am I happy about today?" These don't have to be big things. It could be something as simple as a friendly exchange with the person who sells you your morning coffee. Or perhaps it's a new major milestone that took weeks or months of work and preparation. Or maybe you finally figured out the answer to a challenge. Or you took some fun time for yourself and really enjoyed it, no guilt. The possibilities for happiness are endless.

Recognizing happiness is like keeping a gratitude journal, that wonderful practice of jotting down the things you are grateful for each day. It shifts the focus from the negative

to the positive and helps the positive to build. Where do you want your focus to be? What can you celebrate today?

My birthday is this month. You might hear me singing along with my 20-year old tape. Won't you join in?

I've got these feet that can dance
Celebration of me
And I don't know what's coming
But I am my own design
And my whole life is a poem
And the words and the rhythms are mine
Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday

...book & lyrics by Gretchen Cryer, music by Nancy Ford

TIP OF THE MONTH

Remember to breathe!

I know this sounds simple, but in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, many of us resort to shallow, tense breathing. I know I do. For the past few weeks, I've been remembering to periodically pause for a moment or two and just take several really deep breaths — you know, the ones where the diaphragm is involved and I'm not holding my stomach in. I usually follow that by briefly scanning my body for tense areas and deliberately relaxing them.

Now this is easier if you're familiar with breathing and relaxation techniques. Yoga is one great way to develop and incorporate relaxation into our lives. More likely, you already know how to breathe deeply and some relaxation techniques, you just need to remember to do them, and ultimately, use them more each day. Try it and see what you discover.

COMING EVENTS

Sundays, August 10 & August 17, at noon
Myeloma Awareness Week; Myeloma, what it is and how to deal with it
Guests: Debbie Exner, Marilyn Alexander
Host: Tony Maxwell
Tune in to Radio Alchemy on WVUD, 91.3 or online at <http://www.wvud.org/>

Sunday, September 7, at noon
Disease to Please: Why is it Hard to Say No?
Guests: Rae Booth, Debbie Exner, Wendy Mackowski
Host: Tony Maxwell
Tune in to Radio Alchemy on WVUD, 91.3 or online at <http://www.wvud.org/>

Thursday September 18, 7-9 pm
Seminar: Juggling Life & Work
Co-leaders: Debra Exner and Mario DiCioccio
YMCA, Ardmore, PA

SPREAD THE WORD

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. Curious? Email me at DExner@ExnerAssociates.com or call 302-478-5919 to schedule a complimentary half-hour coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues!

Thanks,

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