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"Living With Purpose and Passion"

The Dan Keusal e-newsletter

Spring 2010

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To view back issues of this newsletter, or to learn more about my work as a Counselor and Astrologer, visit my web site, DanKeusal.com, by clicking [here](#).

Dear Dan,



Recently, as the weather in Seattle has been tending toward Spring, I've been trying to make a change in my morning ritual: getting up earlier and going for a hike in a nearby park before heading to work.

This attempt at change is only a few weeks old, so every morning is still something of a battle: it's difficult to drag myself out of bed and set my body in motion...but it's also difficult to pass up the vitality of feeling my muscles burn, my heart pound, and my spirit deepen as I climb to the top of a wooded bluff and take in the snow-capped Olympics and shimmering Puget Sound (or the shrouded Olympics and slate-gray Sound--still breathtaking).

This new daily dilemma brought to mind a model for making difficult choices that I often teach to my counseling clients, as well as a few lines from a 13th century Persian poet.

That model, those lines, and more await you below, including: "Three Good Poems"...quotes from Antoine de Saint Exupery, Heraclitus, and the acoustic rock band "The Senate"...plus...a video, a music CD, and a book that will remind you that you're not alone, and that it really is good to be alive.

"Don't go back to sleep"...

~Dan

P.S. Feel free to forward this email to others you think will enjoy it, and to email me with your comments and feedback!

Quotes for Inspiration and Action

"Men who love wisdom should acquaint themselves with many particulars."
(Heraclitus)

"If you want people to build a ship, don't herd them together to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks and work. Instead, teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

(Antoine de Saint Exupery)

"When I was little I had an affair with the moon.
It was over too soon."

(from "Spectacle," a song by the band "[The Senate](#)")

"If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star."
(William Stafford)

"This war has pitilessly revealed to civilized man that he is still a
barbarian, and has at the same time shown what an iron scourge lies
in store ever again if he should be tempted to make his neighbour
responsible for his own evil qualities."
(C.G. Jung)

Reflections: Making the hard choices.

Many years ago I worked in a small bookstore whose entire staff consisted of the owner, myself, and two other employees. The owner had the nasty habit of barking at us employees, often right in front of customers. It was embarrassing, but for some time I let him get away with it, telling myself it was just an unpleasant part of the job. I loved working in a bookstore, and didn't want to risk getting fired, but my resentment at being treated this way was growing every day.

One day when the owner let loose with one of his typical tirades, I turned to him and said in a shaking voice "If you ever talk to me like that again, I'll walk out the door and never come back. I deserve respect and I'm going to get it." I was shaking on the inside, too. The owner looked shocked; I doubt he'd ever had anyone stand up to him that way. There was a long silence as he looked at me for what seemed an eternity. Then he said "You're right--I'm sorry." And he never spoke to me that way again.

Situations like this come up all the time in my work with counseling clients, situations where:

1. You are faced with a choice.
2. The choice is between "the status quo" and "change."
3. Whichever one you choose, you're going to have to do or face something difficult.

In the story above, living with the status quo (getting yelled at) was difficult; but so was the prospect of change (confronting the owner).

Either choice (status quo or change) is OK, as long as you're willing to see it *as a choice*, and take responsibility for what you've chosen. I might have opted for the status quo, deciding that the job was worth more to me at that time than my dignity. The owner would still be responsible for his behavior (at least in some larger view!), but I would be responsible for choosing to tolerate it rather than risking the change of confronting him.

Therapists call this "The Two-Choice Dilemma."

Try it out in your own life--take a situation you're struggling with, and ask yourself:

1. What is the status quo?
2. What might change look like?
3. What would be difficult about continuing the status quo?
4. What would be difficult about change?

I've helped many clients through this process. Like them, you may struggle at first with the reality that you *must* choose something difficult, whether it's the status quo or change.

But once you accept this (rather than blaming others, or looking for a way out), you'll find that you are able to make an *informed, conscious* choice--a process that will leave you feeling **empowered**, and that, with a bit of practice, will foster in you an increased sense of dignity, maturity, and confidence.

3 Good Poems

In this edition of "3 Good Poems"...Rumi urges us to pay attention in life, and to be ready to ask, and to act. Rilke reminds us of the value of fighting the right fights--and *losing* them. And Mirabai has a pointed answer for those who attempt to corral her spirit after she's had a taste of the power of being fully alive (the last three lines are priceless!).

Click on the titles below to be taken to online versions of the poems; if for any reason the links don't work, just Google the titles yourself--you'll be glad you did.

1. "[Don't Go Back To Sleep](#)" (Rumi)
2. "[The Man Watching](#)" (Rainer Maria Rilke)
3. "[Why Mira Can't Go Back To Her Old House](#)" (Mirabai) [NOTE: after clicking on this link, the poem is about 2/3 of the way down the page!]

Resources for a Richer Life

(video): **Bill Moyers' final interview: Barry Lopez**. Over the past 20 years, I've developed a profound respect for Barry Lopez. His writings have inspired and challenged me, and the way he conducts himself as a person has been a model of openness and integrity. Bill Moyers chose Lopez to be his guest for the final episode of the long-running PBS show "Bill Moyers Journal." The interview included these words from Lopez--just a taste of the humility and wisdom I've come to admire: "What we're trying to do now is to wake up to what humanity has known for longer than 10 thousand years--that you can't direct the play. The play is not directable. You must participate in the play. You must get out of the director's chair of telling everybody what to do and how to behave and who can be on stage. You must put all that aside and step onto the stage with other men and women and say we're in this together." To watch this extraordinary, 36-minute interview online, click [here](#) (or Google "Bill Moyers Journal Barry Lopez"). You can also order a DVD of the interview, which took place during the 4/30/10 episode.

(music/CD) "**Heaven Below**" (Peter Mayer). A remarkable singer, songwriter, and guitarist whose songs are about the human journey, interconnectedness, and the beauty and mystery of the world. Visit [Mayer's web site](#), read the lyrics for "All The World Is One," "Ordinary Day," and "Do You Really Want To Know?" and you'll get a taste of

what I love about Mayer's songs. You can listen to sound clips of all the songs on Mayer's CDBaby.com page.

(book) *The Rag And Bone Shop Of The Heart* (edited by James Hillman, Robert Bly, and Michael Meade). A collection of poems and other writings intended to speak especially to the experiences of men. Loosely organized around a dozen or so themes; you can view the full [table of contents](#) on Amazon.com. A great source of material for daily reflection. "The Man Walking," which I feature above in "3 Good Poems," is a fine example of the material included in this book.

Invite Dan Keusal to speak to your group!

Do you need a speaker for your business, professional organization, church, or community group?

"Dan is engaging, funny, credible, and real, with relevant content and a rich, wonderful voice. His message was received like water on a dry sponge!" That's what Kelli Swanson Jaecks, Past President of the Oregon Dental Hygienists Association wrote in recommending me to her colleagues nation-wide after I delivered the keynote address at ODHA's annual meeting this past autumn.

I offer lectures and workshops on a wide variety of subjects, ranging in length from brief talks appropriate for a breakfast or lunch meeting, to evening-long presentations, to full-day workshops.

To view a [list](#) of organizations that have invited me to speak, you can visit my web site.

If you'd like to learn more about having me speak to your group, please [email](#), or call me at 206-523-1340.

Counseling & Astrology Services

I offer professional counseling and astrology services for individuals and couples. Whether you come to me with a problem (like depression, stress, anxiety, relationship issues) or simply the sense that it's time for a change, I help you look at how that starting point is calling you to grow, and how you can respond with creativity, vitality, and hope.

To learn more, visit my web site by clicking [here](#).

To schedule an appointment,
or if you have questions,
call me at (206) 523-1340.

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That's it for this issue of "Living With Purpose and Passion." As always, I welcome your comments & suggestions. You can send me an [email](#) or you can call me at (206) 523-1340.

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