

Democracy is the art of running the circus from the monkey cage.

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**By Arthur Snell**

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And who ruffled my feathers? My state legislators did when they voted in favor of a bill costing \$3m to produce curriculum materials for our public schools. So what's wrong with that?

All members of the legislature, both republicans and democrats, voted in favor...with the exception of a single republican senator who felt that it was none of their business. He is right. Their job is to finance public education not to produce curriculum materials.

How could this have happened at a time when over 6% of our labor force is unemployed and we are in a severe and prolonged economic down-turn? There are several possibilities:

- The media failed to keep us informed.
- No organization protested (PTA, School Boards, Teachers, parents etc. etc.
- The bill was proposed by a member of a politically potent ethnic minority and, in the present climate of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity of course {"whitey" would grovel and vote for a bill clearly against their best interest as well as the interests of the students

This is just one more example of the failure of what we laughingly call DEMOCRACY. Democracy is like a wheelbarrow, you know. It doesn't work unless you get behind it and apply some effort. Fail to do this and you forfeit your bitching and whining rights.

Retired high school science teacher.

**Life Is Not Always Fair**

**By Jeff Earlywine**

I once heard the story of a grown bear that lived in a cage and traveled with a circus ever since he was a small cub. The bear spent everyday of his life pacing back and forth in his cage while countless

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spectators looked on. When the bear's keepers were not looking some of the spectators would poke the bear with sharp sticks or would throw pieces of food filled with broken glass into the cage. When the great bear would eat what he thought was a wonderful treat, the broken glass would cut the inside of his throat and stomach.

One day a wealthy animal-lover visited the circus and saw the harmful acts committed against the bear. Because he felt great compassion for animals he approached the circus about purchasing the bear. He explained that he would take the bear and place him in a large open area. In this area the bear would have cool pools of water to play in and lush grassy fields to run. The circus agreed to sell the bear to the man and set up a delivery date.

When the day arrived for the bear to be delivered everyone was anxious to see what would happen when the door of the cage was opened for the first time. To everyone's amazement, when the cage was opened, the bear did what he spent every day of his life doing. He simply paced back and forth the length of the cage. The bear didn't even seem to care that the cage door was open. Finally, the bear's keepers got the bear outside the cage and rolled it away. What they saw next shocked everyone.

The bear looked around at his new beautiful home. He looked at the cool pools of water and the lush green pastures. Then to everyone's surprise and disappointment, the bear began his pacing. Back and forth he would go - as in an imaginary cage. Eventually he had to be put to sleep because he could not function in his beautiful new home.

I hope and pray that you are not living a life like the bear described above. I heard a quote recently that went something like this, "Don't let your past dictate who you are, but do let it influence who you become." It is a well-known fact: Life is not always fair. Therefore, I am of the opinion that when life turns up the heat what you F.O.C.U.S. on helps you make it through the day a winner. My good friend, Robert Mallon, explains it this way, "The longer we look at God the smaller our obstacles become. The longer we look at the obstacles the smaller God becomes. The question is whether we want a BIG God or a big enemy. It is just a matter of perspective."

When life becomes unfair what do you focus on? The principles below are basic, but will powerfully help you when you are struggling to keep a positive outlook.

F – Fun. Set yourself a goal to have fun every day. Make it intentional. Put it on your calendar. Do whatever it takes - just have fun.

O - Organized. When life becomes unfair we can begin to let things pile up. Things like emails and phone calls to reply to, deadlines at work, laundry, yard work, etc. In other words, a cluttered life will bring about a cluttered mind. Or is that the other way around? Either way, as much as possible, keep

your day-to-day activities as organized as possible.

C – Care for others. One of the best ways to forget how much you are hurting is to focus on how you can help others. Getting your eyes off yourself, and on to how you can help others, will boost your positive outlook on life.

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U - You. When you are going through tough times it is very important to keep a good diet, workout routine, and sleep habits. This will help keep your mind clear and your energy up. Remember, God loves you and He does not make junk.

S - Successes. Not only should you plan to have fun everyday, but also you should plan to succeed. You might have to tell yourself to be on the lookout for successes in your day, but when you have one, (even a little one) celebrate. A recent rollerblading trip was an example of this in my life. My goal was to "blade" around this paved course (up and down, left and right) without falling. I looked like an elephant on skates, but when I made it to the finish line I was ecstatic! I accomplished my goal and lived to tell about it.

Life is not always fair. Deaths, sickness, career changes, and struggles are going to occur. Just remember to keep your focus and to hold tight to the hand of God. When times are tough, He will carry you to the end.

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Jeff Earlywine began his ministry career while working on his undergraduate Business degree. His experiences have led him to work in many difference areas that have all benefited the local church.

CONSULTANT – Jeff has spent the last fifteen years consulting with hundreds of different organizations all across the nation. Serving as a consultant at The Injoy Group challenged him to be his best while he worked with the best. Jeff has assisted many ministries in Vision Casting, Strategic Planning, and Future Planning.

EXECUTIVE PASTOR – Jeff's unofficial title was, "Pastor of Organization," and by this title you might know this is his greatest skill. That skill gave him the passion to organize many different ministries in the local church. That skill also developed a volunteer staff capable of growing each of these ministries. He did this by equipping them to fulfill their God-given potential.

Jeff's passion is to come along side the leader and help him to identify and develop his dream, organize the needs of that dream, and then to train and equip leaders to fulfill that dream.

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