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Perfect Life

By Steve Pilkington

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Scott Peck, in his book, "The Road Less Traveled," opens with the simple sentence "Life is difficult." I think all of us would agree. He goes on to say that once we understand and accept that life is difficult then we can begin to transcend it.

In other words, once we understand and actually accept the difficulty of life then this difficulty no longer matters, because we expect difficult times. The real problem most of us run into is that we expect and even desire that life should be easy.

I'd like to go beyond this notion of difficulty and assert that life is perfect just as it is. This is a concept I've been giving thought to for several weeks. Before you write me off as a lunatic, let me explain some things. Perfect is defined in the dictionary as "without blemish."

In order to believe that life is perfect, just as it is, you will need to understand and "buy" into some new paradigm shifts.

These are:

1. All we truly have is right now; this very moment. We cannot live our lives in the past (although some do) and we cannot live our lives in the future (although some do this also). Attempting to live life in the past or the future is too rob ourselves of the now, because now is all we have.

There was a time in my life when I continuously lived for some future time, "when I get my college degree," "when I get my masters degree," then I will have arrived and I can finally be happy and enjoy life. Life doesn't work that way. And I must admit that I missed out on a lot of life because I didn't know how to live in the now. You've heard the expression, "Stop and smell the roses." Do it now, you might be dead tomorrow.

2. There are no coincidences in life. This is a biggie. There

is a reason for everything that happens to you in this life (although the reasons may not be clear at the time they happen and may never become clear in this life). I hear some of you screaming, "What about the bad things?" Those too are included.

In his book, "The Seat Of The Soul," Gary Zukav asserts that the earth is a school of learning and that we (the souls) incarnate physically so that we can come here to learn and grow spiritually. Thusly, everything that happens to us in life happens for a reason. I used to not believe this. I do now.

A man at age 47 woke up in the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit after having undergone bypass surgery last year. He came really close to meeting the "Grim Reaper."

Before the surgery, he was in his cardiologists' office and he even asked out loud, "why is this happening to me?" The doctor responded, "How many McDonalds cheeseburgers have you eaten over the course of your life?"

"No more than anyone else," he responded. "Precisely," said the doctor. That man is me.

By pass surgery was truly one of the best things that ever happened to me. Through that experience I gained a new perspective, appreciation and gratefulness for life that I

could not have acquired any other way.

From that experience I learned what my true purpose in life is. Engaging in that purpose gives me great satisfaction and fulfillment.

Life is a gift. Live it, all of it, and learn from it.

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Article by: Steve Pilkington (c) 2002. Steve is a Personal/Professional Development Coach. You can subscribe to his FREE ezine "Create The Life You Are Meant To Live" by sending a blank email to: subscribe@lifecoachpro.net with "subscribe AA" in the subject line or visit his website at: <http://www.lifecoachpro.net>

Steve Pilkington is a Personal/Professional Development Coach who publishes the FREE ezine "Create The Life You Are Meant To Live."

Why cheesecakes make the perfect gift.

By Stephen Whiteside

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Cheesecake makes a perfect gift. There are guidelines that should be followed when choosing the perfect gift. For one thing, the gift should be chosen specifically for a certain individual whose tastes are known to you. If you are not well acquainted with the recipient, you must give a general-type of gift that will not offend. Another guideline for choosing the perfect gift is that the gift must fit, and most important, if the recipient doesn't like the gift, it must be passed on to someone else.

Do you know anyone who doesn't like cheesecake and wouldn't consider it the perfect gift? For gift-giving occasions the ultimate gift is one that is adored and can be shared with others, and this makes cheesecake the perfect gift. Even if the recipient is on a low fat, no fat, no sugar or no carbs diet, cheesecake is the perfect gift because it can be made to adhere to almost any diet by carefully choosing the ingredients. In today's society there is almost no limit to the availability and variety of ingredients that go into a cheesecake.

Can you imagine the pleasure on the face of that special someone on whom you have bestowed a freshly made cheesecake? Add a few different toppings such as a variety of fruit toppings and streusels to adorn the cheesecake and you have created the perfect cheesecake gift. There are different varieties of cheesecakes such as the original New York cheesecake, which is probably the most well known of all the varieties.

Create a cheesecake in your own kitchen and present it in a special dish to a special person. When

you see the pleasure on their face, you'll know that cheesecake makes the perfect gift.

Stephen Whiteside is the head cheesecake tester at
<http://cheesecake-express.com/imf/cheesecake.html>

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