

FROM THE HEART

A Magazine of Arts and Opinions

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The Human Touch

'Tis the human touch in this world that counts,
The touch of your hand and mine,
Which means far more to the fainting heart
Than shelter and bread and wine;
For shelter is gone when the night is o'er,
And bread lasts only a day,
But the touch of the hand and sound of the voice
Sing in the soul always.

In the casket

At a motivational seminar 3 men are asked to come up to the stage.

They are all asked, "When you are in your casket and friends and family are mourning you, what would you like to hear them say about you?"

The first guy says, "I would like to hear them say that I was the great doctor of my time, and a great family man."

The second guy says, "I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher who made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow."

The last guy replies, "I would like to hear them say..... LOOK!!! HE'S MOVING!!!!!"

My Intention

My intention is to feel good
Breathing is a pleasure
I know who I am
I accept responsibility for my actions
I feel all my emotions as they move through me
I have the power to change
I can create whatever I want
It is safe for it to be easy
Change is a pleasure
I now know I am alive by the pleasure I feel
Life now supports me
I forgive myself completely
The past is over and I have learned from it
I now love myself no matter what
As I love myself, others will too
My relationships are fun and nurturing
I am whole and perfect as I was created
I am one with God

By an anonymous local poet

Dumber ...

I may be dumber than a 5th grader, but so is this guy....

A stranger was seated next to a little girl on the airplane when he turned to her and said, "Let's talk. I've heard that flights go quicker if you strike up a conversation with your fellow passenger."

The little girl, who had just opened her book, closed it slowly and said to the stranger, "What would you like to talk about?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the stranger. "How about nuclear power?" and he smiles.

"OK," she said. "That could be an interesting topic. But let me ask you a question first. A horse, a cow, and a deer all eat the same stuff--grass. Yet a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, and a horse produces clumps of dried grass. Why do you suppose that is?"

The stranger, visibly surprised by the little girl's intelligence, thinks about it and says, "Hmmm, I have no idea."

To which the little girl replies, "Do you really feel qualified to discuss nuclear power when you don't know shit?"

Cabbie and Nun

A cabbie picks up a Nun. She gets into the cab and notices that the VERY handsome cab driver won't stop staring at her. She asks him why he is staring. He replies: 'I have a question to ask but I don't want to offend you.'

She answers, 'My son, you cannot offend me. When you're as old as I am and have been a nun as long as I have, you get a chance to see and hear just about everything. I'm sure that there's nothing you could say or ask that I would find offensive.'

'Well, I've always had a fantasy to have a nun kiss me.'

She responds, 'Well, let's see what we can do about that: #1, you have to be single and #2, you must be Catholic.'

The cab driver is very excited and says, 'Yes, I'm single and Catholic!' 'OK' the nun says. 'Pull into the next alley.' The nun fulfills his fantasy, with a kiss that would make a hooker blush. But when they get back on the road, the

(continued next column)

cab driver starts crying. 'My dear child,' says the nun, 'why are you crying?' 'Forgive me but I've sinned. I lied and I must confess, I'm married and I'm Jewish.' The nun says, 'That's OK. My name is Kevin and I'm going to a Halloween party.'

"God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches by means of opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly, not one."

~ Rumi, 14th century sufi mystic

Creating an idol before God is done by making statements in a book as absolute. It is the creative act of discourse that will keep God alive. Alive in the movement, action, speaking, and thinking not the memorizing. Present, in the moment, not hanging on to the past or gloriously gazing into the future. Suffering, put an end to suffering by letting go of it. Letting go of life by living it. Acting in it. The flow of life.

Anonymous

The Mighty Quinn

From an interview with John Quinn

I grew up in Queens in a family with 4 boys and 2 girls. My three brothers took the high road through life. I took the low road. I used drugs. For 26 years I was addicted to heroin. I became HIV+ in 1988 by using needles that were not clean.

Then I met Mimi and for the past 13 years I have been with this beautiful woman. We love to spend time with each other, to travel together, to share our lives with one another. Opportunities for a good life were opened up that I never had thought were possible before.

But giving up drug addiction is hard. After 10 years I had a relapse and began to drink, to smoke pot and use crack. I stopped going to AA, started being around bad influences again. I thought using drugs would be a relief from pain, but it wasn't. I got cirrhosis of the liver, hepatitis, prostate cancer, arthritis, and neuropathy with loss of feeling in my legs. I got back into the penal system again and spent time in jail. I had a heart attack. On May 4, 2007 I was at death's door. I was given the last rites.

The sin is not in the falling, though, but in the failure to rise. Luckily I got into treatment again through encouragement by Fr. Young. I went back to AA. I began to eat right and to take care of myself health-wise, to take my meds properly. I stay sober and clean. At age 54 I'm getting along OK. I'm healthy and vigorous. Every day I'm away from the addictions I'm a better person. Don't pity me.

We Are Not Alone

Our stories may all be different, but yet they are often all the same. We are in a daily fight for our lives, a fight against an enemy that threatens to destroy us, t-cell by t-cell. We fight back with the tools we have, the skills we've learned, and we adapt with each passing day and experience. In all, we share one common thread - We are not alone!

Maybe you tested HIV+ very recently; maybe you've known it for some time but this is the first time you've reached out for information or support. The Damien Center creates an environment where people can gather to share information, experiences, and make new friends - friends who understand what it is like to live with this disease.

There's no need for you to handle this by yourself. You are not the only person in our community facing this. Just hearing how someone else has adjusted to living with the virus can be enough to help you realize that life is still good, that you can still have love and laughter. We are not alone. And neither are you.

By Perry Junjulas Executive Director of the Albany Damien Center and person living with AIDS. Reprinted in part from *The Body Positive*

War does not determine who is right;
war determines who is left.

Rise Above

Rise above to be on the ground with others in the garden.
Digging in deep and flying above in thought
are isolating, fear based examples of how I inflate and deflate myself.
Rely on others for help at times. Ask.
Relax and listen to others, enjoying their presence.
Be able to see my own abundance and feel security from it.
The abundance of others is also present.
In seeking higher awareness keep the lens clear when looking through and applying it
to others.
I need to feel that I belong and contribute to a community without being consumed by it.
Self awareness. Keep my locus of control internal.
My life is shaped by my mind; I will become what I think.
Look outside myself to help me navigate in creating a life that allows me to share my gifts
with others.
Enjoy the details by being able to step back and see where they fit into the whole picture.
Let the possibilities excite into action a desire to participate.
New horizons can exist without being overwhelming.
They come and go as quick as the hours of a day.

Anonymous

From the Heart is published at the Albany Damien Center to provide a way for the guests, staff, friends and volunteers of the Center to share their interests and their creative talents with others. Poems, jokes, op-eds, photos, drawings can all be included. They should be submitted to Jim Masters, who is serving as the working editor. Perry Junjulas will be the editor-in-chief, and what can and cannot be included will be finally decided by him. Nothing can be included that might out someone who does not want to be outed, nor can anything be included that might insult or harm anyone.

To submit items for future publication you can send them to Jim Masters by e-mail at jmasters002@nycap.rr.com. Or call him at 459-7827 to arrange to have him get them at the Center.