

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit



Newsletter Issues: January – December 2003

By

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Dear Friends,

The [Carpe Diem cum Spiritu](#) (Seize the Day with Spirit) is my weekly inspirational email newsletter. This volume includes the archived issues for the year 2003 published from January through December.



I believe that all are called to live a [Life Full of Spirit](#) ~ fully alive, energized, inspired and living courageously with integrity and character.

Great achievements (no matter in which area of your life they occur) are possible when balance and fullness of spirit are maintained. You have unique talents, abilities and creative potentials, which you try to utilize in some purposeful way to make a difference and get a feeling of satisfaction from life. The power of purpose is the energy that carries you forth in life and gives you direction. Maintaining a balanced life allows you to accomplish great things without depleting your self in the process. A highly motivated, inspired attitude can accomplish almost anything. Imagine your life full of that kind of spirit.

As a Personal Life Coach, I coach people to help them make the changes in their lives that they desire so that they may live with more of that kind of spirit. I help individuals to live their lives with a deeper commitment and conviction that is true to their values, talents and God-given abilities. I truly do want them to live their [Life ~ Full of Spirit](#).

I hope that you enjoy these short reflections and put them to use in your life. Also, please feel free to forward this e-book on to others you think might enjoy it.

Thank you.

[God Bless you.](#)

Mike

**To receive my weekly newsletter by email,
or to find out more about Life Coaching,
Please visit my website at:**

<http://www.hinzdocs.com>

Here's another great resource:

[Learn To Balance Your Life: A practical guide to having it all](#)

By Michael & Jessica Hinz, Chronicle Books, April 2004

www.LearnToBalanceYourLife.com

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My newsletter is sent each week to a list of subscribers who have requested it. My purpose is to provide a brief inspirational thought that is useful to people who are interested in change, growth and living a great life Full of Spirit. Carpe Diem!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

January 1, 2003

New Beginnings

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." Matthew 2:1-2 (NAB)

Happy New Year to you and yours!

Tis still the season of gifts and new beginnings. In the above passage we hear about three kings who traveled a great distance and invested a great deal of time in searching for a newborn baby. On this New Year's Day it is appropriate to ask yourself, what are you searching for this year and to what extent and trouble are you willing to go to in order to achieve it.

While it might seem silly to go to so much trouble to find a little baby, the magi were really searching for a promise, a hope and a dream of something truly great. They found it in a newborn baby, which of course is full of cuteness, innocence, amazement, and great promise of good things to come.

This New Year is like a newborn baby for you and me to grow with. It is full of promise, change, surprises, and lots of good things to come. We have a wonderful opportunity to make a fresh start and to produce some great things this year.

I encourage you to take a moment of your precious time and think about what you would like to accomplish this year and make some goals and a promise to yourself. Up to this point in your life you have been blessed in an abundance of ways with some truly wonderful resources. The question is, What do you intend to produce with them?

The newborn baby grew up and spent his life saving humanity. What will you spend your life creating and doing? We sometimes need to be reminded that it is never too late to get started. It is quite easy for us to get sidetracked and distracted and to forget what we are about and where we are going.

At such times, we just need to get refocused and back on track. So to that end, it is my New Year's resolution for you to ~ **Fill your Life with Spirit** ~ and be about the business of getting **Serious about Living a Great Life.**

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

January 8, 2003

True Greatness

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness. Isaiah 42: 6-7 (NAB)

Most of us wonder from time to time, what life is all about? We have all been born with particular skills, talents, and blessings to live our lives to the fullest and best of our abilities and to perform some good in this world.

Few of us think that we will ever do anything truly great or noteworthy, and yet if we look back upon our lives, we will find them full of a richness of accomplishments. Most of the things you and I have done, we will take for granted and minimize their importance. We will even claim, "That was nothing."

If you ask someone whom you respect that you think has done something 'great', they will likely say, "I just did what had to be done." That's what each of us spends a lifetime doing, 'what needs to be done.' To you and I, most of those things don't amount to much, but to the right person, they mean a great deal.

To your son or daughter, their conception, birth and very life means everything. All of the little things that a parent does each and every day helps to shape the lives of their children. You and I have a great deal to be grateful for in our own births and the lives that we have lived.

So don't waste your time claiming, "That was nothing", because it certainly had more value than you are giving it. If it wasn't worth doing, why did you do it in the first place?

In this new calendar year, you will do many, many things of various worth and 'greatness.' Some you will appreciate, some you will begrudgingly do, some you will joyfully do, some you will question, and some you will do without giving a thought, and some time you will simply waste.

However, taken all together, it forms your LIFE, something that has great value and meaning, even if you don't fully appreciate it. So if you aren't quite sure what your true purpose is in this life, keep working at it, you will likely stumble upon it sooner or later.

Meanwhile, make sure that you are ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ and the rest will fall into place. It is time to be honest with yourself and stop beating yourself up. You don't deserve half of the crap you heap upon yourself. Yes, you make mistakes; get over it and on with it. Life is far too short to waste time worrying about what you should have done when you still have far too much good left to DO.

True greatness is not seen through the eyes of the holder, but through the eyes of the recipient.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

January 15, 2003

by the Grace of God

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 (NAB)

We take so much for granted about what we have been given and about our very selves. We also do not take very good care of our selves. Yes, it is enjoyable to eat too much, to watch too much television, etc. and to maintain our bodies in a state that is not as healthy as could be. But you and I could still enjoy our lives while honoring, respecting and taking excellent care of the greatest gift that we have received, our bodies, our very lives.

Think of your body and your life as a savings account, the more you invest in it, the more it pays off, the more that will be there for the hard times, the greater security and ease of mind you will have. However, the more you keep withdrawing from the savings (without investing back into it), the sooner it will be that there is nothing left to draw from.

There are many, many individuals in this world that don't even have savings accounts, don't have any money to save, never have a security blanket to see them through those lean times, they spend everything they have and then some. But there is no excuse for doing that with your LIFE.

Each of us has been blessed with an abundance of resources with which to live our lives and to do so with a ~ **Fullness of Spirit**. So what happens to take that away from us? Choices!

We make poor choices that erode at the 'temple' of our body and from the 'glory' of our lives. We get wrapped up in the busy-ness of our lives and forget about the 'business' of living our lives respectfully, honestly, faithfully, and courageously with the **Fullness of Spirit** that was deposited into our 'life' account at birth and to which God has continued to deposit blessing after blessing all throughout our lives.

What blessings? They were there a moment ago, what did you do with them? Stop, Think, Listen, and begin to make better choices. When you withdraw a blessing from your 'life' account, make sure it was spent wisely. Get serious about living your life with the **Fullness of Spirit** that is your birthright.

Start today before today is the last tomorrow you will receive.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

January 22, 2003

Time to Answer the Call

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they abandoned their nets and followed him. Mark 1:17-18 (NAB)

Have you ever had to give up everything in life to take a new direction or to start over? That is what happened when Jesus said, "come" and they did. Nothing was ever the same after that.

You and I receive the same call to live our lives to the fullest of our abilities and to follow something worth following. What would that be? Ah, that is the question of the hour. That is the question that bogs us down and keeps us from fulfilling the destiny of our true purpose in life.

Can you honestly say that what you are doing in your life, today, this moment, is what you should truly be doing? That there is no room for change or improvement? No matter how well one may be fulfilling their destiny, there is always room to do more and to do better. And many are not even in the ballpark of where they should be.

So where does that leave you today? What challenge are you shrinking from? What promise have you made that you now want to change? What promise have you refused to make that you know needs to happen? What directions in your life are appropriate and which ones are false? Where are you going?

Such deep and disturbing questions are the substance of our lives. Their answers make all of the difference.

Perhaps it is time for you to abandon some of your pursuits and start in another direction. Perhaps it is time for you to get back to basics and practice what you believe and value most. Perhaps it is time for you to seek something that has been left out of your life so far.

Perhaps it is time to start living your life like it really matters ~ because it truly does. You could be **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ and fishing for LIFE: Living life full of courage, fulfillment, inspiration, value and integrity.

What stops you from answering the call?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

January 29, 2003

My, But Aren't We Special

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. Hebrews 2: 17-18 (NAB)

People are strange creatures. Everyone wants to be 'normal' which means, like everyone else, but we also want to be the best, which then makes us different than anyone else. We want to be average but aren't happy with that either.

Have you ever compared yourself to someone else? Wishing you had more? Wishing you were better at something? Wishing you were famous? Or rich? Or better looking? Or more popular? Or something?

Of course you have, if you are 'normal'. People have an inner drive to better themselves or to produce something of importance in life, to improve LIFE in some way. We like to be known by others as being someone special, as having done something special, etc.

So where are you right now in your Life? What are you bogged down with? Where are you stuck? What are you striving to achieve? Is it worth it?

There is nothing glamorous about most of the things we do in life; we just go about our normal daily routines, doing what needs to be done. But the 'average' person has a bigger impact than they ever imagine. You influence other people's lives every day in ways that you are totally unaware of. Your decisions ripple into the lives of others and may rock the boat in ways unknown to you. What you do today may have some profound consequences in the days and years to come.

And that is all part of our normal lives. The hardships, sufferings, trials and tribulations that you face in your life are not isolated upon you alone. Likewise, the blessings, gifts, honors and the good things are not yours alone either.

Your single life is merely one in a sea of billions of others. Each individual is busily doing its part to complete the bigger picture we know as LIFE. It may not seem like just one of those individuals will make that much of a difference among that vast sea of others, but it truly does. Especially if YOU are the one we are talking about.

It is a matter of perspective. In the bigger picture, the efforts of the individual are unnoticed, but we must not forget that the Big Picture would not exist without the individuals whose efforts compose it. Just changing or removing one individual will impact the bigger picture, subtle yes, but change it nonetheless.

If you don't think so, you are wrong. Think about the last time you put a puzzle together and after working at it for hours and days, you finally finished it only to find that one piece was missing. It was only one piece out of 5000; it didn't matter did it? You didn't even notice it was missing did you?

Subtle, yes.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

February 5, 2003

Look Before Leaping, But Still Leap

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Job spoke, saying: Is not man's life on earth a drudgery? Are not his days those of hirelings? He is a slave who longs for the shade, a hireling who waits for his wages. So I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me. Job 7: 1-4 (NAB)

It is so easy to focus on all the things that could possibly go wrong in our days and lives, and indeed, we do waste an unrealistic amount of time doing just that. However, it is true that such endeavors are not completely wasted efforts, if kept in balance.

It is wise for us to consider what could possibly go wrong in our plans, to do some insightful troubleshooting, but we must be very careful to not get bogged down in that endeavor. That is where most of us get trapped. We get stuck in the “what-if” game and get sidetracked from actually ‘playing’ the game.

Our lives were meant to be lived ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ courageously, with inspired, motivated integrity. The key is on the ‘living’ part of that equation. It means that no matter what comes along our way, that we will continue to press onward, to continue to act and move forward with our plans and our lives.

Life is certainly full of setbacks that get in our way and impede our progress, and we can allow them to stop us dead in our tracks or to inspire us to alter our tracks and take a different direction. Life, although full of tragedies, is full of glorious wonders as well. Of the two, it seems much wiser to focus on and relish the blessings and wonders within our lives.

So when you are struggling with the challenges within your life, why not pause for a moment of reflection on where you’ve been, where you are in that moment and what you are heading towards. Take a moment to recommit yourself to your goals and plans, perhaps consider some ‘tweaking’ of the plan to make some necessary alteration to keep from getting bogged down, and then get on with it. Move forward.

And if the “WHAT-IF’s” begin to hound you: “I can’t move forward because I don’t know what will happen with...” Think about this show stopping ‘what-if’. The birth of a baby is truly a wonderful and amazing event. It is the start of a journey that will be full of surprises and no way of knowing when, where or how it will all end. What-if you had to have a plan for that baby’s life before it could be born or begin its life journey? The journey would never begin.

The only thing known for certain in our lives is that one day our lives will end. Life is not about ‘knowing’ and acting accordingly, but rather about living our days and lives boldly and courageously in spite of how little we ‘know’.

So again, take a moment to consider what you do know at this moment, make some wise considerations and then get busy. Sure you will find out more as time goes on, but you can’t wait for that to happen. There is no way of telling how many opportunities and blessings that you will miss if you hold back waiting for something or waiting to ‘know’ something that you may never get or learn.

So rather than giving yourself over to all the fears of what could possibly go wrong, how about giving yourself over to all the hopes, dreams, blessings, and yes, unknowns, that are still waiting for you along your journey, if you but place one foot before the other and begin.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

February 12, 2003

I do Will it

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." Mark 1: 40-41(NAB)

Life is full of expectations, some are realistic, and some are not. Many are quite realistic except for the uncertainty within our own minds, which then prevents us from acting upon them.

Faith is a matter of trusting that something truly is possible even when we aren't sure that it is realistic. Children are prime examples of this. Children put such implicit faith, trust and belief in their parents and other adults, that for them, it is not a matter of being realistic, but simply a matter that, of course, it will happen if my mom or dad or teacher say so.

How often have you said something, or made a promise to a friend, partner, co-worker, or boss, and then afterwards, began the "what-if" game. What-if I can't do it, or what-if I can't keep that deadline, or what-if that's not possible.

Well, "what-if" all those doubts and insecurities were cleansed from your mind and you just got busy doing that task that may or may not be possible and let your results speak for them selves? Do you think it would make a difference? You better believe it!

I frequently tell people when they say something is 'impossible' to stop and really look at that word. If you break it down, it reads: **I-aM-POSSIBLE**.

Frequently when we classify something as being impossible; we are really judging it as 'impractical' or saying that 'I am not sure I want to do that'. And that is a huge difference, because while you are wasting so much time debating the practicality of that impossible task, someone else is out there accomplishing it and moving on to the next 'impractical' opportunity.

I realize that some things really are not practical for you to accomplish on your own, but that does not mean that they are impossible. No, that means you have not pulled the appropriate resources together to accomplish that task.

There are few things that are truly impossible if you appropriately acquire, utilize and manage all the available resources. Sure some things may still be 'impractical', but if you wish, you can still make it happen.

For as certain as the sun will rise tomorrow, you have been blessed in so many ways and with so many available resources, that the only impossibility is the immensity of the task of determining all the opportunities that are quietly waiting for you in Life.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

February 19, 2003

Try the Flashlight Technique

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there asking themselves, "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming. Who but God alone can forgive sins?" Mark 2:3-7 (NAB)

To what extent are you willing to go to in living your values and beliefs? When the going gets difficult, do you give up? When naysayers ridicule your efforts or question your authority to do something, what do you do? How strongly do you trust and rely on your own value and belief system by which you live your life?

I don't know about you, but I find that it is a constant struggle to truly live my life according to those precepts that I value most. I get frustrated multiple times during almost every day of my life as I brush up against some annoying and irritating obstacle or challenge that I find in my path.

And yet, I find myself pursuing the journey that I have begun and struggling onward down the path of Life granted to me. Life is full of its ups and downs, its blessings and challenges, its givings and its takings.

It is frustrating when my words, actions, intentions or motivations are questioned, misunderstood, unrecognized, ignored or unwanted. What happens then? We each have been given a job to do ~ **to Live our Lives ~ Full of Spirit** ~ courageously and persistently tackling the mission that has been individually and uniquely delegated to each of us.

We can do this successfully when we choose wisely which battles we will pursue; when we strategically pick which goal or purpose we will devote our attentions to at this moment; when we efficiently utilize all resources available to us to get the job done; when we don't lose sight of the mission we are engaged in; when we don't give up when that is really what we want to do.

Perhaps you will find the "**flashlight technique**" useful at this stage of your life. We use a flashlight to see in the dark, to bring to our awareness that which we want to see but cannot. With a flashlight, we can spotlight a small area while everything else remains in darkness.

The trick in life is to spotlight those areas of our lives that we need to focus on at this moment. We are not to be concerned with everything else, or we will never accomplish anything. I encourage you to get out your 'values flashlight' or 'purpose flashlight' and spotlight that area of your Life that you want to be most aware of at this moment. Focus on what you see, what is missing from the picture, what is in the picture, what you want to see there and what is really there.

You may move the 'beam' of focus from one specific area to another to broaden your areas of examination, but do so systematically and purposefully. Perhaps you will find something illuminated that has been lost, forgotten or misplaced for some time and that now needs your attention.

Perhaps you will find something that you have been overlooking or trying to ignore, but it continues to demand your attention no matter how hard you try to ignore it. **Choose wisely and purposefully your focus, it will make a huge difference in your life.**

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

February 26, 2003

Written on Your Heart

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all, shown to be a letter of Christ ministered by us, written not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets that are hearts of flesh.
2 Corinthians 3:1-3 (NAB)

People love to talk about each other. What do you think people say about you? Maybe you don't really care what people say or think – good for you. But most people, even if they say they don't care, really do care.

Many people are job searching these days and some really do worry about what their letters of recommendation will say about them. They may not have anything to really worry about, but they still worry about whether the writer of the letter will be honest or not. People love to gossip and sometimes seem to prefer that to the truth.

You and I cannot prevent people from talking about us, but we can make sure that we give them something really good to talk about. Our behavior, our intentions, our character and personal qualities, should all speak for themselves and be louder than any words could ever be. If you value the right things and live accordingly, then the words people spoke about you should be words worth hearing.

Now the problem with that is that many of us are not very well known and so it is easy for others to fill in the blanks with their gossip. What would your spouse, significant other, children, or friends, the people who know you best say about you? What secrets could they tell that you wouldn't want known?

Maybe it is time to revamp your life a little, after all, it is usually the people who know you best that actually talk about you. And perhaps the most important person of all is your self, what do you say and think about your self? Because what you think more than anything else will shape your behavior and actions.

Do you value ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ courageously pursuing a great Life that is full of value, integrity, hope, faith, and a compelling vision for the future?

It is never too late to start. What do you really think about your self? Take a little time to think of 5 words that describe what you value most in life. When you have those written down, think about whether or not that is how you want to be known. If those are the values that determine how you live your life, you better be sure they are the ones that you really want. Are they really the ones you want written in your heart?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

March 5, 2003

Obstacle or Opportunity?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. Mark 1:12-13 (NAB)

Our lives get hairy and somewhat wild at times. We feel driven here and there by forces that sometimes we would just like to stand up to and say "NO" to and then be on our way. We do not live in a perfect world because we ourselves are imperfect. However, that does not mean that we are not called to strive for perfection and to make the best of whatever situation in which we find ourselves.

Some when faced with lemons will make lemonade while others put on a sour face and complain. Some when faced with challenges allow themselves to be overwhelmed rather than to find an opportunity to embrace changes that might lead to new growth and possibilities. Some will see the glass as being half full or half empty and then argue over which case is true.

I know you can relate to these comments, because your day is full of similar such circumstances. What do you do about it? You could get frustrated and perhaps you should, after all that would be a perfectly appropriate emotion. You could ignore it and go on with your life as if it never happened, which might not be the best choice but is certainly an option.

What do you do when faced with opportunities that seem to be overwhelming obstacles? Do you dig in and find or make something positive out of it? Do you resist at all costs? Do you shut down? Do you just get angry, upset, frustrated and hold grudges?

People frequently react negatively to news that they are not prepared to hear. When we are in a 'reacting' mode, we are usually only interested in promoting our own single-minded viewpoint regardless of any potential opportunities that might be present in the news. It is important to get 'unstuck' from this reacting mode and move into a proactive posture of making the best possible out of the situation.

Life is full of such opportunities for growth and change. We find them at work, at home, in our relationships, in our churches, in our schools, in our communities, in every place where you find people. It is an important distinction to note that while we can ignore opportunities when they arise, we cannot escape from the challenges that pop up in our lives.

If you are invested in ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ then it means that you find proactive ways to respond to challenges that surprise you on a daily basis. It means that you do not care whether the glass is half full or half empty; you make the best of how ever much you have and move on. It means that while you still 'react' you do not allow yourself to remain stuck in that mode.

Therefore, if you are invested in **Living a Great Life**, you must be constantly seeking the 'greatness', the 'positive' side of things, the newness and freshness of each opportunity. You must be able to view challenges and obstacles as opportunities.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

March 12, 2003

I honor the greatness in you

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them. Mark 9:2-3 (NAB)

Each new day of your life is a blessing, what will you do with yours today?

Most people hope to do just one 'great' thing in their life. We spend most of our time doing a myriad of ordinary mundane things of little consequence. Yes, many of those tasks are necessary to do, but their triviality is soon forgotten and left behind. We want to be remembered for something.

Over your lifetime, a great transformation occurs. You slowly evolve into something you would never have predicted on day one of your life. Yet, the potential was there and for many, much of that potential remains untouched on the last day of their lives.

Each day represents a new beginning, a new hold on life, a day of new promises, of new possibilities, of new opportunities to transform an ordinary life into one that matters today more than it did yesterday. That is the true challenge of ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ to accept each day as a new opportunity to transform oneself into something that is better than it was yesterday.

The things that people will remember about you after you are long gone are the ways in which you touched their lives. There is an old Tibetan custom that when one meets another, they bring their palms together in front of their heart with fingers pointing up and say, "Tashi deley." This means, "I honor the greatness in you. I honor the place in you where lives your courage, honor, love, hope and dreams." (Taken from: The Other 90% by R. K. Cooper)

When you greet someone with "hello, how are you?" and halfway down the block they respond, "fine, thank you," have you honored the greatness in each other? Have you at any time in your life truly honored the greatness in another individual? Or in your self?

An interesting note to the greeting above is that the person is not honored for the things they have done, but in the potential that exists within their hearts and minds to do greatness. The focus is not on the great things they have already accomplished but on those they have yet to do today and tomorrow, with great confidence that they are forthcoming.

How will you honor your self today with the blessings and greatness of this new day you have been granted? How will you honor the greatness of the individuals you meet and mingle with today? One day at a time, one step at a time, your greatness accumulates.

Your greatness is honored today and tomorrow as...

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

March 19, 2003

Back Seat or Front Seat Driver?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 (NAB)

It is prudent to seek signs and wisdom before making important decisions that could greatly change your life. One should always examine all the relevant data, ask questions, seek feedback and opinions, explore the strengths and weaknesses of all possible options and then seriously weigh all concerns before choosing.

However, many people don't invest so wisely into the processes of change. Some leap because they always jump right into the thick of things, some hold back and take few risks, some spend all their time asking questions and never get past that step, and some are indecisive and never get around to making the choices that will initiate the change process.

We live in a fast paced world where we get left behind if we don't keep up with the flow. Now that assumes that keeping up with the flow is a good thing, because that is not always the case. However, whether or not choices come easily for you, you literally make hundreds of choices each and every day. Most of them are made with little or no thought, and it is usually the big ones that we notice and get stuck on.

Taking risks is an important and necessary part of life. Life without change is not life, because life is a continuously unfolding process of change and change never ends. Therefore, change is unavoidable. You may choose to react to change and always assume a 'behind' position or you may choose to be proactive in choosing and actively participating in change while it happens and to some degree shape it according to your own 'vision'. That puts you in the 'forward' position.

Another way to say this is you can be a back seat driver or a front seat driver. Obviously, there are strengths and weaknesses to both positions, and the main difference is how much control you want to have over the process. So do you want to be a back seat driver or front seat driver when it comes to determining the direction of your life, where you will go, how fast or slow you will go, how you will get there and what turns you will make along the way?

Where you go in this life and how you get there is determined by how you respond to the signs and wisdom that are present as your navigational aides along the way.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

March 26, 2003

Guilty or Not, Here I Come

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. John 9:1-3 (NAB)

When something goes wrong or something bad happens, frequently the first thought most people have is "what did I do to deserve this?" or "where did I go wrong?" We readily assume that it is somehow our fault and we have done something wrong or are somehow guilty.

It is amazing how we so readily assume responsibility and accountability for something that we have no control over and therefore, no blame. Yet, for those things that we do have control over and therefore, responsibility and accountability for, we frequently disown and distance ourselves from them.

It doesn't make much sense, but this pattern repeats itself over and over in people's lives. The reality is that 'stuff' happens and will continue to happen for eternity regardless of you or I and having absolutely nothing to do with either of us. On the other hand, stuff that does happen as a result of you or I is something that we hold at least limited accountability for and we need to accept that and always try to handle it to our best ability.

That doesn't mean that if our best attempts don't work out quite like we wanted them to, that we are bad or evil or sinful or a failure or whatever you want to call it. No, it means we did our best and should feel good about that, but also acknowledge that 'stuff' happens that we couldn't possibly have known about at the time we made our initial choices.

You see, we frequently blind ourselves unreasonably. We look back on our choices and judge them as good or bad depending upon how they subsequently turned out. That is simply not fair to you. If you made those choices to your best ability based upon the extent of what you knew at the time you made your decisions – then you did all that it was possible for you to do regardless of how they later turned out. However, if you did not do your best, then you do have something to hold yourself accountable for.

There is never a decision made where you are not blind to at least some of the details that could end up making a huge difference to the choice you would make. You never know all the facts, you never know everything that would be important to know, and this will always be the case. You enter into every decision somewhat blind and you simply do your best under the circumstances. That is all that is expected of you and that is all that you can do. No ands, ifs, or buts.

So what do you do? When faced with a difficult decision, you ask for feedback and opinions from others, you try to look at it from every angle possible, you seek more details (in other words you try to remove the 'blindness'), and you make the best decision you can possibly make in that moment, and move on. You continue to make the best choices possible as things begin to unfold and develop down the road and you continue to do your best as you move forward.

That is what life is about and that is what you are responsible and accountable for doing.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

April 2, 2003

What are you waiting for?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

"Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." John 11:41-44 (NAB)

This passage about Lazarus' death and being brought back to life is an amazing story. You have probably been told at sometime in your life that "if you believe, anything can happen". Maybe you have even told your children something similar. The problem of course is that we seldom truly believe.

Life is full of amazing things that we cannot even begin to understand. Few understand how a television or microwave works and yet we know that they do and gladly use them every day. How frequently do you do something that you are surprised about afterwards? Probably not very often.

We do not typically try something new if we do not think we have a good chance of doing it successfully. In other words, we have to have some basis of believing that it will work before we expend the effort of trying. Therefore, in the absence of belief, we simply do not try or at most, do not try very much.

Yet, some people do try or we would not have all the inventions that we do. What is different between them and you? Perhaps some innate curiosity or courage or imagination or perhaps some greater sense of belief that something is worth doing and it is up to them to do it.

I expect that there are certain things in your life that you feel equally passionate about. It is those that you willingly and courageously invest your time and energy. It is when you trust that things will turn out okay and press ahead with that belief—that things happen and get done.

Those who must see or understand first before they attempt to even try, do not get very far in this world. It is those who trust and believe in possibilities, even though they may be difficult to understand or grasp, but try anyway, that make the discoveries in this world that everyone else marvels at.

To **live your life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ means that you travel through life with an eagerness and trust to believe in possibilities, where everyone else is merely waiting to see what happens next. Perseverance and steadfastness are characteristic of new discoveries.

What is waiting to be discovered or noticed in your life? What are you waiting for?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

April 9, 2003

Opportunities from betrayal

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." Mark 14:17-18 (NAB)

It is sometimes very difficult to stand up for your beliefs and values. If you stop to remember, you can probably think about times where you felt someone had let you down, betrayed you or 'stabbed you in the back'. It is not a reassuring feeling to not know whom you can trust.

On the other hand, how trustworthy would people who know you consider you to be. Can you be trusted? Can you be depended upon? In moments of need, are you the person that comes to mind that will be available to help?

Not a day goes by where you do not have a multitude of opportunities to reach out to others to promote trust, understanding, caring and sharing. It might be a smile for the stranger you pass. It might be offering a courtesy to another driver on the road. It might be a courteous thank you to a family member. It might be your willingness to listen to another's words in their need to be heard.

Such simple things that occur over and over in our days, and yet, we so frequently allow them to slip by unheeded. Betrayal is easy when we make so few attempts to understand and to reach out to others. We get so caught up in our busy days that we forget what we are about. In your own life ~ what are you about?

If you are truly about ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ then you are about reaching out to others at every possible opportunity. You are about offering a kind word and a smile and a helping hand. You are about giving up your place in line to someone with their hands full. You are about being fully present to those loved ones in your life. You are about being fully present to all opportunities to make this a better world for all to live in. And yes, when misunderstood or hurt by someone else, you are about trying to understand and finding away to heal the harm and continue on.

What values and beliefs do you profess to live by? How steadfastly do you stand up for them and follow through on living them no matter what? When someone else lets you down, how do you respond? And, when you let someone else down, because you will, what will you do next?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

April 16, 2003

The Spice of Life

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7 (NAB)

Even though the world is constantly changing around us, our lives still get stale and stagnant at times. We get stuck in a rut doing the same old same old. That is fine if you are doing what you want to do and getting great satisfaction from it. However, if that is not true for you, then it is time to do something about it.

What goals are you working towards? Maybe you have forgotten them along the way or perhaps you never took the time to create them. Take a little time now to reexamine them, to tweak them a bit, or even to make some new ones.

Goals are the spice of our life. They give us something to work towards and the right ones motivate us to keep moving. If you are feeling overwhelmed and overworked, then maybe you need to eliminate some of that busyness from your life. If you are sitting around feeling bored, then you need some new direction in your life. If you have achieved the balance that you desire, then you need to work to maintain that and keep it going in the desired direction.

Your life can be out of balance all around or just in a few specific areas. For example, maybe you have great relationships with family and friends, a good spiritual life, good health, a comfortable home, but are not satisfied with your current job and finances. Then you can focus more on increasing your satisfaction at work and getting your finances in order.

The balance you have achieved in those other areas of your life that are going well, will be a source of support and encouragement for you as you work on those less fulfilling areas of your life. Obviously, keeping your whole life in balance and moving in the right direction is a constant challenge. We have our good days and our bad ones, but we keep plugging away at it.

When yeast gets stale, the bread doesn't rise and it ends up being flat, heavy and not very satisfying. The same thing happens in your life when you allow whatever goals, principles and values that motivate you to get stale and old. Keep them fresh. Your life is counting on them.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

April 23, 2003

Waiting for Truth

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. John 20:25 (NAB)

We are a people full of doubt. There is not a day that goes by where we don't doubt at least one thing that day. It might be that you don't believe something your child says or a neighbor or co-worker says. Maybe you doubt your own worthiness or ability to accomplish something. Perhaps you doubt the veracity of another's love or kindness towards you.

The world is full of doubt and uncertainty. There is no way to get rid of it. We will live out our lives with doubt and uncertainty. Some individuals have more capacity and acceptance of such uncertainty. They are more willing to acknowledge and accept the change that occurs regularly.

Part of the anxiety of doubt is the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen and how things will ultimately turn out. We frequently hope or might even convince ourselves that we know the certainty of some action, but seldom does it turn out the way we thought.

Does that mean that we just give up trying to plan and manage our lives? Of course not. We would accomplish very little if we didn't make plans and press ahead with them. However, we must always remain flexible and open to consider new options and opportunities that come along. Without such adaptability, one will find themselves in a constant state of frustration, disappointment and bitterness.

There are times when it is prudent to wait until you have more complete information or confirmation of certain critical details. There are times when it might be better to wait until you can see the evidence that supports the truth of some critical activity. However, if you choose to wait all the time, then you will spend your life waiting and never accomplish anything.

Frequently, we have to press ahead with what we think best even though we might want to wait to be sure about something. Most of the time, it is better to continue moving forward, even if you do so cautiously, than to stay put and do nothing.

There are no guarantees and few certainties in life except for the one that if you do nothing, you certainly will reap what you sow.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

April 30, 2003

Listen before you leap

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. Luke 24:44-45 (NAB)

How many times have you gotten lost in a conversation and needed help in clarifying what was being said? It happens all the time. Wouldn't it be great if our minds could be opened to understand and all our preconceptions were simply cleared away?

Communication is the most important tool to help people live together in peace and harmony. Yet, it is extremely difficult to do well. It is so easy to misunderstand each other's words and meanings. We may think we know what is going on and yet; we later find out that we missed the boat completely. How does that happen?

Great communication is highly dependent upon deep listening and that is something that few people do well. Most of us barely listen at all. We catch a few words and fill in the blanks. We think we know where that conversation is leading and we tune out and start to formulate our reply. As a result, much of the message falls on deaf ears. It is no wonder that we do so poorly at communicating.

If you wish to improve your communication skills, focus on your listening skills. Remind yourself to be patient, slow down, and really listen to what the person is saying. Ask questions to clarify any points that you aren't clear about. Keep your editorial comments to yourself. Paraphrase the important parts back to the person to make sure that you really understood them correctly.

Ask them what they expect from you, perhaps just to be heard, perhaps some advice or some kind of response. Don't assume you know what they expect, check it out to be sure. You could save yourself a lot of trouble. Instead of fretting about what to say, etc., just listen closely and try to catch every detail. Then if a response is expected, make sure you know what kind of response is sought and take some time to frame your response before speaking. If you need some time to process it before replying, simply say so.

So many of our problems would be lessened if we just took the time to communicate better. Just because we talk all the time doesn't mean that we are practicing our communication skills. Talking is a one-way process while communication is two-way. Communication requires both talking and listening.

So even if you talk very well, if you seldom listen, then you really aren't communicating well. You spend all your time 'sending' the message but never check out if the message was received as intended. Most likely, much was lost in the translation process by the receiver (especially if they are as poor at listening as the sender).

Practice listening every day. Try it just for five minutes. If you have children, listen without speaking for five minutes. Sit on your hands if you have to. It is amazing how difficult it can be to listen just for five minutes without interrupting or thinking about what you are going to say. Just sit and listen. You might be amazed at the results and the other person probably won't be able to believe that you are actually listening. It could be the start of a great relationship.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

May 7, 2003

Cornerstones of Achievement

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

He is the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved. Acts 4:11-12 (NAB)

The cornerstone is a symbol of the founding of a building and representative of the firm foundation on which the building rests. You are the cornerstone of many endeavors in life. What kind of foundation do you serve as, in the important relationships and activities of your life and in the lives that you touch?

We wander through life wanting to have an impact and to accomplish something worthwhile. We frequently doubt that we have contributed to anything worthwhile and may even consider ourselves failures. And yet, although many of our goals or visions for a better future may not turn out in quite the way we hoped, they nonetheless are important parts of a bigger picture.

We must not lose sight that we all provide some of the significant 'baby steps' of important life achievements. Parents play significant and irreplaceable roles in the raising of their children to be successful in life. Friends influence each other's lives every day in remarkable and subtle ways. Significant others provide a significant cornerstone of strength and stability within the fabric of each other's lives.

Achievements in the daily lives of people are easily ignored and unacknowledged, but are the most basic and most significantly relevant in life. The manner in which you touch and interact within the lives of others will be the most important accomplishments you will ever build in life. The constructing of the tallest skyscraper pales in comparison to the value and significance of the touching of a single life in some profound way.

Take a moment to examine the cornerstones within your own life. What 'projects' are you 'building' and contributing to in a profound way? What is the greatest achievement that you desire to accomplish in life?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

May 14, 2003

Embracing New Growth

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. John 15:1-2 (NAB)

Many plants need to be pruned in order to remain healthy and to grow more vigorously. People benefit from a similar process when their 'lives' are pruned and shaped judiciously. In other words, when those stagnant or non-productive aspects of your life are 'pruned', it frequently opens a wide range of opportunities that promotes great and positive growth and change.

We are creatures of habit and find a sense of security in keeping things the same. Even when things are not going well, we tend to keep doing the same things over and over, hoping that things will turn out differently. At other times, we might think of some brilliant ideas to improve the situation but then are afraid to act on them out of fear that it might not work out well.

People are like plants in that they are extremely resilient and bounce back from even very tragic events. However, it does not make much sense to wait for life to do your pruning for you. It is far more sensible to take stock of your own life and identify those aspects that are holding you back or getting in your way of living a great life.

To **live a great life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ means that you are willing to take risks to prune the deadwood from your life so that you can experience greater growth and positive change. Life is ever changing and is more satisfying and fulfilling when you participate in the change and experience it fully, rather than resisting and holding back.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

May 21, 2003

Follow the Rules

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus said to his disciples: "As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. John 15:9-10 (NAB)

Love is what all people hunger for and can never get enough. Yet, we break all the rules and lose out as a result. What rules are those? Treat others as we expect to be treated ourselves is the first one. However, we frequently hold back until they have 'earned' that kind of courtesy and behavior from us. It is not surprising then that we are disappointed, especially if they are using the same strategy for us.

Treat others with trust and respect is a second rule. We screw that one up, too. Respect and trust have to be earned before we dole any of that out. We forget that everyone is deserving of respect and trust until they prove otherwise.

Honesty is the best policy is a third rule. Instead, we operate by the mandate that, what they don't know won't hurt me. Conversely, nothing could be further from the truth. What might they not know? Perhaps of your love and care for them. Perhaps of your need for friendship, support and encouragement. In those instances, their not knowing such things will certainly hurt you because you will be left completely out of the picture.

Give and you shall receive is a fourth rule. Frequently we want to receive, but don't you dare expect anything from me in return. That kind of one-sided relationship is not about love, but rather is all about YOU. There is an old saying that you will attract more flies with honey than with vinegar. Well, I am not sure why anyone would want to attract flies, but I think you get the point.

We let our own fears and insecurities get in the way of having the love and care in our relationships that we desire. We are afraid to take risks because we might be rejected, misunderstood, laughed at or hurt in some way. Therefore, we hold back and dole out our love in small doses and hope our efforts pay off. Well they payoff with just the kind of results that such behavior warrants, but not with the kind of results that we desire.

If we were afraid of the right things, perhaps we would be happier and more satisfied with our relationships. Perhaps if we were afraid that if we did not take the first step, then nobody else would either. Or, if we were afraid that if we did not offer our love first, then nobody else would either. Or, if I did not practice loving and trusting and caring each and everyday of my life, then tomorrow it would all be gone.

Think about how you might act different if you had those kinds of fears. Think about if everyone you met today had the same fears and acted upon them, would your day be any different? I think perhaps it would.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

May 28, 2003

Trusting with Vivid Imagination

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover. Mark 16:16-18 (NAB)

Each of us is capable of doing more than we think is possible. It is our doubt and insecurity that gets in the way of doing the great things that we are perfectly capable of doing. It is difficult to try when we think it is not possible. If we even make the attempt, it is half-hearted at best.

Yet, when we put our best efforts forward, the results are usually astounding. We would never have thought it was possible to accomplish so much and then we are very glad that we put forth the effort. If we were to always wait until we knew something was a 'sure' thing, then we would accomplish very little in this life.

The only sure thing is that if you don't try, it will never get done. What things matter the most to you in your life? How much effort do you put forth on their behalf? If you are not achieving the results that you are hoping for, then maybe you are not trying hard enough. Maybe you are letting your doubts sabotage your efforts.

Every single person has a multitude of talents and abilities that they have yet to begin to discover or to fully utilize. They are hidden away waiting for you to step forward and try them out. We tend to stick to the things we know best and assume there is nothing more there. We could not be more wrong if we tried.

One of your greatest gifts is your imagination. Have you used yours today? Faith and belief in anything requires a vivid imagination. You might argue that it is merely blind trust. The difference between going through life with blind trust and going through life with vivid imagination is like the difference between night and day.

If you prefer to ~ **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ then you will have to put your blind trust away and dig out your vivid imagination. Trust is part of both, but vivid imagination depends upon a sight-filled trust rather than blind trust.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

June 4, 2003

One for All

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NAB)

We are a people with a great diversity of talents, abilities, experiences, intellects, interests, passions and physical appearances. Frequently it is difficult to get past the physical appearances to get to the good stuff 'inside.' First impressions are made within the first 5 seconds of meeting someone. Frequently, a second chance is never given.

Think about your self. What kinds of impressions do you give in those first 5 seconds? Do you portray yourself in the best possible light the first time you meet a new person? Or, are you a bit hesitant, unsure, cautious as you in turn, 'check them out'?

Such diversity among peoples is a tremendous blessing, such a richness of potential and creative possibilities. Yet, we get hung up on inconsequential differences. Even within our own families, we have difficulty getting along with each other.

The challenge today is for you to look at your self honestly and intimately. What are your special 'blessings' and talents, skills, abilities, and gifts to be shared? And, how well are you living up to that challenge of being one of many parts in the one body?

Each new day is a truly wonderful blessing in that you have been given another day to improve upon what you achieved yesterday. You have another opportunity to ~**Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ and share your wonderful life in so many new ways with the people in your life.

Part of the responsibility of living courageously is to seek out opportunities to positively influence the lives of others and you will be blessed in so many ways in return.

Start at home. Take it upon yourself to say 5 honest and positive words of support for each unkind word spoken to a family member. Offer at least 3 smiles or hugs or some sign of affection to each family member every day.

Of course, you may also feel free to expand your rays of sunshine to others outside of the home, but make sure you don't leave out those people closest to you. It is easy to take them for granted and that is truly an omission of the heart that grows to take on a life of its own. It becomes divisive rather than unifying.

So whatever part you play in this life ~ give it your best, and remember, you are not in this all by yourself, you have plenty of company.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

June 11, 2003

Make a World of Difference

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age. Matthew 28:16-20 (NAB)

Each of us has been given the wonderful gift of Life and some amazing tools to help us with the journey. We have also been given the opportunity to choose the purpose and vision for ourselves in life.

What is the legacy that you shall leave behind some day? How will you be remembered? Will you be remembered for your generous smile and giving spirit? Will you be remembered for your helping hands and volunteering attitude? Will you be remembered for your kind words and willingness to listen?

You have been empowered to change the world ~ one person at a time ~ by sharing yourself in a most personal manner with the people you meet. There is no greater power to achieve change than that exhibited by two people willing to share and work towards a common goal.

You, too, will change the world in some interesting ways through the people you help shape. Be it sons and daughters, a spouse, friends and neighbors, coworkers, supervisors, parents, etc. ~ whomever you interact with in your daily life. It is so easy to do, you won't even notice that you are doing anything special. All you have to do is be willing to share of yourself, to be yourself.

It is truly amazing the power of a stranger. I am sure you have experienced what I am talking about. You will be going along lost in the fog of your problems and concerns and out of the blue, a stranger with a huge smile happily greets you, and in surprise, you respond. For a short time afterwards, your spirits are lifted and your burdens don't seem quite as heavy.

And that is all it takes to change the world, one person at a time.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

June 18, 2003

Not cast in stone

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover. Mark 14:12-16 (NAB)

It would be nice if sometimes everything just worked out without a hitch; if we were told what was going to happen and what we should do and then everything happened exactly as predicted. But of course, it doesn't work that way.

However, we do like to plan things out and attempt to have as much control over our lives as is humanly possible. The problem with that is that there is more outside of our control than directly within our control. So, that can leave us feeling frustrated, anxious, and on our way to becoming expert worry warts.

It is certainly wise to plan for your future and take prudent steps to take care of yourself and your family. The challenge becomes being able to adapt to new situations, surprises, emergencies, etc., to flexibly modify plans, and to continue as if that is the normal state of affairs. Because, that is the normal state of affairs.

The problem many of us have is that we aren't quite that flexible or adaptable. It is almost as if as soon as a thought or plan is devised, that it becomes written in stone, and as soon as we perceive things with that attitude, of course, it cannot easily be changed.

You are far less apt to be disappointed if you have the philosophy that plans and life are like the weather, just wait a minute and it will change. Ironically, it would seem that under such circumstances, there would be little control available, but instead, one's sense of control blossoms tremendously. For when one knows what they want to achieve but are not locked into a certain way of achieving it, then one is truly able to adapt to whatever happens along the way.

The focus is not on doing things a certain way, 'cast in stone', but rather, on using whatever resources are available at the time to achieve the desired goal or objective. In that case, you are controlling the thing that you have most control over: your own choices and decision processes, what you do and how you go about doing it.

In other words, you accept full responsibility for your actions and remain fully engaged in the process of living your life to the best of your abilities, regardless of and independent of what happens along the way. That is exciting, challenging, thrilling, and ~ that is Life.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

June 25, 2003

What are You About?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

I, Paul, am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. 2 Tm 4:6-8 (NAB)

Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit ~ entitles you to proudly proclaim to the world that you have competed well, finished the race and kept the faith.

What are you about? Now, that is the question. What are you competing for? What race are you running? What faith have you kept?

It is so very easy to get sidetracked along the way. Life is full of hurdles that can trip us up. It gets confusing about which choices are the best and the 'correct' ones. "What should I do?" becomes a commonly heard inquiry.

Well, what should you do about this thing called Life? Live it to the best and fullest of your abilities. Live like there is no tomorrow and today will never end. Live like you don't care what people think about you, but only that you cared about making a Difference in making the world a better place to live. Live like peace, hope, and love depend upon you for their existence ~ because they DO.

When you get up in the morning, put a smile on your face and share it with the rest of the world you meet that day. Don't place it there as a mask that doesn't belong, a mask that hides a different truth underneath. But rather, smile because you enjoy living, because it feels good to smile, because living is contagious and you want to infect everyone you meet with the **Fullness of Spirit**.

We should spend less time worrying about "what" to do and focus more on "why" and "how" we do it. When we have the right "why" the "what" frequently takes care of itself.

If you live your life as if you have been mandated to go out and make a difference in the lives of the people you meet, to warm the world with your loving smile and the smiles that you put on the faces of others, then that is something to compete for. The reality is that you have been given that mandate.

So ~ What are you REALLY About?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

July 2, 2003

Just try it

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus departed from there and came to his native place, accompanied by his disciples. When the sabbath came he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands! Mark 6:1-2 (NAB)

When people that we know well change and start doing things differently, or we see a different side of them that we have never seen before, we might find ourselves wondering what is going on. When we are contemplating doing something new or different ourselves, we might become even more doubtful or cautious.

We are used to seeing other people and ourselves in a certain way. It is difficult to change that perspective and to allow a broader or new perspective in. That keeps us locked into doing things the same old way that we have always done them and keeps us from venturing in directions we have never tried before.

That is not a good thing. Each and every day of your life is filled with new experiences and new possibilities. If you do not allow yourself to experiment with new ideas and ventures, then you will not grow or develop much beyond your current abilities.

Think about what that would mean to the baby who you can almost watch grow bigger every day. If they were not allowed to change, to grow and develop, to experience new things every day, they would never grow up into adulthood. If somehow they managed to grow up, they would not be prepared to cope with the ever-changing world in which they would suddenly find themselves.

Therefore, when you find yourself astonished at doing something new and find that you actually can do it just fine, don't be too surprised because the potential has always been there within you. All you have to do is to allow it out and venture forth a little more than you might customarily allow yourself.

There is a whole lot of living out there in the world that you have not even yet begun to experience. There are people and friends that you have not yet met and things you have not shared with your current friends.

That is what ~ **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ is all about. Exploring, developing and using your resources to the fullest extent of your abilities and courageously sharing yourself and them with the world in which you live. Moreover, if you do that, there will probably be some friends and neighbors who will be astonished and wondering where you got all that... wisdom... mighty deeds.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

July 9, 2003

Practice What You Preach

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.
Ephesians 1:8-10 (NAB)

Frequently things in life are about as clear as mud. You have probably asked many questions and then wished you had not after the answers you received left you scratching your head wondering what that had to do with your question. Sometimes the answer is correct but we just don't understand it clearly, and other times the answer simple is the wrong answer to our question because the question was misunderstood.

You have probably asked yourself the question: "What am I supposed to do?" Such a simple question but the answer is often difficult to come by, elusive, and sometimes is even right in front of our faces, but we somehow don't seem to see it.

Some questions have multiple possible answers, each of which can be equally valid. For example, determining the kind of work that you will choose to do, choosing a college to attend or type of degree to pursue, choosing where to live, etc. For such questions, any number of possibilities might work. In the end, you have to choose what seems to make the most sense to you and then go for it.

Parents have many questions about parenting. Again, there are no easy answers, and one question might have several equally good answers. The answers to any of life's many questions must be rooted within the values and ideals that you believe. Any solution that is contrary to your own personal values and belief system will invariably produce less than satisfactory results.

When you are feeling confused about what to do or how to respond, one possibility is that you need to clarify your own values or principles before you decide that issue. Most people have not taken the time to clearly identify and clarify the values and beliefs that form the core of their decision-making process. Knowing what is important to you will make it easier to make good choices that fit your goals and purposes.

It can be difficult to sort out the complexity of possible solutions when you are not sure what parameters you are using to sort by. For example, filing a stack of folders alphabetically is easy when you are well versed in the alphabet. Similarly, it is much easier to sort out the intricacies of life's difficult questions when you clearly understand the parameters that are involved and where you stand on them.

For example, if you value "love, honor, and respect" than any chosen response should be based in those values. In contrast, any solution that is contrary to those values should be discarded. If you were trying to figure out how to talk to your teenage son or daughter and find yourself screaming, hollering, lying, etc. – you not only won't get the desired results but will also regret your own behavior.

You might want to put yourself in your child's place, and consider what you would want to hear from your parents and how you would want them to treat you and then frame your approach in that manner. Or consider how you would want your boss to treat you at work. Either approach will most likely give the results that you desire and also be based in the values that you live by.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

July 16, 2003

Take the Leap Forward

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while. People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them. Mark 6:31-33 (NAB)

We get so busy that we sometimes forget the most important things. One of those is taking excellent care of ourselves so that we can do our best in whatever mission we have been called to in life.

Obviously you cannot give 100% if you are not functioning at 100% yourself. Many think that taking care of yourself is selfish, but that is incorrect. Taking excellent care of yourself is merely good stewardship of the gift of life that God has given you. Taking care of yourself so that you can do your best in life is not only expected, but you are even irresponsible if you do otherwise. It is what you do with your time, talents and treasure after that where the selfishness can come into play.

You have been given a wonderful gift of time, talents and resources to utilize in creating a better world. It is an investment that you have been granted the use of for a limited time and your stewardship efforts will determine what comes of your efforts.

Make sure you take excellent care of yourself; it is an investment that God gave you to do something wonderful with. The next step is to figure out what that mission and expectations are and to do your best to fulfill them. That is what life is all about.

It is difficult to discern what one's purpose is in life. There are so many choices, so many distractions, so many demands on one's time, so many responsibilities, so many different paths to choose from, so many...

It is no wonder that so many become confused or lost in the jumble of life activities. We find ourselves treading water just to stay afloat. Rest assured that is not why you were put here in life. The challenge becomes one of finding the direction to pursue and to get beyond the treading water stage. Of course, it is quite acceptable to tread water for a brief respite, but to do so for most of one's life is poor stewardship.

Take a moment to ask yourself how well you are taking care of yourself. Then, ask yourself what purpose or mission or what it is that you are seeking to accomplish in life. Then, ask yourself if you are treading water because you lack direction, because you are tired, scared, uninspired, or whatever.

What is a reasonable first step to take and what is stopping you from taking it? Why not take that step now.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

July 23, 2003

Can't Be Done

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?" He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred days' wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little." John 6:5-7 (NAB)

This parable about the loaves and fishes is such an amazing and unbelievable story. To those individuals who are locked into a realistic practical approach to life, it is unbelievable and far-fetched. However, to those who can see possibilities and approach life with a creative open-minded philosophy, it is both amazing and validating of the many possibilities that exist every day of our lives.

When we get bogged down in trying to resolve some life crisis or difficulty, we put on our 'blindness' and get stuck. We think we are approaching the task in an objective manner and considering all reasonable options. However, we start looking in terms of practicalities rather than possibilities. Options become 'impossible', not because they are truly impossible, but rather, because we don't like that idea, or don't think we could do that, or don't want to try that option, etc. In other words, we judge valid options as being 'impractical' for one reason or another and we simply cross them off the list.

And that is the reason why 90% of the possible things never get done. How many times have you said, "I could have done that" or "hey, they stole my idea"? Why was it "impossible" until someone else did it first?

The reality is that you are quite capable of doing more than you ever dreamed of doing. You have talents, skills and abilities that you barely utilize.

You might be thinking that I am crazy, that I don't know how busy you are, how you don't have time to do half the things that need to be done, etc. That is not what I am talking about. Being busy doesn't mean that you are doing anything particularly useful. We are all busy, but many of the things we accomplish, frequently add little value to our lives.

We are all experts at being busy, but lack expertise in adding value to our lives. Many of the possibilities that we pass judgment on as being 'impractical' would add value, but we don't 'waste' our time on them. We are content to waste our time in the standard, expected, routine ways that we have always done things.

There is a time and place for routines and habits and they generally serve us well. However, in the realm of new challenges, new possibilities, new ideas, creativity, and new approaches -- the way we have always done things becomes a show stopper and nothing new happens.

In the above parable, if you were in charge that day -- would everyone have gone hungry?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

July 30, 2003

Where are you going?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. John 6:26-27 (NAB)

These thoughts are a follow-up of last week's loaves and fishes miracle. As we know, the crowds followed Jesus with great passion and hunger. Some were curious, some followed to see what would happen next, some because everyone else was doing it, and some were seeking salvation.

The question is "What do you seek?"

We go through life seeking and searching for something and half the time, we have little idea what exactly it is we seek. Sometimes we are just following the rest of the crowd, sometimes we are just curious or seeking some excitement or thrills, sometimes we hunger for greater meaning and even salvation.

Some people think, "What difference does it make?" The answer of course, is that it makes all the difference. The quality of your life depends upon 'What' you value, what you seek to achieve, and what you believe. Because that will determine how you live your life and what you strive to achieve.

To some degree it doesn't make much difference what 'reason' gets you started on the journey, what matters most are the 'results' you achieve.

So I repeat the question, "What are you striving to achieve in your Life?" and "are you getting the desired results?"

Many would have to answer these questions with "I don't know" because we tend to go through life by the seat of our pants dealing with things as they come along with no clear plan or direction in mind. It is no wonder that so many people feel like something is missing or lacking in their lives. They lack direction and an identified and committed sense of purpose.

It is no surprise that more is achieved when there is a clearly identified goal, plan and purpose to follow. Motivation is high and the job gets done. On the other hand, when you are not sure what is going on or what you should be doing, you may start off with a lot of enthusiasm and motivation but since it lacks direction and purpose, it quickly dissipates and you get bogged down.

Take a few moments each day to quietly reflect on where you are at, where you are going, and what you need to do to get there. You might be surprised at the difference it makes in your life.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

August 6, 2003

To SEE or Not to See

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

The Jews murmured about Jesus because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," and they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? Then how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" John 6:41-42 (NAB)

We all play this little game almost daily within our lives. We doubt who we are and what we are capable of doing. We make judgments about others and stereotype them in our own minds so that when they do something out of line with our own conceptions, we become confused and doubtful.

We do that to ourselves a whole bunch. How many times have you thought to yourself, I could never do that, or that's not me, etc. Frequently when we think that, we are not validating our own realistic limitations but merely voicing our limited (and wrong) conceptions of our own abilities. The bad thing about that is that those misconceptions stop us from doing so many things that we are perfectly capable of doing.

We go through life trying to fit a limited conception of how we are 'supposed' to be and get nervous if we step outside of those guidelines. That is not how we were meant to live. God has big expectations for each of us and few ever even scratch the surface of the vast realm that God has in mind for each of us.

If only we could see ourselves as God sees us rather than how others do and how we see ourselves. If that seemingly trivial change in perspective occurred, the results would be anything but trivial. Such a person truly would be living their **life ~ Full of Spirit ~ with the fullness that God intended.**

To get beyond your own falsely ascribed limitations, you must continually stretch yourself to think beyond the 'rut' that you comfortably keep yourself within. You must constantly question 'why' can't you do that 'thing' and consider how your life would be different if you did do it.

Life was given to be lived fully, not to be lazily squandered away in trivial pursuits that do not honor and respect your own God given talents and purposes that the Creator intended. By showing honor and respect for yourself, you honor and respect the Creator and vice versa.

So, pause for just a moment and consider just one area of your daily life in which you are limiting yourself from doing something that could make a great difference to you and the other people in your life. Think of something where you seem to be bogged down or 'stuck' and can never seem to progress beyond a certain point.

When you have identified that situation, then examine your own thoughts and conceptions about yourself so that you can pinpoint what is 'falsely' hindering you from achieving that goal that you are most likely perfectly capable of achieving.

Then replace that inaccurate 'belief' about yourself with a more accurate and realistic alternative that will get you unstuck and moving forward again on your journey.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

August 13, 2003

Choose Wisely, Your Life Depends on it

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Keep careful watch over your conduct. Do not act like fools, but like thoughtful men. Make the most of the present opportunity, for these are evil days. Do not continue in ignorance, but try to discern the will of the Lord. Ephesians 5:15-17

Continuing last week's thoughts, we sometimes ascribe to socially 'acceptable' behaviors even if they do not make sense to do so. When we do that, we are acting like fools rather than thoughtful individuals with a mind to living lives of value and integrity.

Each day of our lives, we have a multitude of opportunities to live according to values that our not our own. It is easy to go down those paths without a second thought, but that would not be living courageous lives that are ~ **Full of Spirit**.

Each day we are also given unlimited opportunities to live lives of integrity and choice points to live according to our own core values. Many of us have never taken the time to identify those values that we use to make our decisions each day. Whether or not you have taken the time to identify them, they certainly exist and they are the benchmark by which you decide which paths to go down each day of your life.

Frequently, we foolishly put one foot ahead of the other and blindly follow the path wherever it may go, whether or not it takes us in the direction that we truly want to go. Just because an opportunity is placed before you, does not mean that you should jump at it.

Examine each opportunity to make sure that it fits your objectives and values, and then you can go for it. If it does not fit, pass on it, for it is certain that another opportunity lies just around the next turn.

Look at the mundane happenings of a typical day of your life. How often do you 'lie' to someone just to not hurt their feelings or to make them feel good? Such little white lies are commonplace. However, when you tell them, are you really doing anyone any favors? What is in it for you? Are you doing your friend a favor telling them they look good in those clothes when they really don't?

How about the lies you tell your children? How often have you gotten on your child for not telling the truth, when they see you telling little white lies all the time yourself? What message do you think they are learning? It probably goes something like this, "it is okay to lie, just don't get caught."

You will find many such little examples sprinkled throughout your day. Maybe you think they don't mean anything, it was just a tiny little thing of no consequence. Well maybe, but those add up to a lot of tiny little things that form the very fabric of your life.

Take a look at yourself and see if your conduct is what you truly want it to be. I am not saying that you need to be perfect, no one is, but we all need to be constantly watching out for those pitfalls that we just might fall into if we just blindly walk down the road. We must also be watchful for those abundant opportunities that will really fill our lives ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ because they are everywhere, too.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

August 20, 2003

Don't Turn Away

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. John 6:63-66 (NAB)

To live lives of great value, full of purpose and ~ **Full of Spirit** ~ is not easy to do. It is difficult to live by our core values and beliefs. It is easy to be swayed by other people, other values, desires, wishes, peer pressures, and to turn away from the life that you might truly want to live and are called to live.

It is even easier when you are not sure what values you want to live by. Every decision you make is made according to some value system or judgment process. Knowing what values you want to make your decisions by will help you to make good decisions that will serve your purposes well. It will also greatly simplify your decision-making process and you will find it so much easier to make difficult decisions.

When you are not clear about the principles and values that guide you in life, you will easily be swayed to go in directions that lead you astray. You will make decisions that do not serve your purposes well. You will be dissatisfied and disappointed in how you are living your life.

For example, time management is a universal challenge for all of us. Finding enough time to do everything simply seems impossible to most of us. What could you do to get a handle on this problem?

First, clarify what values you hold most important in your life. What are they? Spending time with family, friends, etc. Devoting time to a career that you find fulfilling. Having time to renew and maintain your spiritual needs. Taking very good care of yourself so that you stay in tip-top shape. Keeping organized. What values and principles guide your daily efforts?

Second, examine how you spend the biggest portions of your time. Do you spend it in ways that serve your guiding values well? Or, do you find your time being eaten up in doing things that are not even on your values list?

When you are not using your time wisely to achieve the goals and purposes that are dearest to you, you will be unhappy with your life. The closer your efforts are aligned with your values, the more meaningful and satisfying your efforts will be.

Third, start eliminating some of those time-wasting things from your daily 'to-do' list and replace them with something that is more aligned with your values and purpose and that will add value to your day.

Fourth, remind yourself that you are the only keeper of your time and you can choose to do something different. When facing the challenge of making a difficult decision – look at which options match your values and further your goals and pick the one that best serves your needs.

Staying on course is not always easy, but certainly worth your efforts.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

August 27, 2003

Search for the Answers Within

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. James 1: 18, 21b-22 (NAB)

Within you has been planted a great wisdom with the necessary truths to **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit.** The problem most of us have is that we seldom bother to listen to what is deep inside ourselves. We look for answers in all kinds of places except for where they really exist.

The truly wise person does 'sample' the wisdom of the rest of the world, but they rely heavily upon their own wisdom and internal 'truths.'

Frequently we have a difficult time deciding what to do about some concern or what direction to take to resolve some perplexing challenge or simply to discern the 'purpose' of our own existence. We read all kinds of words, talk to other people, look in various places, and end up just as uncertain and confused as when we started.

What is wrong with that picture? Simply, it is extremely difficult to find what you are looking for when you do not know what it looks like. You might look right at it and not see it for what it is. You might find all kinds of other things that you are not looking for but not the 'right' one that you truly desire.

The first step is to clarify the problem, challenge, concern or whatever it is. Identify what you are seeking answers to, what your values and beliefs are around that issue and then maybe do some brainstorming for possible solutions. Any solution that you might consider must be aligned with your values and principles or you would be wise to discard it.

There are far more possible solutions to pick and choose from than to pick one that truly does not match what your life is all about. Sometimes you might choose something that at first blush seems to be perfect, aligned with your values, and everything, only to show its true colors at some later time. At that point, you simply choose some other option that serves you better than the first.

Life is not about being perfect and always choosing the 'right' answer. It is about living your life to the best of your ability, making the best choices you possibly can in that moment that you make them, and being willing to take reasonable risks that further your 'purpose' in life while serving both you and the Master in ways that **Fills your Life with Spirit.**

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

September 3, 2003

Open to Possibilities

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!"--that is, "Be opened!"-- And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. Mark 7:32-35 (NAB)

Belief opens doors that have always been there, but seemed to be non-existent beforehand. It is amazing some of the experiences you hear people talking about in their lives. Some are pretty hard to believe and you might think "that is impossible."

But is it really? So many more things are possible than any one person could ever imagine. All it takes to make them real is the openness to believe that they just might be possible. We get hung up on trying to figure out how it would work, how it could happen. We believe when we can trace the steps and understand the process of how it works. Without those reality links, we choose to suspend our belief.

Yet, so many things in our lives are beyond our understanding. Few people know how a microwave oven works, how a car engine works, or how a jet flies. However, that does not stop most people from using them and being grateful for such wonderful resources.

If you can let go and allow your mind and heart to believe that things are possible even though you do not understand them or will never know why it happens that way, then so many blessed possibilities would be opened for you. Sure it happens in spite of your misgivings and reluctance, but so much more richness would be present in your life if you did not stand in the way of receiving them.

Living a Life ~ Full of Spirit ~ is all about allowing our own blindness and deafness to be opened to a fuller world of possibilities in which people openly share of themselves and others respond. **Now that would be Living!**

What gets in your way of living a fuller more meaningful life?

What are you willing to do about it?

There is no time like the present to start doing something about it.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

September 10, 2003

Embrace Your Future

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17 (NAB)

Your life serves a great purpose on this earth and lots of people are counting on you.

Stop for a minute and let that sink in. Instead of fighting and resisting it, why not put all that energy into accepting the truth and getting on with **Living your Life ~ Full of Spirit.**

Discerning one's purpose in life is one of the greatest challenges that most people ever face. Some never discover it. Some never accept the truth of it when they do discover it. How about you? Do you know your purpose? Do you live that purpose passionately and to the best of your abilities? Do you struggle and resist it?

We like to think that we will do something great at some time in our life. Many of us dream about it, but think that it will never happen. Yet, the only thing standing in your way is you yourself. Denial that God has a plan for you will prevent you from ever finding it.

Humility and humbleness have their proper places. However, that does not include hindering you from living your life full of the intended purpose. Yes, lots of people are counting on you to do something worthwhile. Most will never say anything to you about it, but that does not mean that the expectations are not there. Believe me they are there.

So, will you continue to resist and hold back? Are you ready to embrace life more fully and with great intent, purpose, and direction?

I guess the bottom line is whether you are truly willing to ~ **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit?**

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

September 17, 2003

Reap What You Sow

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace. James 3:16-18 (NAB)

You have probably heard the saying, "You reap what you sow." That is very true when it comes to our mental attitude. If your thoughts and attitudes are full of resentment, jealousy, bitterness, suspicion, distrust, etc. – then you will certainly find yourself beset with all kinds of behaviors and outcomes that flow from such thoughts.

On the other hand, if you desire peace, tranquility, trust, etc. – then you will have to promote such attitudes within your own thoughts and you will reap the benefits.

So often in life, we are beset with one stressor after another, something goes wrong or even if everything seems to be going well, we find ourselves waiting for the other shoe to fall. It is almost as if we believe that life is not full of good things – which of course, it is.

Most of us could stand to have an attitude adjustment from time to time. We get set in our ways and do ourselves an injustice. It is silly to always be looking for every possible bad thing that could happen – look and you certainly will find them. If we looked equally as hard for the good things, we would find it even easier to find them.

Some people are devastated by the hardships of life, and others just pick up the pieces and keep going (knowing that something better awaits them down the road). What is your prevalent attitude towards life? Is it one of dread and suspicion, waiting for everything to go wrong that could possibly go wrong? Or, is it one of curiosity for what the next challenge will be, but confident that good will prevail and that life is truly wonderful?

To **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ means that you are constantly adjusting your attitude to look for the positive, the bright side, the good even in the bad things that happen.

We have all become experts at looking for the bad in things, so it can be difficult to take a different stance. However, to live a great life requires that you focus on the positive and truly great things in your life.

Most people find it so much easier to cope with the bad that comes along, when they have their eyes fully open to the good and wonderful blessings that are present in their life. They realize that the bad is only a brief condition and that good is omnipresent. What a wonderful attitude to have and how wonderful to be so open and receptive to the many blessed opportunities that come along in life.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

September 24, 2003

the Way that Leads to LIFE

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

"Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us." Jesus replied, "Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us. Mark 9:38-40 (NAB)

Rules are wonderful things that help set limits and create order out of what would otherwise be chaos. However, we sometimes get too wrapped up in doing things the 'right' way and forget to stop and think that rules are guidelines rather than absolutes.

Many of the 'rules' that you follow and live by probably serve you very well. Yet, you probably follow some of them too blindly and that gets you into trouble at times. For instance, you probably have a guideline to not waste your valuable time on people you don't know or have some purpose talking to. Just how busy we all are kind of mandates such guidelines. There is also a certain sense of safety in that, because of the belief that if they aren't with us – they must be against us.

Sometimes that is reasonable – and sometimes not. There is the old saying: a stranger is a friend you haven't met yet. That is what Jesus was before he started his public ministry – a stranger with a powerful message.

How many times have you said: "we do it my way or not at all" or "we've always done it that way." Life gets old and stale and headed towards bankruptcy when we fail to see opportunities for growth and development. If we continue to do things the same old way – things will end up the same old way. Nothing about life was intended to be stagnant and unchanging.

To **Live your Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ means that you are always on the lookout for ways to change the stagnant areas of your life into vibrant, life-giving sustenance. You use guidelines as that – guides for living life -- but you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater – you must constantly ponder and interact within life's circumstances to keep the spirit within life and throw out that which is stagnant.

Life is so full of potential and opportunities for LIFE ~ make sure you get a piece of it, too, and make sure you use it to live a **Great Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ the way the stranger in our midst intended for you.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

October 1, 2003

Greet LIFE with open arms

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Mark 10:13-15 (NAB)

Younger children are so accepting of others and fail to see differences in people and circumstances that later in life, as adults, they will not fail to see.

It would seem that as we grow up, we start seeing the world in a different way. It is not the fact that the world changes, because the people and circumstances remain fairly constant. No, it is that our perspective changes as we mature and develop.

Whose perspective is better? Yes, the child is rather naïve and innocent and far less educated than the adult. But that also means that they do not have all the 'filters' in place that the typical adult uses to judge situations and people. On the other hand, that does not validate that all of the filters that we as adults use daily in our lives, are good ones or serve us well. Some of them are good and some are not.

It goes without saying that all people judge others on a constant basis. First impressions normally far outlast and even overrule any other impressions that may be based on far more accurate and realistic information. Yet, most of us adhere to first impressions and do not even consider giving a second chance.

Is that what life is all about? It should not be that way – and yet, frequently is. However, **Living Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ is all about engaging and living life more deeply, fully, meaningfully and honestly.

It is all about giving as many opportunities as necessary to get the job done. It is all about looking beyond first impressions in order to see the reality of what is truly there and seeing possibilities as opportunities to make a better world.

It is all about living a great life and being serious about not letting our misperceptions screw things up. Life truly is a great and wonderful thing in spite of how we may twist things around, get turned off by first impressions, dislike someone because of perceived differences, and so forth.

Living a great life means that you do not turn away from the Life that comes to you.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

October 8, 2003

Spirituality Fills the Gap

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Indeed the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account. Hebrews 4:12-13 (NAB)

How would your life be different if you were able to penetrate to the very core of who you are as a person and discern with great clarity your life purpose? It might be earth shattering.

Spirituality opens one to living life with a fullness and depth of purpose and meaning. It does this by opening our eyes to our own uniqueness, talents, abilities, and blessings and giving us a powerful direction for using those God given resources in service to others in a more meaningful way.

Spirituality is all about relationships -- of Life and Love. How fitting since life is all about relationships. One's relationship with God is a model for how our relationships with people can be. If you have a distant and vague spiritual relationship, you are probably distant and disconnected from a sense of real purpose in life. Your relationships with other people likely have something missing from them, too.

A strong foundation of spirituality in one's life can be a strong balancing force to even out the bumps in the road of life. It offers solace and comfort when no amount of rationalization will ever make sense of some tragic life event. It offers hope and inspiration in the face of uncertainty. It offers steadfast determination in the drudgery of having to wait to see what will happen next.

A true sense of spirituality in life offers not only a sense of direction, purpose and meaning in life, but opens you to a wider range of possibilities of what your life is truly all about. It becomes the center and focal point of everything you do and keeps you on track and moving in the right direction.

To **Live a Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ means that you dare to live life on edge, forging ahead in a relationship with Life that is fully awake and fully engaged.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

October 15, 2003

and the Winner Is

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?" They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Mark 10:35-38 (NAB)

It is nice to be granted special esteem, special status or a place of honor, special services, etc. Many people have the expectation that they "deserve" special status regardless of whether or not they have earned it or truly warrant it. In fact, frequently such expectations are out of line with reality. Often, the people who most deserve such honor are too busy doing what needs to be done to worry about getting anything in return - that is not why they were doing it in the first place.

It comes down to a matter of personal values. What do you value in life? What is important to you? What would you most want to do with your time and resources regardless of whether or not there is a 'payoff' for you? People who **live a great life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ are busy living their lives according to those values that they hold most important and sacred. The payoff for them is frequently the satisfaction of "doing."

Such individuals are living life more along the lines of valuing what they have to offer rather than what the world has to offer to them. Ironically, such individuals are usually blessed in far more ways than is the person who expects special status but has not responsibly lived up to their end of the bargain.

Accountability goes hand in hand with responsibility. Special status rewards special achievement. If you are feeling a sense of entitlement for special treatment that you are not receiving, the question is what have you done to earn that entitlement? If you have earned the reward but it is not forthcoming, then perhaps you will want to choose a different course of action. On the other hand, if your accountability is the problem, perhaps you should revisit your values and clarify how it is that you truly want to live your life.

When your values are in alignment with how you actually live your life - the rewards, benefits, blessings, etc normally take care of themselves.

Some people play the game of life by the rule that the winner is the one with the most toys at the end of life. The true winner is the person that can look back over their life and honest say with pride, "I wouldn't change a thing." Few of us could honestly say that - which means we still have work to do.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

October 22, 2003

Blind to Life's Opportunities

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me." And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Mark 10:46-52 (NAB)

Communication is a two way street, although many of us treat it as if it were only one-way. We do plenty of talking but don't stop to listen as often as we should. Communication only occurs if both talking and listening is happening.

Perhaps you do a lot of talking to God, but how often do you listen to what He has to say to you? In the above passage the blind man was quick to talk and to listen to what Jesus had to say. He was quick to act when he was told to do something and he was cured as a result.

Frequently, we are not sure what we are being told to do in our spiritual life and therefore, we are slow to respond. In many ways, we are more blind than was the blind man. Although he could not physically see with his eyes, he certainly had perfect sight through his heart and mind.

In **Living a Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ we are called to have that perfect kind of vision, to respond and act with hearts and minds of faith and trust. We are called to communicate, to both listen and talk, to God and with the people in our lives. Time and again, the communications we are waiting to hear will be delivered through the other people in our lives. We must not be blind to them because we are expecting the message to come from a different source.

Sometimes when we stop and try to imagine what it would be like to suddenly be blind and unable to see, it is hard to imagine how we could possibly continue to live our normal lives. Yet, we would continue. So much of our daily activities require communication. Stop to consider what your life would be like if you could no longer communicate by any means whatsoever. You could not get your message and needs across to others and could not understand what they were trying to tell you. Think how frustrating that would be.

On the other hand, that is not so far from the reality that already does occur. Many parents do not take the time to really listen to and understand their children (and vice versa). Many workers do not really try too hard to communicate with each other and with their supervisors. We get so wrapped up in our busy lives that we don't take time to make sure that our communications don't suffer in the process.

We take it for granted and do such a poor job of communicating, that it really does negatively impact our lives. Perhaps you think you are doing a good job of communicating already. However, think how much better and how drastically different your life would be if you improved your communicating by 100%.

Most people do not get to the "taking-action" phase until they are reasonably satisfied that whatever level of communication (that they are comfortable with) has occurred. That means that many worthwhile things never even get started and that is quite a shame.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

October 29, 2003

Seeing into your FUTURE

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Jesus said to the crowds: "Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day. John 6:37-39 (NAB)

What is your vision for your life? Are you on a journey to somewhere special or perhaps just drifting along the way? We all have dreams as a child but we frequently lose touch with them after we become adults. That is a shame, because it is at that point that we become able to do something about them.

Life is so much more meaningful and fulfilling when we know we are working towards a goal that has great value and significance for us. When you have clarified and developed that special plan for your future -- that is your 'vision'. It is being able to see something happening in your future that is very desirable and motivates and inspires you to do your best as you work towards achieving it.

Many people believe that they have a special purpose in life -- that God has something special in mind for them. Another way of saying that is that God has a special 'vision' for each of us -- He sees each of us doing something very special and meaningful in our lives. Each of us has talents, skills, abilities, knowledge, etc -- gifts that we have been blessed with to equip us to fulfill our mission in life.

Having a vision is not about trying to predict the future. Rather, it is about painting a possible future and then stepping into the role of making it become a reality. Vision has a way of changing and evolving over time and that is only natural. Therefore, your plans and goals for your future will also continue to evolve and change over time.

A powerful and compelling vision will draw you forward through time and motivate and inspire you to accomplish things that would never happen without vision, the belief, the desire to make it happen. **Living a Life ~ Full of Spirit** ~ is all about living your life with great VISION and making wonderful things happen.

Maybe it's time for you to clarify and fine tune your vision.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

November 5, 2003

Build Something Worthwhile

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

You are God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3:9c-11 (NAB)

In continuing our theme of living life with a powerful and compelling vision, we each are given the gift of a strong foundation of skills, abilities, knowledge, etc. It is up to us individually as to what and how we build upon that foundation.

From time to time, we might need to do some remodeling or even add on some additions. As we go through life, our skill base, tools and responsibilities are expanded and added upon to give us an ever growing potential to **Live our Lives ~ Full of Spirit.**

However, to keep the Spirit flowing, we will have to re-evaluate our lives from time to time and make some minor tweaks to keep us on track. We might need to add a little color or spice similar to repainting a room or changing the curtains, etc. Sometimes we need to just freshen our outlook on life and get refocused.

At other times, we need more of a major remodeling similar to adding on a room to gain more space. Our lives get very cluttered and busy, and sometimes we need to make more space for the important things. We can do that by clearing out some of the clutter from our days to make more time and room for other worthwhile things. Part of that is clarifying our values so that our goals and time is spent on achieving those things that are most important.

Sometimes our lives are going along fine and just need to be dusted off or cleaned up a bit. For example, we might need to tighten up our schedule a bit so that we still have time to make sure we take great care of ourselves by making sure we have time to relax, to pray, to do whatever we need to do to keep our batteries fully charged.

It is wise to remember that anything that is built on a strong and secure foundation will be able to weather the tests of time. Likewise, your strong foundation will help you stand against whatever challenges of Life comes your way.

Upon that foundation, you are free to choose to do whatever you want, to build the Life you want, to shape it, form it and remodel it however you choose. Make sure that whatever structure that you build ~ will serve you well.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

November 12, 2003

Living a Great Life

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. Mark 13:28 (NAB)

We frequently look for signs to help us figure out what is going to happen or what we should do next. Sometimes we find them and sometimes we don't. Furthermore, it is not always easy to figure out the meaning of what we see.

Life is full of signposts, forks in the road, side roads, etc. It can be difficult to decide which way to go or to discern what the sign is trying to tell us.

It is easier to make such decisions when you have a clear idea about what you are trying to achieve and where you ultimately are trying to get. When you have only a foggy idea or no idea, then such decisions become very difficult, even agonizing, because you have no basis upon which to judge them.

Living a great life means you have clear ideas, a clear vision for what you want to achieve. When decision points come along in life, you can then decide which one seems to offer the most potential to help you achieve your goals, because you know what those goals are.

It becomes easier to choose and to continue on. You also know that any choice you make today, may be remade at a later point when a different path comes along that will serve you better. You know that it is not about being right or judging the past, or counting mistakes, but rather, it is all about achieving your goals, promoting your vision and **living your life ~ Full of Spirit**. That is such a freeing experience.

Many of us get hung up on trying to not make mistakes, or harshly judging our current and past performance. This locks us up and frequently prevents us from moving forward. We become afraid to make decisions until we can pretty accurately predict how they will turn out. Of course, that point is seldom reached and a multitude of opportunities are passed up in waiting for that time to come.

Living a Great Life means we give it our best shot and keep plugging away. Some decisions will work out and others won't ~ that's the way it goes. We can't be right all the time, but Life is not about being right all the time. It is about "living" all the time. Many people merely exist, rather than "LIVE".

You have been blessed with the gift of LIFE, give it your best shot and keep moving forward to Live a Great Life.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

November 19, 2003

Your Life Reveals What?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Pilate said to Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?" ... Jesus answered, "You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."
John 18:33b-37 (NAB)

What do others say about you? What do you think and say about yourself? For what purpose were you born? What role does truth play in your life?

We play all kinds of roles in our lives depending upon where we are at and what is expected of us in that setting. Sometimes we act very differently from one setting to another. For instance, we may present ourselves differently depending upon if we are at church, in a meeting, at a party, or talking to our children.

It is natural to acclimate to different roles or personal presentations depending upon the setting in which you find yourself. Regardless of the setting, hopefully, you present a common core set of values, such as truth, honesty, integrity, etc. You, as a person, live by a certain set of core beliefs and values that should be consistent across situations and settings. Have you taken the time to clearly identify what those are for you?

It is important because it flavors how you live your life and what goals and plans you strive to achieve. It affects how successful you will be in your endeavors and what 'success' and 'failure' looks like to you. It affects how you will prioritize your time and what you value most in life.

In essence, your values and beliefs form the very core upon which you hang the fabric of your life. Your life is what others see you doing, saying, etc. ~ they may or may not see the value and belief system that forms the foundation of who you are as a person.

You may or may not be aware of that foundation either and that will have a significant impact upon your own life. I am reminded about the children's story about the emperor who wore the invisible clothes and no one would tell him that he was naked.

What areas of your life are you fooling yourself about? Are you ready to do something about it?

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

November 26, 2003

Thank You

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. Amen. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 (NAB)

We pause in America to give special thanks for all of the blessings bestowed upon each of our families over the past year and to look forward to continued blessings into the future. It would be good for each of us to start each new day of the coming year with the above intention.

It is so easy to get caught up in the busyness of each day and perhaps forget about the values and virtues that should be guiding our motives and actions. Sometimes we might find ourselves being so competitive to get ahead that we forget what Living a Great Life is truly all about.

What is it all about for you? What are you most thankful for at this very moment? If you had to give up everything or lost everything except for one thing ~ What would you want that to be?

Interesting question, but it is a good thing we don't really have to do it. But think about how different your life might be if you really did do that. How would we ever make it without all of our stuff that keeps us going... and holds us back?

I would hazard a guess that if you started each day of the coming year with the above intention and that you tried your very best to live each day by the values and virtues you hold most dear, and let go of some of those 'things' that are holding you back ~ that next year at this time, you will truly have something to look back on and give thanks.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

December 3, 2003

Gifts that keep Giving

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Philemon 1:4-6, 8-11 (NAB)

We sometimes get so wrapped up in the cycles of life, the holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, the church seasons, etc. that we sometimes forget that we are a work in progress. From the day of our birth until our death, we are continuously evolving as an unfinished work that hopefully continuously gets better and more refined.

It is easy to get lost in the details of life and the cycle of evolving and improving grinds to a halt. It is important to never lose sight of one's values and beliefs no matter how busy one becomes. To **Live a Great Life** requires one to continuously trim away those useless and destructive aspects that get in the way of evolving and promoting God's work within each of us.

At this time of year we are reminded in a special way of the power of giving and receiving and the tremendous impact it can have in our lives. Don't let the hustle and bustle of the season blind you to the true value and spirit of the season.

We hear the message repeated: Prepare the way of the Lord. That is a reminder that we don't prepare just during these four weeks before Christmas, but rather, our whole life is a season of preparation, of evolving into the person we were meant to be, of stepping into and growing into the **Great Life Full of Spirit** that we were gifted with.

Take a moment to consider what gifts that you hope to receive in this special season of the year. I don't mean those DVD players and other such gifts (although it is nice to receive such gifts as well), but rather, as you start the New Year in January, what do you hope to carry with you in your heart as you start a fresh new yearly cycle?

Perhaps you might want to strengthen your gifts of Trust, Hope, Generosity, Friendliness, Sharing, Affection, Communication, Faith, etc. Take a moment to consider what strengths you can bring to the table in order to strengthen and improve those aspects of your Life that might need some tweaking. Think about one gift that you might want to work on over the next four weeks as a personal gift to your self for the New Year. Perhaps the gift of patience (one that most of us could certainly stand working on).

May your Life be Blessed and enriched during this Special Season of the year!

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

December 10, 2003

Open to the POWER

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7 (NAB)

There is power in making your wishes known. Until you voice them, they remain in the category of unfulfilled wishes/needs, or even worse, unknown desires.

However, once you voice your concerns, wishes, desires, needs, etc. then they become real and tangible. And that means, things can begin to happen. Otherwise, you might find yourself working at cross-purposes and even against your own wellbeing.

Perhaps you remember a time when you voiced a particular thought or idea and things kind of fell right into place. That is part of the power I am talking about. It is possible that things might have fallen into place even if you had not voiced it, but with a key difference, you probably would not have recognized the opportunity and would have missed it.

Life is full of such opportunities but most of us miss most of them. We have to be open to them and recognize them when they come along. That is more likely to occur if we have recognized and acknowledged a need or growth opportunity within our own life. When we have done that, then we place ourselves in a 'search' mode to find solutions to it. Otherwise, we typically are blind to such opportunities because we simply are not looking for them.

Furthermore, it is important to give thanks for the many blessings that are abundantly present within our lives less we become overly focused and sensitized to our unfulfilled needs, our wants, our unsatisfied portions in life. Those aspects of life are certainly there too, but if we pay too much attention to them we will become distracted, discouraged, and blinded to what Life is all about.

Living a Great Life is all about Living Life ~ Full of Spirit ~ full of the power and blessings that our Lord has given to us.

Part of the secret about doing that well is to simply ask for those things that you need, share what you have and yourself within your community, and keep your eyes open to God's gifts coming your way.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

December 17, 2003

Sneaking up on Choices

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Luke 1:39-45 (NAB)

Many people are skeptical about many of the things that they hear and sometimes that is a good thing. But it also means that opportunities are missed because we let them pass us by. We are frequently skeptical of our gut hunches, too, that feeling or thought that we should do or not do something. We have hunches all the time that have no realistic data to support them, and yet, they are frequently right on the mark and we miss out if we don't listen to them.

Life is full of such moments where we aren't sure what to do, whether to listen and act, or listen and not act, to follow a hunch or to pass on it. Furthermore, there are numerous times we hear something that we want to believe but aren't sure whether the person or source is reliable. What should you do?

Life is full of indecision, of information that is evolving and continuing to emerge. We seldom have the good fortune to have the 'complete' and unblemished story on which to base our decisions. But, frequently we must act anyway. Frequently, the best course of action is to seek clarification of what we know or to seek more information that will help us to make the best decision in that moment. And sometimes that also means that we should reconsider old decisions as new information comes our way.

It might be best to think of decision-making as an imprecise process of sneaking up upon the best choice. It never fails that as soon as you make a choice, you find something else out that might have altered your original choice. Life is in constant flux, always changing, and never stops still to grant anyone time to make a decision.

Decisions are made on the fly and as things continue to change and emerge, you 'sneak' up on the best decision. That means you have to be willing to change your mind and the decisions that you make. Frequently, people make decisions as if they were cast in stone and therefore they are unchangeable. That makes it extremely difficult to live in a world where everything is constantly changing.

In the midst of all this change and chaos, your value and belief system forms a foundation of stability and constancy from which your decisions and choices spring forth. Yes, your value system does continue to emerge and develop over time, but for most people it remains amazingly stable over the lifetime.

When your life seems out of control and stuck in the fast lane, you can choose to slow down and clarify what is going on so that you can make better choices. When you find out that a prior choice is no longer the best one, than correct it, remember that you are sneaking up on the best choice.

Remember that life was meant to be enjoyed and Spirit filled. Remember that many promises are frequently not fulfilled as we first expected and we should be ready for and enjoy the 'surprises'.

May the Holiday Season be an especially Blessed, Holy and Peaceful one for you and yours.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

December 24, 2003

Rejoice Daily

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17 (NAB)

Merry Christmas and may the coming year be full of Blessings for You and Yours!

This as always, has been a busy and hectic time of the year. Don't forget that it is also a season of rejoicing, of singing and of giving thanks. It is a Season of renewing our hope, faith, trust and commitment to **Living a Life that is Full of Spirit** ~ the spirit of God manifested within our lives. Many of us will soon be breathing a sigh of relief, grateful that we made it through this season again and ready to put it behind us for another year. I can understand that feeling, and yet, the true meaning of Christmas is not limited to one day or even one season of the year. Rather, it is a quickening of the heart, mind and spirit that should last year round for all of one's lifetime.

Imagine what it would be like to live in a world in which the spirit of giving and rejoicing were the rule of the day every single day of the year. Would it make a difference in your life if rather than trying to pick out one gift to please a person one time during the year, you tried to make their day for them and give of yourself every day of the year? Would it make a difference if everyone else in your world were likewise attempting to gratify and give to you in the same way?

You bet it would, but you probably don't think that is very likely to happen. And you are right it isn't, not as long as you and I continue to believe that it isn't possible. However, there are a few individuals out there in the world who haven't fallen into that trap, such as the Mother Teresa's of the world. Did she, one little old woman, make a difference? Yes, one that has been heard around the world and continues on beyond her lifetime.

What does this Holiday Season mean to you and is there a piece of it that you hope to not put away so that you can carry it with you throughout the year and for the rest of your Life?

I hope so and I hope that you are successful in that endeavor.

God Blesses you!

Carpe Diem cum Spiritu

Seize the Day with Spirit

by Michael A. Hinz, Ph.D.

December 31, 2003

Who's coming for Dinner?

Live your life to the fullest and best of your abilities.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." Matthew 2:1-2 (NAB)

Have you ever experienced an Identity Crisis? That is what seems to be going on in the above passage. The king felt threatened and didn't want to be usurped from his throne. It seemed serious because three wise men, kings, traveled from a far, guided by a star to do him homage. Sounds real, sounds serious.

Many times in our own lives we are affronted by circumstances that are realistic and serious but yet are confusing as to their relevance in our lives. We too may suffer from an identity crisis in those moments ~ out of just not knowing what to do next or how to respond.

How would you respond if three wise men, kings/presidents, came to do you homage and what do you think they would say about you? Never happen? Maybe not, but it is interesting to speculate about. Really, what might they say about you that would warrant them traveling so far to see you?

You, too, were born for a purpose. Have you been living up to your mission? Do you know what your mission in life is? Or, is that what your own identity crisis is all about?

Not to worry ~ we each have a lifetime to get it right, to figure out what to do, to figure out our own unique purposes and do something about it. So there is still time, just don't wait too long.

You never know when you might hear a knock at the door ~ and you should be ready for it.

God Blesses you!