

DETROIT

Fingerprints on the mirror



By Ma'at Seba
SUN COLUMNIST



While watching the news one evening, a story came on about a missing teenager and the mother was crying uncontrollably asking for her daughter's safe return. As I watched her, my heart went out to her because as a mother I could

feel her fear and pain. Even though I have never had that exact experience, emotionally I almost came close to it.

While shopping one day my oldest son who was a toddler at the time, had disappeared from out of the clothes aisle where I was. I had only looked away for a few seconds because I could always see him in my peripheral vision. I looked down that aisle; I looked down the other aisles calling for him with no response. The worst fear that I have ever had in my life came over me, my legs were becoming numb and my heart was racing as I tearfully called out for him. After a minute or so other shoppers began to help me look, and then I had a feeling to go back down the aisle that I was first in. As I called out for him again I heard a little snicker and I saw the clothes moving. He had crawled onto the beam of the rack with his legs crossed and was hidden under the clothes where I couldn't see him. Needless to say, I was happy, mad, scared and relieved. I didn't know whether to hug him or punish him.

When my granddaughter comes over to visit she has a ritual of climbing onto the toilet and making a fingerprint mural all over my bathroom mirror. She knows I like my mirrors to be clean and that I will scold her in a joking way, which she gets a kick out of. So now it is her mission to sneak and leave her fingerprint calling card just so we can have that love interaction. One day she and my daughter came over but only stayed a minute. I hadn't thought about the mirror because I didn't see her go into the bathroom.

After they left I discovered the mural was right back up there again and at first I had gotten a little peeved, but then I had a flashback about that mother on the news. I thought about how she would give anything to have her daughter back and all of the things that her daughter might have done to anger her mother were at that moment insignificant. I reminisce about when my children were being baptized, and after the reverend put the baptismal water on my youngest son's head and was in the process of doing my daughter, my son turned to his brother and says in his little 3 year old loud voice "Hey T, what da hell was dat?" Needless to say, his father and I were so embarrassed as the whole church snickered. Then I thought about my daughter who could win any amateur comedy night contest and my grandson who always gives a growl while in a Hulk Hogan stance. I smiled as I acknowledged how grateful I was for all of the

people in my life, regardless as to the interactions I had with them, pleasant or not.

Life is a gift and so are all of the people in it. We all know someone who we would rather not have in our personal circle of family or friends, but they are gifts as well. The old saying that "no one is promised tomorrow" is so true. The people in our personal world are not always going to act the way we would like for them to act, nor will they always do what we want them to do, for they have their own journey and lessons in life to learn. It would benefit us all to accept them where there are consciously at, and not where we want them to be. No one is "perfect" in our human eyes, and yet they are perfect if we look at them with Divine eyes. We all make the best choices that we know how to make with the circumstances surrounding the situation at that time. We all can look back in retrospect at situations and see where we might have made different choices, but we did the best that we could at that time. This is why we should not judge anyone because they are doing the best that they can with what they have to work with (especially mentally and emotionally). People who know better, do better.

When we arrive at a place within ourselves where we can respect people where they are and for who and what they are, this will be a better world. This includes those who are in what we would consider a toxic relationship, on drugs, alcoholic, homeless, jobless, have anger issues etc. Respecting where a person is does not mean that you must accept certain behaviors from them and especially those that directly affect you, because you can choose not to be in their presence, or life. It means that you are allowing them to work their challenges and lessons out. Everyone needs encouragement and support at various times when they are struggling or going through something, and not to be talked about and ridiculed. One thing is pretty certain, when they get sick and tired of being in their situation, they will strive to change it.

All life is a valuable gift and we all should begin to see each other as that. If you haven't told your mate, children, family and friends that you love and value them, then maybe you should. Do not take them or life for granted. Embrace the gifts that they bring you whether it is their laughter or their pain, for if you choose to assist them during and through their challenges it makes you both stronger. Stop and take the time to make a call, send a card, email or gift to your loved ones, you might be surprised at how powerful an impact it will have on them. When my granddaughter is grown and with children of her own I can reminisce on our special times together. Until then, the next time my grandbaby comes over, maybe I'll just let her fingerprints stay on the mirror.

Ma'at Seba is a Motivational Healer, Reiki Master, spiritual guide, motivational speaker, writer, lecturer - www.Relationshipfirstiad.com, elationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com

NATIVE SUN

How a near-death experience revealed the secret to lasting happiness



(StatePoint) What if happiness isn't about accumulating wealth, but about how you use your resources—time, money and emotional energy—to create joy for yourselves and others? Picture your next family gathering not filled with tension or superficial chatter, but genuine laughter and meaningful connections. Imagine seeing the joy on your loved ones' faces when you share something special with them—not after you're gone, but right now, creating memories that last.

Science confirms that generosity and gratitude significantly enhance personal happiness. A 2020 University of Chicago study found that people who intentionally give to others experience deeper and longer-lasting joy compared to those who spend only on themselves.

Educational entrepreneur and author of "The Happiness Experiment," Carl B. Barney is sharing practical, achievable steps to experiencing more happiness today:

- Express Daily Gratitude: Write down three things you're grateful for each day. Notice how quickly your outlook shifts toward joy and positivity.

- Create Memorable Experiences: Plan meaningful, shared moments with loved ones rather than simply giving material gifts. The happiness derived from these shared experiences endures long after the event itself.

- Give with Purpose: Offer thoughtful gestures, advice or financial help in meaningful ways. Even small acts of generosity can transform relationships and significantly boost your happiness.

This approach to happiness isn't just theory—it's a proven pathway to a richer, more fulfilling life. After a near-death experience in a plane crash profoundly shifted his worldview, Barney realized he wanted to witness the joy and impact of his generosity firsthand, rather than leaving his loved ones to benefit only after he was gone. Discover more about this transformative approach and start enhancing your happiness today at happinessexperiment.com.

Happiness can't be bought, but it can be cultivated. As science and real-world experiences show, generosity and gratitude are fundamental pillars to long-lasting joy.

How support and connection can improve mental health as you age

(StatePoint) Mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety and depression, are common among older adults, and can be exacerbated by declining health, loss of loved ones, financial challenges and late-in-life regrets.

Unfortunately, these issues can impact overall health, quality of life, and in some cases, even be life-threatening. The suicide rate among Americans aged 75 and older is the highest of any age group, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If you're an older adult, Dr. Zia Wahid, medical director with Cigna's Medicare business, encourages you to take the following actions:

- Nurture relationships: Research has found that loneliness can have negative health consequences as impactful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. That's why finding connection is essential. Check with your local community center to find out what activities, classes and social events they offer. Faith-based organizations, neighborhood gatherings, and clubs based on common interests are also great ways to meet people and stay engaged. A simple phone call with a loved one is often enough to strengthen bonds, and emotional resilience.

- Get moving: Physical activity can improve strength and agility as you age. It can also be a powerful way to boost your mood and ease anxiety and depression. From chair yoga to water aerobics, there are forms of exercise appropriate for every ability and age, and free or inexpensive classes offered in many communities. Your Medicare Advantage (MA) plan may also offer fitness benefits that can help you move more and stay connected. Group fitness not your thing? Consider just getting outdoors for a short walk and a dose of sunshine.

- Avoid substance misuse: Substance use disorder is common among older adults, and can intensify mental health challenges. One in 11 adults over age 60 had a substance use disorder in 2022, and that number is on the rise, according to the American Psychological Association. Check your Medicare plan. It may cover treatment for alcoholism and substance use in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

- Schedule a doctor's visit: Mental health, just like physical health, requires your attention and care. If you're experiencing mental health concerns, schedule a doctor's appointment. They can refer you to a psychologist, psychiatrist or clinical social worker, or provide additional advice and resources.

- Get it off your chest: Talking about your feelings with friends, family, or even a trained professional can be helpful. Medicare covers individual and group therapy with doctors or licensed clinicians, and some of these services are offered virtually.

- Consider medication: Antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, antipsychotics and mood stabilizers, can be effective treatments for certain mental health conditions. A Part D plan - either standalone or within an MA plan - covers many of these prescriptions. Before starting a new medication, be sure to talk to your doctor about possible side effects and interactions with drugs you're currently taking.

- Don't wait: If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, immediately call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 to reach a trained crisis counselor. This free, confidential service is available 24/7 nationwide in both English and Spanish.

For more information about Medicare benefits and mental health, visit cignamedicareinformation.com.