

## So Let It Be Written...

*Beyond Chicken Soup* is divided into 52 sections (one per week, if you like), with each section consisting of two parts: (1) a reminder message concerning the nature of and/or means to a life worth all the considerable bother; and (2) a set of interrogatives designed to stimulate introspection.

While moving through this offering, if you should decide that your life, as currently constituted, is a little short on a particular constituent (time alone, for example), you might want to make an interim adjustment. Such an adjustment might take the form of amending a belief you currently hold, or changing a pattern of behavior – or some combination of the two. In any event, in implementing this adjustment, you might want to record your actions, and your progress, in a journal.

Even if you choose not to implement any adjustments in the near term (tomorrow, after all, is another day), you might want to linger on each reminder message for a few days anyway, specifically to reflect on how the substance of each one relates to your present circumstances. To enhance the effectiveness of your reflections, you might want to record your thoughts and introspections in the journal mentioned above.

One cycle through the complete set of reminder messages might not be sufficient. Indeed, the further one has veered away from a life worth all the considerable bother, the longer it might take, and the more effort it might require, to get back on track.

To help you in this regard, you might want to supplement this book with a set of reminder (Secret Santa) cards available from Kingsley Books ([www.kingsley-books.com](http://www.kingsley-books.com)).

*Happiness is the practice of virtue  
unencumbered of all doctrine;  
virtue, the practice of love  
unencumbered of all desire.*

*If you would be happy,  
my friend –*

1

*Recognize the difference  
between craving and yearning;  
gratification and fulfillment. A  
dog barks; we reach for a bone.  
A cat rubs against our leg; do  
we reach also for a bone?*

## A meditation a day...

- ♥ When you are at your place of work, do you find yourself taking frequent snack / coffee breaks? If so, are you being animated by real physical hunger, or might a hunger of a different sort be at work, at least in part?
- ♥ If hunger is the appetite of the body, and curiosity is the appetite of the mind, what might the appetite of the soul be?
- ♥ We all know that the body craves after food, and the mind thirsts after knowledge. Yet we do not seem to know equally well what the soul yearns after. Why might this be the case?
- ♥ If pleasure is the body's reward for meeting its needs, and understanding is the mind's reward for meeting its needs, what might the soul's reward be for meeting its needs?
- ♥ How many advertisers can you name who consistently demonstrate an interest in their audience being able to differentiate between hunger and emptiness, craving and yearning, pleasure and fulfillment?
- ♥ Our society is afflicted with a seemingly intractable drug problem. Many argue that the solution to this problem consists of educating our youth against the pernicious effects of drugs. Do you agree with this position, or is there perhaps a deeper problem to be addressed? Indeed, just what are people who take drugs attempting to satisfy?
- ♥ Toward which aspect of the self (ego self, soul self, or agency self) is the slogan 'Just do it!' directed? On average, how long after we 'just do it' do we need to 'just do it' again? Why might this be the case?

2

*Strive to love, accept, and sacrifice without expectation or condition. In committing ourselves to a life of spontaneous generosity and compassion, we assure ourselves of everything we will ever really need.*

## A meditation a day...

- ♥ We tend to react to the needs of others in either of two ways: (1) by conducting a cost-benefit analysis; or (2) running into the burning house without benefit of forethought. Which part of our trinity of self (ego self, soul self, or agency self) is likely the major player in each case? What likely is the nature of the 'payoff' (reward) in each case?
- ♥ Conditional love is temporal, measured, and ultimately crazy-making for those on the receiving end. Have you ever been on the receiving end of conditional love? If so, how did it make you feel? What was its overall effect on you?
- ♥ Have you ever been on the giving end of conditional love? Was there a calculated payoff involved (for example, gaining someone's loyalty or indebtedness)?
- ♥ Despite any real evidence to support doing so, many of us hold the belief that those who win million in state lotteries are assured of living happily ever after. Why might most of us be so willing to embrace this belief?
- ♥ Underlying our tendency to elevate celebrities to a position of reverence and emulation is an abiding belief that famous people are significantly happier than ordinary people are. Are they?
- ♥ Of all the people you know, or who are well known to you, which ones are most likely to make a personal sacrifice without first conducting a cost-to-benefit analysis?
- ♥ If you had to advise a classroom of third graders on the realities regarding the pursuit of happiness in America, what would you tell them? Whose life would you hold up for emulation in this regard?