

5. Soul-space - A Few Guidelines for Happiness

There is a story about a European bounty hunter in Africa who was trying to get his loot and booty across the country to the coast before the rains came. One morning his native Kenyan helpers refused to pick up his boxes, bags, and trunks of gold and elephant tusks. He bullied, threatened and bribed them. They still refused. He finally got the message. 'We are waiting,' they said, 'for our souls to catch up.'

I often feel like this. It is easy to lose one's soul. . . . I need to do what many of you would probably love to do – find a quiet place to pray. At such times I reflect on guidelines for happiness and 'things to try':

- Decide to be happy. Learn to find pleasure in little things;
- Life is always a mixed bag – like Basset's Allsorts or Cadbury's Roses. Each day brings a mixture of emotions. Life is like that.
- You cannot please everyone. Don't cling to your failures. Learn to keep letting go of all anxiety;
- Learn to laugh at yourself. You are not the centre of the universe. Don't take yourself too seriously. Look at the bigger picture. Trust in God and in your friends.
- Be your own person. Do not let yourself be anyone else's victim. It is not possible to live up to the expectations of other people. You only have to account to yourself and God.
- You carry God's dream for your happiness within you. It is a dream about your freedom from fear. If you really want to, you can make that dream come true;
- Do not be controlled by the negative voices of your parents, your teachers and the religious leaders of your childhood. They are the tapes from the past that keep playing in our heads;
- Trust in God's extravagant love for you. Fill your mind with lovely thought – compassionate and generous. You may feel the fear – but do it anyway! You are well protected at all times, whether you know it or not, by the angels of God;
- Think of others. Jesus, and all our greatest women and men reminded us of this saving grace. Because our hearts are made to grow by forgetting themselves, we become happier the more we take care of others;
- Live for today; there is only the present moment. Life is short enough. Enjoy every second of our one, wild and precious life. And may God bless you always.