

Rants, Ravings, and Reflections:
Musings, thoughts, and ideas
by Mark A Husk

Part I: Psychological/Inspirational

It has occurred to me that people save lives every day. It's not just the police, firemen, and other emergency personnel that do it, it's all of us. Every time we offer a smile, every time we offer some kind words, every time we take time to tell someone that we love them, that they matter, that they are an important part of our lives, we send out little ripples of hope. Hope that perhaps all is not lost, that the world hasn't completely spiraled down into nothingness. And that in itself may be all someone needs to keep going, just for one more day. September 6, 2013

What do I do with the time that is left for me? I realize, perhaps starkly, that one day I shall be no more. I will be gone. And with me will be all my dreams, my wishes, my "want to's", my ambition, my hopes. Also, what will disappear will be my opportunities. My chance to do something. Anything. To laugh, to love, to hate, to cry, to scream. The clock is ticking, and I am running out of time. So what do I do? Do I hide, comfortable, safely walled within my home, fearful of the spectre of death, which may come beckoning from anywhere, at any time? Or should I run out the door, embrace the west wind, dance and celebrate life along with the sun and the living things? The reality is that no matter which path I chose, it will eventually come to an end. So what do I do with this small fragile life that is given to me? With the rest of the short time that I have? The choice is ultimately mine, I can choose either one. Which one shall I choose today? August 30, 2013

There is a lot of talk about the prevention of bullying. Mainly it is directed towards school children and teens. But we all know that bullying doesn't end with graduation. What do we do about the bullying we get individually from our employers or relatives? Or the bullying we get collectively from corporations or governments? What can be done about these? July 28 2013

We kind of expect that, should we get to heaven, that the Lord will ask us, "Have you loved each other as I have loved you?". But what if the Lord also asks us, "Have you loved yourself (taken care of yourself) even as I have loved you?", what would we say? July 28 2013

I find it interesting that in many instances, it's not the rich or the successful, the privileged or the powerful that can be counted on to reach out and help others in times of trouble, but those who have known trouble themselves...the poor, the trampled, the broke, the beat. It's those who have known pain themselves who can be counted on to help ease the pain of others. Therein lies our strength, and perhaps even, our salvation. July 26 2013

Never underestimate your influence on some else's life. You may never see the results, but lives can be changed, lives can be saved, simply because you are you. July 15 2013

The Declaration of Independence states "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." It's interesting to think that addiction, in it's inevitable destruction, takes away these very things and gives us, according to Alcoholics Anonymous, it's exact opposite: "Death, insanity, or incarceration". July 3 2013

One thing I try to keep in mind is perspective on my own life. It's easy to get bent out of shape over current challenges and problems, but if I look back at my life and what all I've been through, the current situation doesn't seem so bad. I guess it boils down to respect for myself and respect for the journey I've made so far. June 28, 2013

A Poem: What Have You Done Today?

America is all about accomplishment. About achievement. About "Racing to the Top".

What have you done today?

We make "To-Do" lists, we build our resume's, we accumulate things to show our status.

What have you done today?

Part of our introductory conversations with others is about the job we hold. We talk about our "career path" and "corporate ladders".

What have you done today?

We have buzzwords such as efficiency, productivity, and quotas. We set goals and measure ourselves against the success of our neighbors.

What have you done today?

We have grades, and performance reviews, and progress reports. We have critics and supervisors and oversight committees.

What have you done today?

We are given standards, best practices procedures, and quality measurements. We judge, evaluate, and recommend improvements.

What have you done today?

Today I made someone smile.
Today I eased someone's hardship.
Today I comforted someone's pain.
Today I wiped away someone's tear.
Today I gave food to someone hungry.
Today I made peace with someone angry.
Today I spoke with someone who was lonely.
Today I hugged someone in need of love.
Today I loved and was loved in return.
Today I gave of myself so that someone would not be without.

What did you do today? June 24 2013

Faith, or perhaps having a sense of being connected to, or in a relationship with a Higher Power, takes practice. We as human animals learn through doing. So, it seems to me that if a person wants to have a feeling of being connected to a Higher Power, then it needs to be practiced. Sure, some of us can get hit by a metaphorical bolt of lightning and "get it" right away, but most of us struggle with our faith. Life challenges come and go, some more severe than others. In one sense, these are definitely tests of our faith, our certainty in what we believe. We may falter and need to readjust our beliefs, or we may close our grip tighter, and our convictions become stronger. But it's still in a sense practice. And I think this holds true no matter our particular brand of faith or religious ideal.

This practice can also include daily rituals, group meetings and in-depth conversations, readings in holy and secular texts and the like.

And it stands to reason, the more we practice our faith when times are smooth, the quicker and more readily we will use it as a source of comfort and coping when times get hard. June 17 2013

Sometimes the greatest task we have in our adulthood is to come to terms with our own childhood. May 11 2013

Our bodies can fool our minds. What we may assume to be signs of stress, anxiety, or nervousness may just be a physiological response to our diet (too much caffeine) or excitement (experiencing something new), or actually reacting to the actions of others (being around or exposed to anxious, stressed or nervous people). May 8 2013

Now is the time for those of us who are especially sensitive to the violence of mankind to stay away from the television and other media, and to gather with others who can comfort and promote peace and love. April 15 2013

Don't give anyone else the responsibility for your own education. Do what you need to do to get the diploma, degree, license. But Don't stop there. Feed your own curiosity, your own passion. Do your own research and never be afraid to question the answers. Seek out those who share your interests and learn from them. Never stop learning, questioning, and seeking answers. April 9 2013

And so my 50th birthday is coming up soon. For a while, I thought I should do something spectacular, something I'd remember and could tell tales about. Skydiving came to mind.

This morning, as I sit with my coffee, I wonder if perhaps I'm looking at this wrong. I'm realizing more and more that I've only got a limited time on this earth, and that time is getting shorter. Eighty is only thirty years away, should I be so lucky. What could I do, what should I do, with the time I have left?

I've always been concerned about others, about the planet on which we live. It's easy of course to be pessimistic, that our own greed will eventually doom us, and that I should just try to have some fun and avoid the drama if I can. But that will not help me sleep at night. I'm not sure I want that to be my legacy. I really don't care much what others think of me, and after I'm dead, then it will matter even less. But can I live the rest of my life spending my money and time frivolously, carelessly, for my own pleasure, while others near me may be in need?

Somehow, I think, I need to find a way to make my last remaining years count, and the way to do that is through helping others. Whether it is donating to a local food bank, stopping to help someone in need, taking time out to listen, using what little skill I have as a counselor, I feel I must do something. Something to leave this world a better place than I found it. Something to make a difference. I do not hope to change the world, but there has to be a way to do something. Perhaps there I will find a path, the adventure that will lead to my own Holy Grail. Perhaps, in my own heart, I know that there is no other way. April 4 2013

The Earth is my Church, it's inhabitants my Congregation, their Stories my Scripture. Their Song is my Hymn, and the Prayers of my Heart are carried by the Wind that blows through all. March 17 2013

People, just like computers, tend to jam up and freeze. The first thing to do, and it usually works, is to unplug, and then after a while, plug back in. January 26 2013

Who is it that decides what it means to be "well-adjusted" or "normal"? Is it "normal" for us to plant ourselves in front of a TV and expose ourselves to the trivial blandness that it has to offer? Are we "well-adjusted" if we spend our time and money and effort chasing the latest fad, the latest clothes, the latest toys? Are we judged well if we make sure to jump on the latest political bandwagon, rant against the latest outrage, and show our support for the latest cause? Must we always be seen at the local sporting events, malls, company picnics, and various other social functions for us to be accepted?

Maybe there is such thing as "too much". Maybe there are those who prefer solitude, quiet time, peaceful evenings and their own few friends. Maybe it's those who realize that there are some things more important than being "social" or "keeping up with the Joneses". Maybe there is a hidden treasure, a priceless gem that in all our hurried distracted lifestyles we are missing out on. Maybe what we are missing, in our hurried scattering and mindless acceptance of whatever the outside world throws at us, is ourselves. January 19 2013

As a counselor, I have often told my clients who suffer from bouts of anxiety and depression to avoid watching the news. This tragedy is a good example. It will be repeated over and over, with horrifying images described, witnesses of all sorts interviewed, and pundits talking mostly nonsense. We sit in our homes, helpless as this nightmare unfolds before us, and our hearts break. We cannot help those affected, who may be so far away, but we can help ourselves, and we can help others. Turn off the TV. Reach out to your friends and loved ones. Help those in need. Do something to comfort yourself or someone else. Find a way to express that love and concern that is within us. That is where our healing begins. December 14 2012

My life journey is not a race, nor a contest, nor a struggle of will against the world. It is rather a wandering, a musing, a contemplation, where every moment has it's wonder, it's fascination, and is worthy even at it's darkest, of pausing to appreciate, reflect, and absorb completely. December 6 2012

It's the holiday season, and we often turn our thoughts to those less fortunate than ourselves. However, being less fortunate doesn't always mean lack of material things. Many people suffer from loneliness and depression during these times. It doesn't take much to reach out, and it might save a life. November 19 2012

It's amazing...people may look at me and think I am successful. What they don't see however, is how much I am utterly, completely dependent upon the love, kindness and generosity of those around me. November 4 2012

What if you knew that no matter what happens in your life, that everything was eventually going to be OK? What if pain and fear and death really didn't matter? What if the only things that mattered was Love, and Joy, Gratitude and Peace? How would you live your life? November 2 2012

How much penance must we do before we forgive ourselves? October 19 2012

In the story of Cinderella, when the Fairy Godmother transformed Cinderella into a princess, she was simply dropping the illusion of the scullery-maid and revealing who she truly was. If we hang around people who treat us as worth-less people, then we tend to see ourselves, and act as if we are worth-less. Sometimes it takes a "Godmother", a wise and knowing person, who can help us shed the veil we are under, and reveal us to ourselves as we really are, Princes and Princesses, Children of Light, answering a wonderful Call to Life, to Love, and to Service, to perform a Holy Task that only we can do. September 14 2012

There must be a balance between serving others and serving yourself. Neither must outweigh the other. What you do for others, do for yourself. What you do for yourself, do for those who need. For it's not "There but for the Grace of God go I", it's "That is a part of me, that is a part of God." August 30 2012

Wounds may take a long time to heal. Sometimes a lifetime. But in the healing process there is hope. Hope for change, hope for a chance to change, to perhaps make a difference in someone else's life in some small way. Healing also has a way of humanizing us. We come face to face with our fragility and realize that everyone else is just as fragile as we are. And when we are so humbled, and realize others are the same, it causes us to reach out, to care and support and love. And there is our true strength, and our salvation. August 13 2012

Yesterday morning one of my first customers was a World War II veteran. He was 89 years old and was brighter and sharper than many who were much younger. He was a medic in the Army and told me that he received two silver stars and never fired a shot. I got to shake his hand. Later in the day, I was starting to feel pain in my back and legs from standing on the hard floor. Just as I was about to say something, I turned around and met a young man home from the military coming towards me with a prosthetic leg. Life is full of wonder, and reminds me often to keep things in perspective. August 6 2012

I wonder, if a person can't seem to function "properly" in today's rushed and crushed business world, maybe it's not a sign of incompetence, but health. Maybe the problem is the system, and not the person. August 4 2012

There will come a time when I will die. I have wandered around on this earth, making my own way, exploring as I am able, satisfying my own curiosity. I have done what I must to live, consuming what I had to, but never more than I need. I have a greater goal, though. Those of you who are different than me may not understand. It may seem a tragedy to you, but to me, it is a task I must complete. I am not long for this world, and I ask that upon my departure that you do not weep. For the world may be finished with this body of mine, but not with this spirit. Even though "I" am gone, "I" will still live. Wait and see, and wonders will appear.

--Sincerely,

The Caterpillar July 26 2012

There must be peace beauty and love to be found in the world. There is so much Darkness that exists and threatens to overwhelm us, there must also be Light to counter that. Here is where we draw our strength to go on. It is important, for those of us caught up in the struggle against the Darkness, to actively seek out the Light and claim it for our own. And we will find it in Peace, Beauty, and Love. July 24 2012

I am not concerned about dying and realizing that I have served the wrong God. I am concerned about dying and realizing that I have not served the world. July 12 2012

Peace of mind, serenity, is something that requires practice on a daily basis. Just like most any other skill, the more we practice, the easier it gets. June 22 2012

Within the last few weeks, I have spoken with a cancer survivor who told me that getting cancer was the best thing that ever happened to him, I have visited a doctor who

treated several pre-cancerous skin spots on me, and had a lady tell me her husband had lost a battle with cancer.

In my readings of Islam, I find that the word "Jihad" means "struggle" and refers to an internal struggle, an emotional, spiritual struggle.

So, I wonder if a person who has cancer, or any other life threatening disease, and through the course of treatment, finds peace and serenity with themselves and those around him, but then dies from the disease, has he really lost the battle? Is the true battle with the disease or with ourselves? It seems to me that if we find peace, then no matter the outcome, we have won. June 16 2012

We tend to become what we surround ourselves with. So, let us try to surround ourselves as much as possible with peace, love, and joy. June 15 2012

Every now and then, somebody trying to be a smartypants will ask me, "What's the meaning of life?" Here is my reply: It was John F. Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." I will paraphrase that by saying, "Ask not what the meaning of life is. Ask what meaning you can give your life." May 17 2012

It's interesting to think that as much as we study mental illness, there is not much information on measuring mental healthiness. It seems as if we take mental health for granted, and only give it attention when it falters. Can we do better than that? May 15 2012

It's important, I think, to surround yourself with good friends, beauty, quiet times, and peace, if for nothing else but to provide a defense against hate, fear, violence, and the incessant noise of the world. May 11 2012

What would happen if you lived your life expecting small miracles to happen around you every day? What would you see? March 25 2012

How would we act, what would we do, if we KNEW that most of our anxieties and worries about future events were FALSE? March 15 2012

Oh, for the days of old, when I would wander through fields of grain and green, o'er hills and across the wooded valleys far from home. A longbow and a quiver of fieldpoints to help me pass the time and look with sharper eyes for the rotted stumps and clods of earth upon which to draw. The warm blanket of the sun, the caress of the breeze, the feel of soft loam under foot, those memories beckon me, even though I have aged, and am not the man I once was.

And yet still, I think, perhaps if time and health allow, one day I might be bold enough to once again leave civilization and its cares behind and venture outward, and inward, to find the peace and tranquility that only Mother Nature can give. February 18 2012

People may threaten and harass, they may make snide or cutting remarks, but if the threat is not actually real and can't hurt you, then they are like a large barking dog at the end of a chain. It can be frightening in appearance, but you can't be hurt unless you go inside the dog's area. January 9 2012

And so the celestial seasons turn. The sun halts on it's slow ebb in the sky, and begins to rise once more. The Long Night diminishes as the Morning Star awakens from her Winter Sleep. Light the Yule Log and raise a glass to renewed hope, prosperity, peace and joy for the coming year. December 21 2011

This holiday season, I have seen several posts by people who are grieving the loss of someone special. I know the holidays are a busy time, focusing so much on those around us, we have little time for ourselves. But it's important, I think, to take the time to remember and honor those who have passed, and have been part of our lives. Perhaps a small ritual is in order, a lighting of a special candle, or sorting through photographs. Maybe writing a letter to the departed, or holding a quiet conversation with them, or just sharing memories of them with another. Whatever works for you that will help you connect with that person and share a special moment with their memory may very well be needed at this special time of the year. One other thing--you may feel lonely, but you are not really alone. December 20 2011

True friends will drag you kicking and screaming towards Hope. December 10 2011

I hate it when I worry and worry over something and then what I was worried about turns out OK. I wasted all that worry for nothing... November 27 2011

I saw a sign on a Chinese restaurant today that said, "Open for Thanksgiving". That made me stop and think. What have we been given? And what have we given? We can be grateful to have received, but we can also be grateful to be given the opportunity to give, as well. November 22 2011

Are you worthy of the love of others? Silly. Of course you are. And don't doubt it for a minute. November 16 2011

Attending the death of a loved one is one of the most horrifying, yet beautiful things you can do. November 10 2011

Some of us aren't meant to fit into a "normal" world. We don't readily engage in common social activities, or enjoy watching mainstream television or popular movies. We don't read the best sellers, or watch or play team sports. You may think we are a little weird, but that's OK. We're happy doing what we are doing, often by ourselves, living in our own little world. We like it that way, and wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. October 23 2011

The last of Indian Summer, the rain falls gently on the leaves, on the ground, in the trees. Insects sing their final songs before the frost, an ending, a passing, preparing for the winter's deep sleep, and heralding the new life to come. October 12 2011

Sometimes, it seems that we appreciate our peace, serenity and well-being only when they are taken from us. September 25 2011

Sometimes facing the day seems too overwhelming. It's times like this when we remind ourselves that we don't have to take on the whole world all at once. All we have to do is one simple thing at a time. So, what do you need to do now to take care of yourself? September 21 2011

I passed a road sign today that advertised a church program that was entitled "Is There More to Life?" My only reply is "I hope not." What about the question "Is there less to life?" Perhaps we should find ways of simplifying our busy lives so we have more time for the really important things. September 15 2011

Is my life so busy that I am unable to make any difference in the world?
September 6 2011

Sometimes we find a niche', a place where we feel we belong, a path that might be strange yet comfortable for us. When we do, then it seems as if work isn't work, and effort isn't effort, and like a leaf in a stream, we flow along in the universe's Great Path. August 30 2011

Sometimes you really have to practice letting things go and not giving a damn.
August 26 2011

What is more important: Accomplishment as defined by others or your own Serenity? Competition for some fleeting Reward or Your own Peace of Mind? Success in accumulating and possessing Things, or Satisfaction with Your own Life?
August 26 2011

Self care demands a bit of 'selfishness'. Not selfishness in the negative sense, but selfishness in a sense that prioritizes what is important and necessary for you to do for yourself so that you can continue to help others. This includes not only physical health, but mental, emotional and spiritual health as well. August 25 2011

They say to take it one day at a time. For some of us, facing an entire day is too much. We need to break it down into hours or even minutes, and know that even this will pass.--We do what we can and let the rest go. August 24 2011

Sometimes we choose the path we travel, and sometimes fate and circumstance chooses it for us. Other times it is a subtle hint, or a suggestion, or a silent nagging inner whisper that calls to us. In my own experience, when I listen to those quiet suggestions or my own inner voice, is when things have worked out the best for me. August 23 2011

In the famed trilogy of Faith, Hope, and Love, it is Love that actually demands that you interact with others. In fact, it can't exist without interaction with others. Love is indeed a verb. August 13 2011

Oftentimes, our help comes from others who are searching too. They may not have an answer, but they do have a piece of the puzzle. August 13 2011

Every one of life's storms has an ending. In a universe where change is really the only constant, nothing lasts forever, and that includes pain. August 8 2011

If we talked to others like we talk to ourselves, we might have no friends at all... August 6 2011

Why does taking time out for yourself, when you give so much of yourself to others, seem so selfish and hard to do? August 5 2011

Rights and Responsibility go hand in hand. If I have the Right to Free Speech, then I have the Responsibility to Speak Out. August 2 2011

Your education--what you learn in life--is yours to keep. No one can take that away from you. July 31 2011

I cannot be what other people want me to be. I have a hard enough time trying to be what I want to be. July 22 2011

Sometimes the circumstances of your life come around and remind you that you are not the one that is in control, and that is ok. July 18 2011

My church cannot be made of brick and lumber that separate me from the wild places of the world. My church cannot have vaulted ceilings to separate me from the sun, the clouds and the stars. My church cannot have sacred hymns to drown out the birds, the wind and the insects and animals of the forest. My church is planet Earth, the most holy creation of God. June 19 2011

The brain is an organ, just like any other in the body. When injured it may require medication. Medication in this sense is not supposed to solve your problems, but to make you healthy enough to effectively deal with them. June 9 2011

Every now and then, Fate calls us to attend the death of a loved one. This is a task that is infinitely difficult, yet holds within it the highest of honors. It is one of the hardest things we will ever be asked to do in this life. It is our duty though, to those who have touched our lives, to answer and do what we must. Our reward is a final parting gift of life and love. June 6 2011

I've come to the conclusion that I am my own worst enemy. I stand in my own way, block my own progress, and beat myself up when I don't live up to my own expectations. Talk about a psychological paradox. Is there any way to get rid of me?
May 6 2011

There is something in the back of our minds, in our souls if you will, that doesn't forget. It remembers all the joy and all the pain we have been through in our lives. Every now and then, during certain seasons, certain situations, certain moments, it will rise up and remind us that our past is still here with us. March 17 2011

We cannot have peace by hiding away from the world. Only by actively engaging the ugliness and doing what we can to comfort and heal can peace for ourselves and others actually come. March 9 2011

It's easy to get wrapped up in our possessions and busyness and protect ourselves from the realities of the world. Sometimes however, reality does kick the door in and demand our attention. It has a voice that says "Wake up! Pay attention to what is really important in your life. You will only be here for a short time, so make sure to live your life well." March 9 2011

"Love thy neighbor as thyself"- Good advice, but we often forget that little word "as". If we are caring for our neighbor more than we are caring for ourselves, then there is an unbalance that can't be maintained. We have to take care of ourselves so that we can take care of others. March 6 2011

Those that pass before us, leave their marks on our soul. We carry them with us wherever we go. They have not left us, not really. They still live in our memories, in our words, and in our deeds. And as long as we have a story to tell, a memory to share, an example to show, they still live strong within us, and they still go on.
February 21 2011