

Jim's Perspective...

Choosing Hau' oli

Hau' oli. The word is Hawaiian and means to cause happiness, gaiety, or joy. There was a presentation titled "Choosing Joy" at a recent ABA event sponsored by the Tort, Trial, Insurance, Practice Section in which the speaker explained the difference between joy and happiness. She explained that happiness is tied to circumstances, while joyfulness is tied to a spiritual way of engaging with the world that is connected to practicing gratitude. She explained that even the smallest examples of Hau' oli, or joy, stimulate feel-good neurotransmitters in the body that can lead to significant health benefits and improved mental well-being. And so, a little summer Hau' oli from me!

All of our children and grandchildren were with us last weekend. Saturday afternoon we all went to the Lancaster County Super Fair. The County Fair was celebrating its 150th anniversary. We arrived at the fairgrounds and parked the vehicle in a dirt lot and walked over to the midway. As we neared the midway, there was a large tent with animals confined inside pens that were set up so that the kids could stick their arms inside the pens and pet the animals or feed them some type of grain mixture. All three grandkids wanted to feed the animals which included small goats, small pigs, some type of small cow, a camel, and other small animals that I did not know what they were. The kids raced from pen to pen, laughing and feeding the animals. They would try to mimic the sounds that the animals were making, and from time to time they started jumping up and down laughing at how eager the animals were to eat. I just loved watching them. What is so enjoyable, and refreshing, is that there is no pretense, calculation, motive or hidden scheme to their behavior, but instead, it is all genuine reaction. How wonderful to see. As I observe it, and experience it, I have a feeling of both happiness and gratitude, and how lucky I am to have these grandkids to be with. They provide an environment of spontaneity and sincerity that you just don't experience everyday. I am very lucky to have them in my life. Often there is a conception out there that the parent, or adult, takes care of the kids, keeps track of them, and makes sure they eat their dinner, and clean their room. However, there is another relationship between the adult and a child in which the child provides help, or fun, or meaning to a parent that an adult would otherwise not be able to experience.

We made it to the midway and the two older grandkids got on some of the amusement rides. The youngest grandchild, Ben, was afraid of the rides and didn't want to get on anything. He stood by me, hugged my leg, and watched. He started looking at a retail space that displayed various stuffed animals that were for sale. Some of the stuffed animals were different kinds of fish or other animals that might live in water or the ocean. He then looked up at me and had the following observation (afterwards, I got a napkin and wrote it down);

You can't hug a jellyfish.
It has a lot of legs,
the legs will reach out and electrocute you.
I don't like to swim in the ocean.

I don't want a jellyfish as a pet.
Jellyfish can't go on land,
jellyfish can come close to shore.

I always love the sincerity of little kids. It just melts my heart when they speak like this and you know it is a 100 per cent honest expression of what they are thinking. Maybe we should elect little kids to Congress!

We were at the caterpillar roller coaster. Anne wanted to go on the roller coaster with Carter (they are the same age) but Carter was reluctant. I love it! The girl, ready to tackle a scary ride and the boy cautiously hesitant to embark on this dangerous adventure. Finally, it was agreed that both would go on the ride and sit together and Papa would sit behind them. This ride is for kids, so the car is rather small, but Papa managed to get himself inserted into the front seat of the car behind them (there were some other adults riding with kids too). Below is a picture of us in the cars. I am a little kid again! Off we went! Once again, an experience I would never have, without grandkids. Subsequent to this ride, both Anne and Carter went on more exciting rides together. Papa was not needed!



The grandkids: always living in the moment – eating pretzels, funnel cakes, and snow cones – looking at the 4H animals and other farm animals inside the fair building – not a care in the world, and no concern about their future life. Such a wonderful departure from 2020 and pandemic disease and death. There is something there, however, that age knows, and that children are slow to figure out. You get only so many trips to the county fair midway; you get only so many warm summer evenings with a full moon; you will experience only so many laughs, giggles, and philosophical ramblings from a grandchild about jellyfish. So it is always a good idea to feel happiness and gratitude for what we now have.

I finish with a poem. Little kids like this poem and I do too!

Accidentally

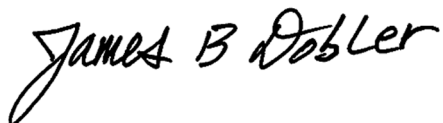
Once---I didn't mean to,
but that
was that---
I yawned in the sunshine
and swallowed a gnat.

I'd rather eat mushrooms
and bullfrogs' legs,
I'd rather have pepper
all over my eggs

than open my mouth
on a sleepy day
and close on a gnat
going down that way.

It tasted sort of salty.
It didn't hurt a bit.
I accidentally ate a gnat,
and that
was
it!

Maxine W. Kumin



Jim Dobler, CPCU

PIA Legislative Coordinator

Questions or Comments? Please email jbdobler@outlook.com