

The Happiest Person in the World

“Take one step as the happiest person in the world.”

“Really?” I thought, “Is that the secret to enlightenment?”

My friend had just returned from a weeklong retreat aiming to renew spirit and body. Hoping just a little wisdom would rub off on me, I asked, “What did you discover?”

Her answer was, “Take one step as the happiest person in the world.”

It wasn't the first time I encountered that advice, although I had never recognized it as a rung on the ladder to enlightenment. Just the opposite. As a teen, I had worshipped Saturday mornings in a very typical way—I slept. That is, I slept until my mother, a first generation child of German-Russian immigrants, would bounce into the room, throw open the curtains and say, “Let's let some *hell* in here.” *Hell* meant bright in German, but to me it meant torture. She would follow enthusiastically with the question, “Aren't you the happiest person in the world?”

The question stuck. I began asking myself, “Aren't you the happiest person in the world?” I have long ago shed the logic of the question. I don't own the superlatives in any corner. I am not the richest, most beautiful, most talented, or the most beloved person on the planet. To answer my question, though, I have been the happiest.

This begs explanation. Thankfully, I have never experienced war, extreme hate or hunger; but like most I have experienced the challenges a typical life offers. I have also had my happy days, like the birth of a grandchild and my wedding day that many would define as pinnacle events, but these don't need superlatives for definition.

What I call my happiest times are very ordinary moments embedded in an ordinary life. The realization comes when I'm sharing a hotdog with my husband at Costco or cutting cucumbers while preparing a family meal with my step-daughter. Not surprisingly, sometimes I find I'm happiest when I'm sitting with the early morning sun streaming through the blinds, striping the room with a little *hell*.

At these times I am the happiest person in the world. I am thankful for these moments and with gratitude I wish these moments for others.

I wish you many steps as the happiest person in the world.