Authentic Happiness & Human Flourishing

St. Mark’s Cathedral
October 7, 2015
Preview of the Coming Weeks

Oct. 14 & 21  Sanctuary and Thistle Farms
Oct. 28      Becca Stevens in the Nave
Nov.         The New Jim Crow
Overview of Course

Week 1    Authentic Happiness, Positive Emotions and Flow

Week 2    Human Flourishing (a new theory)

Week 3    A Different Model, Gratitude, Vulnerability

Week 4    Putting It All Together
Life is GREAT! I can't wait to see what TOMORROW brings!

Heart, while I appreciate your positivity, I wonder if it only sets you up for failure, and well, heartbreak.

NONSENSE! If things are good now, then all I need is for things to remain equally awesome or better forever!

But life WON'T always be awesome. Life is mostly "okay." If you always expect "awesome," then by contrast, "okay" will feel terrible to you.

You need to appreciate the great times, but be prepared for the okay times. Then you'll be better equipped to handle the bad times, too.

What are you so happy about NOW?

After that boring speech there's nowhere to go but UP!
To flourish, one must have:

1. Positive emotion (joy, etc.)
2. Engagement (flow)—living in the present
3. Meaning, purpose—derive value, worthiness in life
4. Self-esteem
5. Optimism—positive emotions that are future oriented
6. Resilience
7. Positive Relationships
Practicing Gratitude

Brother David Steindl-Rast, Benedictine who has written extensively on “gratefulness”

“It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful.”
Another Model: Wholehearted Living

- Vulnerability
- Belonging
- Gratitude
- Worthiness
- Wholehearted Living
The Myth (Story) of Scarcity…

*There is not enough!*

*More is better!*

*That is just the way it is!*

- Fear-driven Life is Stifled
- Fear is human, but we are often ashamed of our fears
- The “incarnation” consecrates humanity and addresses our fear of being alone
- Pride (fear) tempts us to believe that vulnerability is weakness

**Confession (vulnerability) in community releases a healing power**
Who is God for us?

If separate, then can self-reject, must earn God’s approval externally.

Relational model
Not about jumping through hoops (how to)
It’s about identity (imago dei)
It’s about grace—awake and surrender to it.
Connection versus Fusion (shadow)
Making the Turn—Learning to Tell our Stories

• Primal anxiety—fear of rejection (shame)
• Shame gremlins dog us

• Paradox—we can only discover the way out by being vulnerable IN COMMUNITY

• In community, we work on removing social “masks”
  need to be known and loved
  We need relationships in which we can “confess” our humanity
  Church failure—“cosmetic piety”—about “shoulds”
Choose one of the questions below and share with your neighbor:

1. Practice Empathy: Share a moment when your heart stirred with love and empathy for someone (not a family member)

2. Practice Gratitude: For whom are you thankful and why?

3. Practice Resilience: What dream lives on in me?

4. Share a time when you found yourself “using possessions or prestige” to fill that “God-shaped hole” in your life, and how you would do it differently.
Next Steps....
and
Questions & Conversation