

‘Hope’ for Future Mental Wellness? We’ll See . . .

by Frank G. Sterle, Jr.

Dysthymia: A type of depression involving long term symptoms that keep you from feeling good.

It is a sad fact that many people refuse to think before they act, and they procreate without sufficient capacity to raise normal, happy offspring. Thus, dysfunctional children – not to mention future bullies, racists and even violent criminals – are being created.

If society wants mentally sound, functional youth – and, therefore, adults – we need to establish a progressive governmental act that would see mandatory high-school courses on child psychology and rearing, commencing, at the latest, in Grade 11. (FYI: Even small flaws in their rearing during the first six years of life can make children vulnerable to dysfunctional thought processes in later years.)

This is where I – and the times of each year when I should be happy and celebrating – come into the picture. Although matters may one day permit me to have hope for an *enjoyable* future for myself (indeed, I have survived the first half of my life, and I intend on surviving the remainder in the best of spirit possible), I still have to face dismal facts in my life. I have a malformed heart valve, which, according to all of the relevant doctors, will eventually require replacement. If this happens, my rib cage will be sawed open, my heart will be stopped, blood flow will be by-passed around that faulty valve, and, likely, a pig’s heart valve will replace my flawed one. Worried? No. Rather, I’m in some form of denial. Anyhow, logic dictates that I cross that proverbial bridge when I reach it, if, in fact, I ever come upon it (doctors – even in numbers – are known to be mistaken).

Aside from all of that, although my parents – who themselves endured very hard lives – seemed to do their best at parenting, they did not provide emotional stability. As a result, I’ve had little appreciation for my corporeal existence. Sadly, I must also admit that I have no authentic appreciation for Mother’s Day (my father passed away in June, 2002); like my own birthday, this occasion is basically null and void for me. None of this is any surprise to me: childbirth is naught but a self-serving endeavour; after all, no parent-to-be thinks, *I’m going to do a potential infant a favour and bring him/her into this world.*

I prefer that my birthday (November 17 – ironically, the day after which a widely-unrecognized Greek terrorist group named their organization) go unnoticed, for I cannot help but cringe whenever someone

wishes me a happy birthday. And Christmastime is the same: I verbally return “merry Christmas” wishes, but I don’t really mean it, because Christmas is not a merry time for me. And the fact that I have a roof over my head and enough to eat only exacerbates my guilt complex, for there are too many deserving souls out there across the globe who have naught but misery for Xmas (not to mention that many go hungry for most of the year).

On the other hand, there’s the time that my former shrink pointed out to me that a smile actually broke out onto my face when I was talking about my precious pet feline, Mimi. He noted that he had not seen me smile once until I talked to him about my beloved cat – my current life’s greatest bright spot.

I must emphasize, though, that I do/did love my parents, and I do/did not ceaselessly bonk them over their proverbial heads regarding their past parenting. Nonetheless, there just doesn’t seem to be any real reason, in my mind, to be happy about the anniversary of the day in November, 1967, on which I was brought into this world – this life.

Self-pity? No, I don't think so. Self-absorbed? Perhaps; however, this is simply the way I feel.