

The Thinking on Things Letter

JUNE, 2015

An indispensable, better than an onion bagel filled with lox, cream cheese, onions, capers and tomatoes. It'll only give you heart burn and this letter will nourish your need for cultural literacy.

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Elijah Levy, Ph.D., Director

It's May folks – and this isn't a virtual reality treatment to reverse time and stop this dreadful, senescent, biological and unsolvable problem called aging. Yup – you're a day older than yesterday, but a day smarter too because you're a lifelong learner accumulating lots of social intelligence and this thing called wisdom. We are gearing up for 2015 – and that means continuing to envision growth, fellowship and strengthening the recovery program at Founders House of Hope. Our goals include enlarging the supportive employment program, in addition to enrolling more residents at Cerritos College to continue their educational pursuits and transition to semi-independent or independent living. We've admitted many new residents to Founders who are making an investment in their recovery program and to lead self-determined lives.

We're all excited for Cecile Mermelstein, a resident at Founders who is having her book of poetry self-published in June. Cecile has been writing creatively since childhood and this monumental achievement represents a magnificent moment in her life. I'll post her book of free verse poetry which she titled "The Ironic Truth" on my website for you to see. My website is: www.thelevylaunch.com

About Elijah Levy

Dr. Levy's degree is in Clinical Psychology and he is an interdisciplinary thinker, enjoying the synthesis of philosophy, psychology and sociology to examine the science of human behavior. He has taught at University of Redlands since 1991 in the undergraduate and graduate school of business. Dr. Levy also teaches psychology courses at an integrated health school called Southern California University of Health Sciences. On several occasions, he has received Excellence in Teaching awards, in addition to being honored for his volunteering activities and distinguished service. Dr. Levy is the director of Founders Outreach, a nonprofit agency providing psychiatric rehabilitation services to 90 mentally ill residents residing at Founders House of Hope, where he has been at since 1997. He designed the psychiatric/psychosocial rehabilitation program, in addition to the supported employment program being implemented at Founders. Dr. Levy is the director of The Levy Launch a center providing corporate training, management consultation, life/career coaching and support to nonprofit agencies. He is the author two books, one on intercultural awareness titled *You, Me and Them*, a book of poetry titled *Crisis in Meaning*, and he has edited an anthology of poetry written by individuals with mental illness titled *Pages Left to Turn: Poetry by Restless Minds*. In 2007, Dr. Levy and a colleague produced a documentary on mental illness titled *Beyond the Shadow of Mental Illness* and he collaborated on a documentary of a Veterans Legacy Project group that he facilitates. Since 2011, Dr. Levy, Chief Charlie Celano and his brother Josef Levy have been training police officers on compassionate policing and how to more effectively communicate with the homeless, mentally ill in the community.

Southern California University of Health Sciences

Well – I’m at my two year teaching point at SCUHS in Whittier. I’ve been teaching Introductory Psychology and Developmental Psychology here and it’s been a wonderful experience being with students and colleagues at this university. The university is expanding their degree completion programs and will be offering a Physician Assistant Program in the Fall of 2016. It’s exciting being here and serving all of our wonderful students in meaningful ways.



University of Redlands

I’m hitting 23 years at University of Redlands. It’s my longest paying job and that lady that lives with me likes it. She reminds me to sustain job stability and I agree it’s good to hold a job. I’ve enjoyed this stint and the wonderful relationships developed over the years with students who are so motivated to reach for the best in them by earning their degrees.

Training Police Officers to Interact Effectively with the Mentally Ill

Well—my brother and I are staying quite busy in Southern CA training law enforcement on compassionate policing of the mentally ill. We’ve trained close to 4,000 police officers in the last three years and received very positive, favorable evaluations of our four hour training. In December, January and February we trained all of the Fresno Police Department. Joe, my brother is a retired Commander from Long Beach P.D. and together we’re pushing out of our local regions to train more departments. The work is keeping us busy and we know we’re making a difference in how law enforcement interacts with the mentally ill in the community. The evaluations we’re receiving indicate we’re removing counterproductive assumptions and myths some officers are operating with that only lead to undesirable outcomes when confronting the mentally ill in the community. We will be training Inglewood and Hawthorne Police Departments in the next few months, in addition to Arcadia P.D. and Laguna Beach P.D.



All the art in this newsletter is by the talented Arlene Gardipee who is a resident at New Horizon Lodge.

Our Training for Police Officers Wins an Award

Well – I’ve got great news to share about the training we’re doing for police officers on how to interact with the mentally ill. On May 5th – The Violence Prevention Coalition of Orange County selected our class to receive The 2015 Ambassador of Peace award. We are honored to receive this award for the training we’ve been providing since 2011 to law enforcement departments in Southern California. We are invited to a luncheon on June 5th at the Promenade and Gardens in Costa Mesa to receive this award.



A veteran named John Adame, who has been enrolled in my Veterans Legacy Project group for 15 years finally self-published his Vietnam service experience in the book titled "Where's the Music." I'm simply thrilled seeing John experience this magnificent moment in his life.

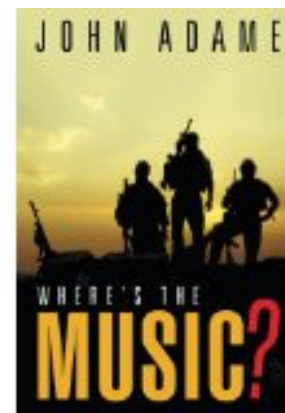
Here is the synopsis I wrote for his book:

John Adame's journey from college to Vietnam and home is a captivating story that poignantly reveals how the brutality of war can damage the soul and create psychic pain. Yet the indefatigable will to overcome survives in the end. Vietnam was one of the most unpopular wars in history. John's tour lasted from May of 1967 to May of 1969. As the young dutiful college student drafted into the war, John honored his service to country. He was the product of a military family and was drafted by the Army into the 9th Infantry, serving in the Tet Offensive. John completed basic training at Fort Ord in 1967. He denies being a hero and is a survivor. The heroes are those who made the ultimate and absolute sacrifice of life for the war effort. For John, the battlefield continued while adjusting to civilian life and being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The brutality of war, with its deeply embedded scars resulted in self-imposed social isolation and maladaptive behaviors that made his adjustment to civilian life difficult. He is grateful for marrying a love that would return him into the kind, responsible and altruistic man he was. The John everyone knew was ready to be resurrected, while retaining the memory of Vietnam and how it altered his perception of humanity.

I want to acknowledge that Ann Romero, my older adult student at Norwalk Senior Center finally published her memoir of poetry and family stories for everyone to enjoy. It took me lots of years of annoying her to do this – and I finally prevailed. I'm sorry for the aggravation Ann – but you've got to admit, it's finally done and now I won't bother you anymore. You're such a gifted, unique writer Ann and we needed to get this material into this anthology. Thanks lots and we know your family and friends will enjoy it.

By John Adame:

The first awareness I had with the results of war was when I was very young. It was at a military funeral for a soldier who had died in combat in the Korean War. I really did not have any idea what was taking place, but I recall soldiers in uniform and the sound of the 21-gun salute, the sounds of the trumpet, and the constant crying. After the service, my parents and I traveled to the home of the dead soldier. As we entered the home, I spotted a portrait of the dead soldier, and as the people passed the portrait, they stopped momentarily and continued into the home. The second took place while we were visiting my maternal grandmother's house. I made my way to one of the bedrooms, and on the bed was a military uniform (my Uncle Chava's Marine uniform). I do not know if he was on his way to or coming home from Korea. All this had been forgotten until the last few years. War and the military were only experienced through John Wayne movies. Family involvement was occasionally mentioned. I remember my grandfather, Abundio, wearing a large heavy coat, which I later learned belonged to one of my uncles while in the service. I knew I had uncles who had fought in World War II and Korea but never heard any war stories. Playing war games and fighting to play John Wayne was just part of a young boy's life. Watching the news of wars on television and newsreel film on the movie theater screen made war a thing that was done in far off lands. As I grew up, I learned of a war in a far off land called Vietnam. I read "Deliver Us from Evil" by Dr. Tom Dooley. It was about his experiences with people in Vietnam during the post-French, Indochina war, and the splitting the country into the communist north and the free south. I later learned that he had influenced President John Kennedy to help the South Vietnamese people. As time went on, I heard more and more about this war in Vietnam.



Life and Career Coaching

Dr. Elijah Levy is now available for life and career coaching.

Are you feeling frozen in place and unable to defrost yourself? Do you need to unleash your potential to create fulfilling outcomes in your personal and career life?

If you're feeling stuck and unable to defrost yourself, coaching can motivate you to act. We will identify what's keeping you frozen, strategize, set actionable goals, identify the psychological and environmental barriers and we'll list the personal and professional benefits of achieving your aspirations. The coaching relationship is a powerful one that will hold you accountable to achieve smart, measureable goals and increase self-esteem and confidence during the process. You will empower yourself by challenging assumptions of your abilities; by honestly asking yourself who you are and who you want to become. The coaching relationship will enable you to gain more control over your life and provide you with opportunities to change by expanding your power.

We know that being frozen in place widens the gap between the real self and the ideal self. The gap needs to narrow so you can reach for the best in you and realize your aspirations. The longer you wait to act, the more it hurts the quality of your life. Admit it – you're aware you need to change but need insight, self-awareness, guidance, confidence and support of a life coach.

A life and career coach can support your drive to initiate that long awaited process of self-exploration as it relates to personal and career ambitions. You'll begin by asking yourself these difficult, ultimate questions:

Who am I?

What do I want out of my life?

Is my current life the one I want?

What accomplishments give me pride?

Can the skills I possess today provide me with more opportunities to achieve in life?

What uncertainties in my life do I need to try to remove?

How can I achieve enduring, genuine happiness?

Can I more effectively manage work-family balance?

Am I feeling fulfilled in my current relationships?

What represents my true, fitting work? Fitting work pulls for the best I you because your natural abilities, skills and talents are a great match with the work.

Is the job I have right now my "fitting work"?

Have you ever known anyone that's attributed their success in life to luck? I haven't and will probably never encounter anyone that's successful based on luck. Luck is not the paradigm of success in life. Principles such as a disciplined attitude, clarity in goal setting, empowerment and self-determination contributes to success in life. Success in life requires self-efficacy, healthy amounts of self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-efficacy translates into skill development. Self-esteem means feeling valued and worthwhile. Empowerment means taking charge of your life through making the right choices. Finally, self-confidence reveals one's tendency to take risks by setting goals. We know that success in life requires ability and skill which are a permanent, core element of your being. You may have the skill set but aren't motivated to act to reach your launch destination. If you don't possess the skill sets, you need to develop the skills and knowledge to set goals consistent with these abilities. Individuals with low self-esteem do not set personal and career goals. If they do, the goals are easily achievable because they are consistent with the individual's low self-esteem. Achieving these goals doesn't enable the individual to learn anything meaningful about themselves, is only self-serving and it doesn't improve the quality of their life.

Dr. Levy is a Clinical Psychologist, published author, consultant, college professor and is a two time Ironman finisher. He understands how and why people erect self-imposed barriers to personal and career achievement; and strategies to overcome barriers by having you identify and dispute irrational ideas you have about your skills and potential. The real you can become the ideal you if you are courageous enough to envision what constitutes the ideal you, followed by making a powerful commitment to confront the challenges with confidence, discipline and integrity.

If you are needing to defrost, call Dr. Levy for a free consultation to explore how you can begin become intrinsically motivated, empowered and exercise your self-determination. I am available for personal and career coaching. The career coaching launch kit includes completing career assessments and work values inventories followed by an interpretation of your results. These instruments will aid us discover what constitutes your "fitting work." Work that captures most of your abilities, skills and knowledge base represents your "fitting or true work." In other words, it's an excellent match between who you are; your skills and what the job calls for; where you're being utilized optimally and your work values are aligned with the work values and mission of the organization. In addition I will help you revise your resume so that it shows the best version of you, and have you write an outstanding cover letter. You will learn how to interview to impress the interviewer. As my client, you will receive handbooks I have written as part of the career coaching launch kit.

You can call or email me for a free consultation: I am at (562) 230-3334 or you can email me at: thelevylaunch@yahoo.com