

Happy New Year!

Dear Friends and Family,

Though I have experienced with you some very happy and some very sad times in 2006, my personal news is relatively unremarkable for the year just ended, and the situation is fine. I am still learning, and I remain reasonably content. Instead of personal news, I would like to share with you a bit of what I have considered.

Perhaps you remember a CNN interview from early last year. Many tourists (12 of 14) died in a bus accident in March. They were sightseeing through the Andes Mountains of northern Chile when the accident occurred. Ten of the travelers were members of a Jewish senior residents home in Monroe Township, New Jersey. When speaking to CNN, one man, a close friend to many of those residents, provided poignant perspective:

“We have no right to ask when sorrow comes, ‘Why did this happen to me?’ – unless we ask the very same question for every joy that comes our way.”

(<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0603/26/sm.01.html>)

Already this year, a thoughtful writer conveyed a similar message with his recounting of this Buddhist parable:

A poor farmer whose only worldly possession is a mare wakes up one morning to discover that the mare has gone. He runs to his parents' house and breaks the terrible news. When he's finished, they ask, "Are you sure it's bad news?"

"Of course it's bad news!" he replies, stomping angrily away.

Ten days later, his mare returns, bringing with her a magnificent stallion.

The farmer runs to his parents and tells them the wonderful news.

"Are you sure it's good news?" they ask.

"Of course it's good news," he declares, leaving in a huff.

Days go by, and the farmer decides to try to break the stallion. He bridles the beast, climbs on its back, and is promptly thrown to the ground and trampled. The village doctor informs him that he will be a cripple for life. When he can do so, he makes his way to his parents and tells them the dreadful news.

"Are you sure it's bad news?" they reply.

He doesn't answer, but he mutters to himself all the way home. Two weeks later, a detachment of the Emperor's army arrives to draft all the able-bodied men of the village. Of course, they pass over the crippled farmer. He hobbles to his parents' house to share his joy.

"Are you sure it's good news?" they ask.

The story has no end, of course, but the point is clear: we should try to experience what happens to us without judging it.

(Nick Bromell: "Scooter and Me")

As we journey through 2007's experiences, here's hoping we receive them non-judgmentally, yet question, doubt, strive to understand, and grow.

Peace

Dennis Maust
2525 Turtle Creek Blvd Apt 315
Dallas TX 75219
dmaust1979@yahoo.com
<http://www.dmaust.com/>