

# Spiritual Soup

**Kurt Venables**

## **Negativity and the Wonder of the Ordinary**



Tammy and I were at the dinner table the other day talking about someone we know. The person is very negative about her whole life. Samantha (our little girl) said, “What’s negativity?” Coincidentally, she had been drinking a glass of juice and was about halfway done. I picked up her glass and set it right in front of her:

“What do you see?”

“A glass of juice,” she said.

“A negative person would see the glass half empty.”

“I just see a glass of juice.”

The inner Light, shining bright within, stifles negativity. Likewise, negativity stifles the Light. You know the type of person of which I speak I’m sure. Nothing is ever good enough. The one we were discussing doesn’t like her job. She doesn’t like the people with whom she works. She doesn’t like her spouse. Her house isn’t big enough, or fancy enough. She doesn’t have enough money. Ad infinitum.

Negativity is one of the Four Horsemen, spiritual maladies I have identified that pervade our culture. I group Negativity with Stress as one of the horsemen because both are related to the optimism of the Light (or lack thereof). The Light reveals the wonder of the ordinary. It forces us to see what is truly important in life. The inner Light, shining bright within, allows us to see the beauty of the world around us, the beauty of the spring flowers budding up from the ground, the beauty of a laughing child, the

wonder of our own life- our own consciousness. Things that formerly seemed important- material excesses, desire for power or greatness, etc.- are understood as unimportant by those who find the Light. Realizing that the crushing desires long fretted over are not important results in a dramatic reduction in stress. Appreciating the little things, things we already have, brings a new optimism to life. Through the lens of this optimism, negativity seems ludicrous and, certainly, sad. The Light makes us realize that the joy of life is what is truly important. From this perspective, negativity is irrational because worrying about some little thing simply destroys happiness. Let us work to change that which can be changed and accept that which cannot, but let us never cease to experience the joy of life.

Arrogance is often at the root of negativity. Arrogance, with which many erect selfish boundaries between themselves and others, must be overcome if one is to experience the love of the Light. Arrogance also creates unrealistic expectations about life, which leads to negativity. One spoiled with arrogance thinks himself or herself “better” than others. The arrogant think they simply “deserve” to be handed things in life. It’s not hard to see why arrogant people become negative about their lives when

things don't go their way. This is why we must strive to teach our children that they will not always get everything they want, however hard that may be, but that they will get everything they need, because the truly important things may be found among the most ordinary.

With effort, arrogance may be overcome, allowing the inner Light to shine; negativity may be erased, and profound joy may be

found. Shadows need not darken a heart or a life forever:

### **Shadows**

Dark skies and gathering storms,  
Eerie faces on shadowed forms,  
The inner Light holds at bay,  
As darkness falls into a new day.

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