

FORUM

Fill your jar with simple pleasures



Nigel Alston

Motivational Moments

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present!

—Unknown

A group of business students were introduced to a bit of showmanship recently from an expert on time management.

As the students watched, the teacher pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed Mason jar and placed it on the table in front of the class.

"What does this have to do with business?" they wondered.

Next, he produce 12 fist-

sized rocks and placed them one at a time into the jar.

"Is this jar full?" he asked. The class responded with a resounding, "yes."

"Really," queried the teacher.

Next he produced a bucket of gravel, dumped some of the gravel into the jar and shook it. The pieces of the gravel worked into the spaces between the big rocks.

"Is the jar full?" he asked again.

"Probably not."

"Good," said the expert, as he then produced a bucket of sand. He dumped the sand in the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel.

Once again that familiar question — "Is the jar full?"

The class is a little wiser now and emphatically responded, "no!"

That's when the expert grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it into the jar until it was filled to the brim.

"What is the point of this illustration," he asked?

"The point is," said one of the bright students, "no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it."

Of course, he missed the

point entirely. I have missed it myself on too many occasions. Maybe you have, too. What's the message for you and me?

"If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all." How true!

How can you be happy and focus on the important things. The "Steps to Happiness" can provide an answer.

Everybody knows you can't be all things to all people; you can't be all things at once; you can't do all things better than everyone else; your humanity is showing just like everyone else's.

So, you have to find out who you are, and be that. You have to decide what comes first, and do that. You have to discover your strengths, and use them. You have to learn not to compete with others. Because no one else is in the contest of "being you."

Then, you will have learned to accept your own uniqueness. You will have learned to set priorities and make decisions. You will have learned to live with your limitations.

You will have learned to give yourself the respect that is due.

And you'll be a most vital mortal.

Look at 1999 as a big Mason jar. You are in charge of what goes into the jar. What are the big rocks, in your life for the New Year? Is there a special project you want to complete? Do you want to spend more time with loved ones? Maybe you want to deepen your faith, increase your education or improve your financial situation.

Is there a cause you want to fight for? Do you want to teach or mentor others?

Dare to believe that you are a wonderful, unique person; that you are a once-in-all-history event; that it's more than a right, it's your duty to be who you are; that life is not a problem to solve, but a gift to cherish. And you'll be able to stay up on what used to get you down.

Whatever your big rocks are, remember to put them in the jar first.

When you do, you will be able to stay up on what used to get you down.

Happy New Year!

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Another tale of two families

The press dubbed it a "miracle birth." Corporations, major donors and individuals leaped over each to send them gifts, donations, and baby care products.

Iowa's governor offered to build them a new house. President Clinton called to congratulate them and invite them to the White House. A tabloid weekly offered them \$250,000 to tell their story. And dozens of persons volunteered to provide round the clock assistance with the care of their babies.

Meanwhile, several months earlier, the media ignored the birth of sextuplets to Jacqueline and Linden Thompson, a low-income, African American couple in Washington, D.C. This sparked protests of racism from many African Americans, and a national campaign to support the family. Despite the media's glowing reports of contributions to the couple, these are the warning signs they still may not get the same media and public support as the McCaugheys.

The press has spent far more time debating the "ethics" of using fertility drugs, and of having multiple births than on the family's needs.

Many doctors blame the couple for endangering the mother's life and reducing the chances of the babies, survival by refusing to abort some of the fetuses.

The public pledges of support for the couple are just that pledges. Many

potential contributors say they will wait to see how many of the babies survive before they give.

Media reports make repeated assertions that the couple have not been "open" to the press, have made no statements and given no interviews.

The concern over the possible public underreaction to the couple's plight prompted Houston publisher Chido Nwangwu to appeal for help for the family.

"We want to make certain that these children get the same kind of support as the McCaugheys got," Nwangwu said.

Chukwu and Udobi, like the McCaugheys, need great support.

It will cost an estimated \$2 million to care for the mother and infants before they get out of the hospital.

I'm making my donation toward their care. How many others will do the same?

Donations and information contact:
USAfrica Children Support
c/o The Chukwu Octuplets
8303 S.W. Freeway Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77074
713-270-5500
713-270-8131 (fax)
children@usafricaonline.com

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of The Crisis in Black and Black. His email address is ehutchi344@aol.com



Nkem Chukwu, accompanied by her husband Iyke Louis Odobi, leave the hospital last week. Despite pledges, donations for the couple have been slow to come in, observers say.

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