

# Getting it together

## Taking an 'intentional' role can help solve life's problems

One of my favorite stories is about a bricklayer who hated peanut butter sandwiches. Each day at lunch time the bricklayer, whose name was Charlie, would go through an awesome ritual which baffled his fellow craftsmen. Promptly at noon, Charlie would sit under a tree with the other bricklayers and open his lunch pail to see what kind of sandwich had been packed.

Carefully he would unwrap the sandwich and pull it apart. And with a cry of rage and disgust he would spit out the words "Peanut butter again! I hate peanut butter sandwiches!"

Day after day this was repeated while Charlie's workmates watched in amusement and silently shook their heads. Finally, one friend could stand it no longer. "Now, Charlie, be a real man with a smile as my friend finished his latest peanut butter luncheon. Who don't you just tell your wife

that you don't like peanut butter sandwiches?" "You leave my wife out of this!" snapped Charlie. "I make my own sandwiches!"

AND WITH THAT remark, Charlie said it for all of us. When it comes to our personal happiness, we all make our own sandwiches, although we are not so quick to admit it.

No matter how much it may seem like we are just victims of the odds and flow of fate, the truth is that we all have considerable influence over what seems to us happy to us.

When people accept this truth and live their lives accordingly, they are able to pursue their personal goals on purpose rather than just reacting to the latest incidents of fate. Such an attitude is known as intentionality, a real mouthful of a word coined by existential philosophers and humanistic psychologists like Rollo May.

Individuals who live their lives with intentionality have a realistic understanding of just how much they have contributed to their own personal happiness or unhappiness.

They apply this knowledge to their future, taking it into account in their day-to-day decisions and long range goals, and so they are able to have a very intentional role in providing for their own personal satisfaction.

IN THE ABSTRACT this may seem like idealistic philosophizing, but it is a daily practical issue in counseling people with personal problems.

No matter what seems to have caused a personal problem, the greatest single factor that makes it so hard to solve is a lack of intentionality.

Individuals with marital problems, for example, almost always go to marriage counseling with the expectation that things could be better if their partner would change. Men and women with personal problems are usually quite expert on the faults of everyone else and are quick to describe how other people or circumstances are to blame for their unhappiness.

Rather than looking at their own attitudes and behavior, unhappy people feel that the only solution to their dilemma would be a change in the person or circumstance that is causing their problem. Since this is rarely possible, such an attitude breeds a feeling of hopelessness and passivity.

So these unintentional unhappy individuals usually "solve" their problems by leaving the offending circumstances as in the case of divorce and job changes, or by passively living with their frustration.

In either case, unintentional people rationalize their failures with such beliefs as "married life kills romantic love," "large corporations destroy the personal lives of their executives," "teenagers are impossible to reason with," and "I have been emotionally crippled by the experiences of my childhood."

By  
BOB TRENZ,  
Ph.D.



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## Volunteers

This column, describing volunteer needs in Oakland County, is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau. Inquiries regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Junior League of Birmingham at 643-7272. Requests for volunteer listings should also be made through the bureau.

**ADOPTION IDENTITY MOVEMENT**  
OF MICHIGAN Hazel Park encourages better understanding of the rights of adopted adults. Volunteers are needed to prepare a survey and assist with typing and mailing. Volunteers with professional skills, especially psychologists and attorneys, are needed to advise clients.

**NORTH OAKLAND GIRLS SCOUTS CAMP COURAGE.** Lapeer needs young men age 16 and up to work with handicapped children ages 7-18. Volunteers live in one week at Camp Courage to help with activities for the special education young people in areas such as dramatics, arts and crafts. Available dates are from June 27 to July 23. Orientation begins June 25.

FISH is a completely volunteer organization.

tion providing a 24-hour answering service, referrals, emergency food and clothing, transportation and more within the community. The Farmington-Southfield branch needs volunteers to man the telephone bank and to provide one day each month. A training session is provided. Volunteer drivers are also needed to transport people to doctor's appointments and elsewhere.

## CFG annual meeting slated

The 1976 annual meeting of Camp Fire Girls Detroit Area Council will be held June 9, beginning 8:30 a.m. in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Woodward Avenue at East Hancock.

The theme of this first breakfast annual meeting is "People Who Need People Are the Luckiest People in the World." Adult members and friends of Camp Fire are encouraged to attend.

Following breakfast, the program includes discussion of the Council's new structure, effective in June, discussion of new amendments and by-laws, recognition of outstanding volunteers with National Camp Fire awards, and a talk by the executive director of Camp Fire Girls Detroit Area Council, Dolores Potts.

The meeting is expected to run until 11 a.m. Free parking is available behind the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. Persons wishing to make reservations for breakfast at \$2.50 each, should telephone the Camp Fire office at 653-2670 by June 4.

## Heitis unit plans meeting

The National Foundation for Heitis and Otitis will host its fourth open meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 8 in the Parkview Town Center's community room.

The topic will be "Heitis and Otitis: News and Views." Dr. Joseph B. Kirsner, chief of staff and professor of medicine for University of Chicago hospitals and clinics, will be the speaker.

A question and answer period is planned, followed by free refreshments.

Free parking is available and the public is invited.

## WSU schedules family courses

Twelve credit courses dealing with the family, the consumer and the home will be offered from June 28 to Sept. 11 for the Department of Family and Consumer Resources, through the College of Lifelong Learning, Wayne State University. Classes meet Monday through Thursday in Old Main on the WSU campus. For additional course or registration information, call Anne Linn at 577-5312.

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