

ABCs of Wisdom

E-Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is a Greek word meaning “possessed by god, inspired.”

It is a combination of two Greek words: “en” meaning “within,” and “theos,” meaning “God” come together to make *enthusiasm*. Enthusiasm helps us get through this crazy, often confusing, life.

Most people wouldn't call me enthusiastic. Those who don't really know me, that is. I may not exhibit lots of excitement on the outside. But as my dad used to say, “I'm just bubbling over inside.” I may not be enthusiastic over some events that excite most people like winning a game or a race.

I can become completely enthralled, however, over watching Monarch caterpillars transform into butterflies. I am always enthused when one of my plants blooms for the first time. I'm especially thrilled to see a single mom graduate from college and go on to build a life for her family. And nothing measures up to seeing a new grandbaby for the first time. You may show enthusiasm in your way while others become inspired in their ways. That is okay.

Enthusiasm can be a quiet pleasure. Today it's raining and I am enjoying the cooler temperatures. It enthuses me because it feeds the plants I love so much. To me I see *theos* in that. However, many people in our area would rather not see another drop coming from the sky. I'm also enthusiastic about learning. I'd like to learn something new every day. I devour books that teach me something I didn't already know.

Whatever you are, if you are enthusiastic, it's my bet that you have a passion for life. I have a feeling that you don't hang around with toxic people, and that other inspired people

like to be with you. You are probably a person who accepts the risks that come your way. You are not frightened and you are willing to work hard.

Enthusiasm for life reminds me of little Mattie Stepanek who died of a rare disorder at the tender age of thirteen. He taught love in his *Heartsongs* poetry books. His enthusiasm touched anyone who carefully listened. President Jimmy Carter described Mattie as, “the most extraordinary person whom I have ever known.” Oprah Winfrey names him as one of her all time most memorable guests in the 25-year history of her show. His gift to us was enthusiasm. In spite of his major terminal illness he said, “We all have life storms, and when we get the rough times and we recover from them, we should celebrate that we got through it. No matter how bad it may seem, there’s always something beautiful that you can find.”

People who have done well in the world are usually enthusiastic. However, they often failed before they succeeded. Here are twelve who knew disappointment and failure before they succeeded. See if you recognize them: Jim Carrey, Katy Perry, Oprah, Jay Z, J.K. Rowling, Stephen King, Bill Gates, Henry Ford, Colonel Sanders, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney, and Sir J. Dyson. Each of these went on to achieve major success because they had enthusiasm.

Aldous Huxley said, “The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm.” I say, the secret of *wisdom* is to capture your enthusiasm, hold it close and life will be an inspired adventure.

“Enthusiasm is the electricity of life.” - Gordon Parks