TAKE A BREAK

Despite our busy schedule, we have some spare time. To do something during that period away from routine in our own way gives a break to our monotonous life.

■ **by D. P. Sabharwal**

This is no living, I am sick of it!

You call it life? Get up in the morning, work like a bullock the whole day and then drop dead on the bed to get up and start all over again next morning!

School, homework, tuition, examination preparation, assignments—Oh God! How can I get out of this daily rut?

An hour to reach office to attend to silly monotonous routine for 8 hours, then another hour to reach back home to listen to kids and wife's problems—to tell you the truth, at times I feel like running away to the Himalayas!

Well, these are not the utterances of a few selected disgruntled people. Truly speaking, these are the opinions expressed by the 4 members of the very first family whom I encountered and asked, "What do you think about the life you are living?"

The responses from the other people to whom I posed the same question were almost similar whether he or she was a Government servant, businessman, teacher, housewife, school-going child or an elderly retired person. Almost each one opined that life was certainly mechanical, monotonous and almost boring.

It was at this point that I remembered the 2 lines of a poem I had read almost 30 years ago while at school which goes something like this: "What is this life if full of care! We have no time to stand and stare!"

To be honest, at that time as a student I had never fully understood the true meaning of these lines. Then I could never imagine that by "standing and staring" one could throw out "cares and worries" from one's life.

Well, maybe I was just a child who did not have a full vision of life at that age. Or maybe life at that time was



A few moments with the children AkAAeeps the boredom away.A

not what it is today.

Yes, life today undoubtedly is much more fast, hectic, demanding and mechanical compared to what it used to be a few decades ago. The environment in which we are living today has also changed. It is much more noisy, polluted and devoid of open and green fields.

Furthermore, human relationship too has undergone a sea change. It is rare to find a congenial, friendly and soothing workplace, be it office, school or factory. All these factors lead to stress and tension which ultimately give rise to a feeling of "disenchantment with life" and expressions such as "this is no life."

Well, life or no life one has to live. There is no choice. But yes, one can change the life one is living. It can be made enjoyable and worth living, for, where there is a will, there is a way. But before I proceed any further let me admit that it is easier said than done. As is rightly said by Henry Courtney, "Finding a way to live the simple life today is man's most complicated task."

WORLDLYWISE & OTHERWISE

A costly drink

About 2 years ago, I was travelling by a night bus from Karimganj to Guwahati. We reached Kalain around 8 pm, where the bus halted for the passengers to have their supper.

Just as the bus was about to leave, the young man travelling in the seat next to mine came in with 2 tetrapacks of the mango drink, Frooty. He began to drink one, while he handed over the other to me. When I declined his offer, he persisted on my having it in a very gentle manner till I finally accepted it.

After 9 pm the light in the bus was dimmed and while the other passengers dozed off, I fell into a deep slumber. In the morning when I was shaken out of my sleep by the conductor, I felt a terrible headache. Then I found that my VIP suitcase, the 5 gold rings I was wearing and Rs 5,000 in my pocket, were all missing.

When I asked about the young man travelling in the adjoining seat, I learnt that he had disembarked at Shillong around midnight.

—Ranjit Singh.

The clever purohit

I had gone to Varanasi with my family in May 1992. We had been warned about purohits who were out to fleece the visitors and so after some bargaining I fixed up with one purohit to help us perform all the rituals customary for a Brahmin for a total sum of Rs 2,000. The suave and soft-spoken purohit convinced me that I had made the right decision.

At the beginning, he brought 4 more junior purohits to recite the "Sankalp." Then he handed me Rs 20 to pay them Rs 5 each for their services! I was somewhat irritated at the paltry amount but remained quiet.

For the next 2 days, everything went smoothly. Finally, when it was time for us to leave, he gave me the names and addresses of the purohits of Triveni and Allahabad and advised me how much I should pay them. He declined outright that our arrangement included his accompanying us to Allahabad.

On our return, he again directed us to a purohit in Gaya for the Shraddha ceremony. Sensing my irritation, he hastily added that he had a mutual running account with that purohit and would pay him out of the stipulated Rs 2,000.

This was some consolation to me, as I felt I had been thoroughly fooled by the worldlywise purohit.

—T. N. Srinivasan.

WORLDLYWISE & OTHERWISE.

If you have come across incidents which illustrate the various facets of life, you are invited to contribute to this feature.
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Complicated task

The task may be complicated, but it is neither daunting nor insurmountable. In fact it is not all that difficult. With a little bit of effort, one can change the existing pattern of life to a more lively and worth living one by just adding something more to it. Sounds funny? Well, it may appear so but it is not so in reality. You see, I am talking about "Rest and relaxation." Yes, bring this aspect into your daily life and within no time you will find your dull and boring life changing into a colourful and enjoyable one.

When this simple remedy was suggested, most of the people spoken to come out with, "But where is the time to rest and relax?" Now that may be a common response but in reality the truth is far from it. Even the most busy person is not all that busy —he can spare at least an hour a day for rest and relaxation.

If you have any doubt about the last statement, let us do a simple calculation. 8 hours for work, 3 hours (on the extreme side) for moving to and from work, 1 hour for getting ready, 1 hour for eating and 8 hours of sleep makes only 21 hours. That leaves 3 hours or 180 minutes for every working day. And the free time available on Sundays and holidays which are plentiful in our country in addition to this.

So availability of free time is not the excuse for not resting and relaxing. The problem lies elsewhere. Well, the fact is that most of us do not know how to relax. There are moments in our daily life, in fact many times during a day, when we are sitting idle, when we have nothing to do. At such times we may be resting physically, but mentally we are hardly ever relaxing. And that is the reason why in spite of sitting idle, we find life dull, boring and dragging.

The most simple and effective way of relaxing is taking a break from