



FOCUS &
SUSTAIN

Connections

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The Beijing Queer Choir Unmasked

I recently returned from a music festival in Denver. The GALA Choruses of over 100 choruses and 6,500 singers from all across the U.S. and overseas took to the various stages at the Performance Art Center, Convention Center and other downtown locations, with amazing songs and shows.

One chorus, **The Beijing Queer Choir made its debut at this festival** held every four years for the last forty years. For this courageous and ground breaking group, joining a welcoming and supportive family of singers was very important. You see, in China, **their lives as gay and lesbian people remains hidden**. Family ostracizing, lack of community support, and pressure from the government to marry and have children keep them concealed. They did not want to obtain individual visas for fear of discrimination, harassment and retribution. Finally, three weeks before the festival in Denver began, the group was given permission to leave China and travel on a group visa, keeping their individual information unseen. However, only half of their members (13 of the 26) managed to come to Denver. **Some of the Beijing Queer Choir Members could not step out of the shadows and come to Denver. They feared retribution** at work, persecution in their communities or rejection at home.

The Beijing Queer Choir performs in China with masks on so they can not be individually identified. I had an opportunity to speak with a few of their members who, through their interpreter, said how excited yet a bit apprehensive they were to be here. **They were afraid they would be turned over to the Chinese embassy for being gay or lesbian.**

When they stepped on the stage they all had their masks on. As the interpreter talked about the great welcome and support they had received in Denver, the singers, one by one, took off their masks. It was a powerful moment for the audience to watch these performers sing in front of an audience without masks, for the first time. **Only one singer kept their mask on to highlight the fear many in Beijing have in "coming out."**

As you can imagine, **the audience erupted in howling applause, tears and standing ovation for this chorus armed with courage, purpose, tenacity and commitment.**

They are on their way back to Beijing with new strength and with added confidence to give support to others like them in Beijing. **They learned that they have the support of a world around them.** It was powerful to witness and experience the Beijing Queer Choir as **they made their debut in Denver, unmasked.**

Email me at bhaj@focusandsustain.com to tell me **how you have used courage and strength to identify and become who you are.**

Life is so much brighter when we focus on what truly matters...



This Month's Offer:

For those of you in the Life Focus programs, we will provide an extra 20 minute call with Bhaj for a question or concern you might have about living your purposed life.

This is in addition to your regular August call with Bhaj

Contact grace@focusandsustain.com to take advantage of this exclusive offer.

This offer ends on August 23, 2016

Sports, Food and Politics

We have heard the phrase "*live each day like it's your last*".

We updated it to "*live each day like it's your best*".

- Football and basketball are on high messaging hiatus. So now, we can **turn our attention to the Olympics**: tennis, sailing, horses, fencing, track. Oh., wait... basketball will be featured. With 48 or so sports represented, perhaps a sport or two or three will grab your attention. TiVo will diligently record for me during the day and I will most likely "sail through the twelve or more hours in 2 or 3".
- Produce this month is strong with local corn.** Sweet corn is so delicious raw when the corn is mature. It is so juicy and sweet. **Blackberries are out** and popular with bears and people picking the berries on their hikes, walks and breaks during daily jogs. I enjoy making sorbet with these tasty summer berries. Cucumbers are ready to pick and they provide a great addition to salads and are a twist to the lemon water routine you give yourself. Eggplants and baby carrots are also maturing for an excellent baba ghanoush dip.
- The final countdown is running. **The major party conventions are done and the race to November is in full swing.** The pundits will be lobbing their sound bites wanting YOU to chew on their sinew. Voter beware. It should be a wild ride to the finish line.



"You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have"

Bob Marley



Quick Tips



Money Focus

Sometimes you just **want to take a break**, a break from the financial stewardship you have developed for yourself. So you do, take that break.

And during that break you might say to yourself, “hmmm, I think I **will take a longer break.**” And so you do. And eventually you find that **your break turns into a habit** and it is hard to go back to your financial stewardship. It’s like a friend became a stranger and you cannot seem to reconnect.

When this happens, there is **no need to chastise or berate yourself.** Instead, **open up your financial management software or app** and listen to your mind as it either wants to reengage or resists re-engaging. If it is leading you to re-engagement, go for it, follow that lead. **If it is resisting,** uncover what it is resisting, and **call me.** Let’s get it back on track ...**NOW**

You know that I think and believe the most important, productive and successful way to live is by living through our values. But it is not always easy to do so.

For me, for instance, wisdom is my highest value. But there are times when even I let my emotions rule. **When my emotions override my values, I know I am in trouble** and a situation will quickly arise to bear this out. Whether it is fear, jealousy, envy, greed, desire, or something else I let dictate my actions, I am always amused or frustrated (yes, I know, more emotions) when I realize that I have put aside my values. I then review my values which I have taped to a wall and stop the train of emotions from moving forward. **I then reset my being so that my values can return and give me the clarity I seek to live the purposed life I cherish.**



Legacy Focus

Is there meaning and purpose to your family money?

Family money needs to be separated from individually earned or distributed money. To grow, the family money needs to have its own purpose separate from individual's money. Usually **family money should support the unifying purpose of the family.**

Without a purpose for the money your family runs the risk that **some individuals will assign their own purpose** to the family money, feeling entitled to it, or fighting for their fair share. As a result your family will have a **strong likelihood of losing its wealth in 2-3 generations.**



N. Cog Nito Reports



Ice cream, gelato or sorbet. It's so hard for me to choose between them because I do not know what I am going to get. I love ice cream when I can taste the fruit that summer provides for us.

I want **the fruit to be part of the ice cream**, not chunks of frozen tasteless fruit. So, I now make my own. And it is THE BEST. I can add as much fruit as I want to make that ice cream sing. And it does. **It sings a magical tune every time it melts in my mouth.**

Good gelato is hard for me to find also. I have made some gelato but it hasn't turned out to taste that different from ice cream. Hmmmm, guess I'll have to try another batch. Let's see: raspberry, peach, blackberry...

I used to not like sorbet. It had too much ice and not enough flavor. Then I made my own. Oh my. It's a **berry good extravaganza** with massive amounts of fruit, little cane sugar and iced water. I love it now. Wait, a minute, where was I? Oh yes, ice **cream, gelato or sorbet? Let me know your fav.**



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"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end"

Ursula KLe Quin