

Those Coffee Cups

My reputation as being a lover of coffee has spread far and wide. Its taste is delightful, early or late. I keep a good supply in the office, as well as at home. Fortunately, nowadays coffee shops have sprung up on nearly every corner, so I don't have to go far to find one when I am on the road.

Since the State of Washington is known for its good coffees, that is one of the reasons I enjoy visiting there. When Jimmy Rhodes, Life Care's director of music services (who also is a coffee fan), and I are traveling together there, we figure we get about five miles to the latte.

Against that background, you will understand why I appreciate an article received from Ralph Allen, who recently was an interim executive director for our company at Ocean View Convalescent Center in Long Beach. Allen is not certain of its source, but it is certainly worth sharing:

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university lecturer. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and in life. Offering his guests coffee, the lecturer went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups: porcelain, plastic, glass, some plain-looking and some expensive and exquisite, telling them to help themselves to hot coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the lecturer said: "If you noticed, all the nice-looking, expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the better cups and are eyeing each other's cups.

"Now, if Life is coffee, then the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life, but the quality of Life doesn't change. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee in it."

We thank Allen for passing this along. It is thought-provoking, to be sure.

And the message is: Please don't let the cups consume you. Enjoy the coffee instead. Being happy does not mean everything is perfect. It means you have decided to see beyond the imperfections.

With that, I will now have another cup of coffee.

--Beecher Hunter