

THE SECRET TO BEING SATISFIED

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

As I have been watching the Olympic Games I have been fascinated by the participants' varied responses to their achievements. Every single gold medal winner has been beside himself or herself with excitement. Yet, when interviewed on TV, the first thing out of the mouth of a track and field silver medallist was, "I only wish it was gold." I thought he was joking for a moment, but he was dead serious. His head was down and he was not looking very happy. In his mind the silver medal was just not good enough. By comparison, I was thrilled when I heard one of the young USA gymnasts say that although she had just missed out on getting a medal in a tie-breaker decision, she is still 4th in the world and she is satisfied with that.

So, where does our satisfaction come from? The dictionary meaning of satisfaction is 'To fulfill one's desires, needs or demands'. These statements are proactive because they rely on us DOING something. In the Bible Paul says in Philippians, "I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens." Wow, when we study the writings of Paul, and read of the trials he went through, we know for sure he had found the secret to being satisfied. Paul is not referring to doing anything. His is a reactive statement in that he is talking about possessing a sense of BEING rather than doing. I think the dictionary should have added a further meaning to the word satisfaction – "To experience a sense of well-being in every situation."

So, what makes us unsatisfied? There are messages hitting all of our senses pretty much all day long. TV advertisements dictate what looks, tastes or feels 'cool'. Society says that to be successful one needs to be rich, good looking, wealthy and/or academic. Parents sometimes tell their kids that if they don't win, then they have lost. Only a win or an 'A' grade is acceptable to them.

Is it wrong to strive to be THE best? Absolutely not! However, there are four words missing from this statement. We need to strive to be the best THAT WE CAN BE. Is the sky the limit? Yes. I believe that most of us never reach our true potential because we haven't explored our passions or found our purpose and we don't create the goals we need to find or achieve them. Satisfaction is one of the ingredients of maturity. A sense of well-being is generated whenever a person succeeds in whatever endeavor he chooses. 'Success' needs to be interpreted as 'the best we can possibly be/do'.

Satisfaction doesn't only come from what we can do, but who we can be. This means it isn't all about me. My satisfaction also comes from being a great friend, from interpreting and responding to the needs of others, from giving without drawing attention to my own good deeds. My satisfaction also comes

from being the best parent I can be and from instilling positive values into my children so that they become great role models for their families in the future.

When you look in the mirror, are you satisfied with what you see? If not, ask yourself, "Why not?" Make a list, set some goals and get busy with becoming the best you can be. Do your kids possess a sense of well-being, of confidence, or of satisfaction? If not, then, why not? Are you placing impossible expectations on them? Are they not keeping up at school? Do they not know how to handle failure? Do they know that you love them for who they are? Talk to them one-on-one to check on their spirit. Adjust your attitude towards them if necessary. Give them lots of encouragement. Help your children set goals and create rewards for them when they achieve the goals. Don't just help them discover their passions, assist them to live them out.

Dissatisfaction is exhausting. To be constantly striving for impossible targets or being unhappy because you either can't fulfill your dreams, or don't have any, absolutely wears you out. To be truly satisfied is to be happy with whom you are, with what you have achieved in your life, and with the positive difference you have made to others.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.