

The Complaint Box



DEBBIE GIBSON

Like it or not, we all have a Complaint Box. Do you ever feel like yours is stuffed to overflowing with general unhappiness and unwanted surprises? If you are like me, you sometimes allow the daily annoyances and unexpected change of plans to directly translate into complaints. One day I caught myself stuffing my inner Complaint Box full of anything and everything that I didn't like about my life. After listening to myself complain about too much to do in not enough time, I had to stop and ask myself, *What's wrong here? Any chance of turning some of these complaints around and start thinking of them as infinite blessings?*

Because of those thoughts, I began an experiment. Each evening I open my journal, draw a line down the center of the page to create two columns, and then I write down as many things I can think of from the day under these two headings: *Good Things That Happened Today* and *My Takeaways on Life in the Current Moment*.

Life being such a wonderful event, it wasn't hard to think of things to list. When I paused to take a true inventory of my spirit, heart, and soul, I realized that my Complaints were the result of me feeling overwhelmed by the day-to-day, being too busy, and not paying attention to the many good things that were blessing my day.

After I finished my *Good Things* list, I would then write as many things that I could think of under the heading: *My Takeaways on Life in the Current Moment*. When I paused to think of *My Takeaways*, all sorts of things started to bubble forth – things that prior to this exercise might have been labeled as an obstacle or a problem or a frustration. With a more pessimistic or overwhelmed mindset,

I could see how many of the things from this second list could end up in my Complaint Box. These things are generally the things that zipped when I expected them to zag – the surprises that metamorphosed and veered away from what I was assuming or expecting.

My discovery in the making of these lists somehow turns any thought of complaining around in a more positive direction in a nanosecond. By viewing perceived problems through the lens of *what*

I was learning or I had learned, challenging stuff suddenly started to jump the center line on my journal page into the *Good Things* column. When life events jumped the centerline, I could see the correlation so clearly between “losing” and “gaining.” In fact – even better – I could feel the correlation and I experienced an understanding that calmed my soul and quelled any frustrations about “what wasn't working out.”

Feeling this shift, assured me that all is right with the world, and I began to marvel at the malleability that a different attitude can bring to any moment.

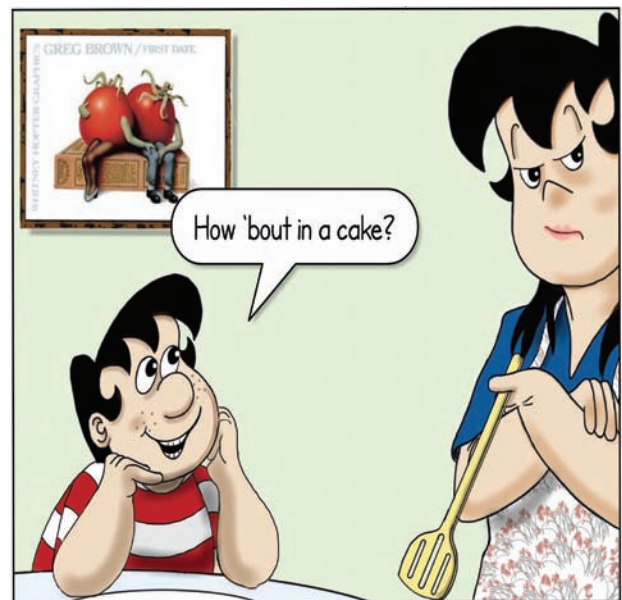
You get the idea. The seemingly “bad breaks” that occur in life – the things that we quickly pop into our heart-and-soul's Complaint Box – have all the potential to set us up for something even better. Be open to seeing the “bad stuff” as “potentially good stuff.” That there are *Takeaways*, if you only look. Life events aren't always so easy to dissect into lists, but I find that if I really stretch and embrace both the *Good Things* and the *Takeaways*, I learn a lot about me and how I can be happier and as I navigate life's surprises.

Who can know what's next? And how can we define *best*? Or what exactly is a *positive* or a *negative*? Be it a *Good Thing* or a *Takeaway*, I am learning that what works best for me is to not see everything as one thing or another. To understand that I don't have a bird's-eye view of every little piece of life that has been set in motion. To be me, and to be happy, and to have a light heart, required that I stop complaining and start paying better attention, to not be so quick to catastrophize the unexpected into something bad and to try to be more open to the process.

Because of my daily inventory keeping, life events are starting to translate surprises in new ways that are changing my mind and my heart. I know that something good is happening right now. And I am *trying* to be ready for the next adventure with a positive mindset.

Buy a journal. Grab a pen. Draw a line. Label two columns, and empty that Complaint Box. You can thank me later.

Rueben



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Support Group For Female Survivors Of Sexual Assault

Women survivors of sexual assault are invited to attend regular support group meetings or individual support if you prefer. Survivors meet in a safe environment with other women who have had similar experiences. Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. Family Crisis Services knows and understands what a survivor is going through. The fact that you are alive and reading this means that you are incredibly strong, courageous and intelligent. We are here to aid in the recovery process with individual support sessions. Please call and let us help. We are a confidential service. For information, call Ranetta Davis (276) 889-8206 or Haley Slade at (276) 988-5583.

Recovery Program

Recovery Program every Thursday evening at Lebanon Memorial United Methodist Church. Supper starts at 6:00 p.m., Worship begins at 7:00 p.m., various open sharing groups start at 8:15 p.m. and all activities conclude around 9:30 p.m. Child care is available.

Child Abuse Prevention 5K Run And Walk

April 29, 2017, 10:00 a.m. at the Russell County Government Center, \$25. People can pick up registration forms in the lobby of the agency or they can go to our Facebook page: Russell County, VA Department of Social Services and click the blue ribbon icon, which will take them to the event page and they can download a registration form from there.

Buffet Luncheon

Buffet luncheon for the benefit of the Historical Society will be held May 20, at 12:00 noon on the grounds of the Historic Courthouse at Dickensonville. Tickets for \$25.00 are on sale at the Cooperative Extension Office, the Dickenson-Bundy Craft House, and the Russell County Tourism Office. Dedication of Tourism LOVE sign at 2:00 p.m. is open to all. For information: Helen Owens 276-889-3383.

Kids Fishing Day

May 20, 2017, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Big Cedar Creek, at the Pinnacles, Russell County. Trout stocked by DGIF, no pre-registration required. No charge, kids ages 15 and under,

free food and drinks, prizes.

Russell County Rotary Club April Schedule

The Russell County Rotary Club welcomes visitors to our weekly program meetings held at 12:00 p.m. at Pat's Kountry Diner. The April Program schedule is as follows:
April 27th-Greg Cornforth-Lebanon Physical Therapy
We hope you'll join us!

Adams Chapel Cemetery In Need Of Donations

Adams Chapel Cemetery, located on 668 from Dickensonville, is in need of funds for mowing and upkeep. Any amount would be appreciated. Send donations to: Clyde Johnson, 1111 Booker Road, Castlewood, VA 24224. Thank you for your help!

Spring Revival

Honaker Church of Christ, April 27-28-29, 2017, 7:00 p.m. nightly.
April 27-Walter Switzerlette; April 28-Mark Gaminde; April 29-Brian Taylor.
For more info contact Minister Randy Taylor 970-9507.
Everyone welcome.

Hotdog Dinner

Thursday, May 11, 2017, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Honaker Town Hall; 2 hotdogs, chips and dessert \$6.00 (pick-up or delivery). Sponsored by Honaker Lions Club. To raise money for fireworks for the Independence Celebration on July 1, 2017.

Fireworks Fundraiser Pizza Buffet

The Honaker Lions Club will sponsor a Special Buffet on Tuesday, May 16th at Pizza Plus in Honaker. The cost of a meal is \$8.99 plus tax. This will include pizza, salad bar, dessert pizza and drink.

This special event will be from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The Lions Club will use all the proceeds from this buffet towards the Fireworks for the Independence Celebration on Saturday, July 1st.

For more information call 276-873-4211, 276-873-6556 or 276-873-7393.

Rosedale Community Connections Will Meet

Rosedale Community Connections will meet the first Thursday of each month at 10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall of Rosedale Baptist Church.

Welcome singles and couples of any age to enjoy devotional, games, fellowship and eventually crafts. Come and bring your favorite dish. 880-0277.

Community Night At Wendy's

Thursday, May 4, 2017, 4:00 -7:00 p.m. Proceeds to benefit the Lebanon High School Boys' Baseball & Girls' Softball Teams. Come out, enjoy a good meal and support these worthy teams.

Church Yard Sale/Bake Sale/Car Wash

Highway Abundant Life Church will be having a Yard Sale/Bake Sale/Car Wash on May 6th, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Rain or shine. Located at 431 South Railroad Ave., Honaker, VA 24260. Any questions call Pastor Seth Shortridge 276-202-2981.

Ribbon Cutting

The Russell County Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Ribbon Cutting for the official Grand Opening of the Renew Salon and Spa on Main Street in Lebanon, Friday, April 28, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. Following the Ribbon Cutting will be an Open House until 5:00 p.m. with door prizes each hour from Renew.

Please join us in welcoming them to Lebanon.

International Tabletop Day 2017

The Russell County Prevention Coalition will be hosting an event in celebration of International Tabletop Day 2017 on Saturday, April 29 from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Elk Garden School Community Center. There will be 20+ tabletop games to choose from. Feel free to bring your own favorite games. There will be free food.

Yard Sales at Church Hill

Church Hill United Methodist Church will be having yard sales Thursday, Friday and Saturday, May 4, 5 and 6th. The yard sales will start at 8:00 a.m. There will be a variety of items for sale as well as hot dogs, fried pies and sodas.

Directions to the church are as follows: At the intersection of Highways 19 and 58 in Hansonville, turn onto Highway 58 and go seven tenths of a mile. Turn right onto Church Hill Road and go to the top of the hill, the church is on the right.

Helpful And Harmful Insects

Butterflies and other helpful insects, such as bees, pollinate flowers and can keep dangerous pests at bay in the garden.

Although it's virtually impossible to count them, insects are the most diverse group of organisms on the planet. Nine hundred thousand different kinds of insects are known to exist. At any given time, it is estimated that there are around 10 quintillion individual insects living.

Gardeners grow frustrated when seeing their gardens infested with insects. In an effort to restore their gardens, homeowners might be tempted to eradicate any bug that moves in their yards. But gardeners would be wise to first learn which insects are hurting their gardens and which can actually help gardens in the long run.

Harmful

Certain insects can be dangerous to animals and plants. The following are a handful of insects that can threaten the vitality of gardens.

Aphids: These insects suck on the juice needed to sustain plants, particularly when they congregate.

Bald-faced hornet: Hornets tend to be an aggressive species that can sting re-

peatedly. Should you find a nest near an entertaining space or garden, it can cause trouble.

Carpenter ants: These ants will burrow into wood causing damage. They may compromise any wooden structure in and around a home.

Locusts: Various species of locust can damage plants and crops due to their voracious appetites.

Treehoppers: These small, green insects mimic the look of leaves, and their appetites can affect crops and gardens.

Red pavement ant: As they feed on all manner of human food, these ants can quickly overtake areas with their staggering numbers and deliver painful bites.

Grasshoppers: Certain grasshoppers, like the red-legged grasshopper, can decimate food crops and transfer parasites to birds when eaten as prey.

Caterpillars: Many caterpillars, the precursor to adult moths, will feed constantly on leaves, stems and other parts of plants. The tobacco hornworm moth caterpillar can damage potato and tomato plants.

Helpful

Plants depend on insects to transfer pollen as they forage, and many insects

are quite beneficial to have around. While some pollinate, others are predators of other pests.

Antlion: A foe of ants, they'll help eat and control ant populations and pollinate flowers. They pose no threat to humans, either.

Big dipper firefly: These colorful insects feast on earthworms, slugs and snails during the larval stage. Fireflies add drama to evening gardens with their twinkling lights.

Garden spiders: Although some spiders can be venomous, many are quite handy to have around the garden. They'll help control pest populations that can damage plants and crops.

Dragonflies: These arial artists that zip around the yard are consuming smaller insects that would otherwise pester plants and humans.

Blue-winged wasp: This wasp attacks the larvae of Japanese beetles, helping to control beetle populations.

Bees and butterflies: Butterflies and bees are some of the best pollinators out there, and each can add whimsy to gardens.

2017 Virginia Coalition For Child Abuse Prevention Moments In Virginia

- Every 7.6 days a child dies as a result of abuse/neglect.
- Every 104 minutes a child drops out of school.
- Every 41 minutes a child in Virginia become homeless.
- Every 125 minutes a child is served by a CASA volunteer.
- Every 5 minutes a child is born in Virginia.
- 5,228 children are currently in foster care in Virginia.
- Every 80 minutes a child is abused or neglected in Virginia.
- Every day, 11 children receive services from a Virginia Child Advocacy Center.
- Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available) 1-800-552-7096. Parent Helpline 800-Children (800-244-5373).