



# Gleanings

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## Did you know?

The English word vocation is derived from the Latin word *vocatio* which means to call.

Source  
Merriam-Webster Online

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## The Cost of Depression

An article in the June 18, 2003 edition of *The New York Times* titled "More Americans Seeking Help for Depression" states that over 16% of Americans suffer from depression severe enough to warrant treatment. The article goes on to claim that depression costs employers \$44 billion a year in lost productive time, while lost production time due to illnesses, not related to depression, is \$13 billion a year. According to a May 29, 2003 article in *The Wall Street Journal*, the current GDP is \$10.4 trillion. The cost to corporate America related to lost production due to depression and illnesses is therefore one-half of one percent (.5%) of which 75% is due to depression. This means that an organization generating \$10 million in revenue a year loses \$40,000 annually due to depression, and a \$30 million a year organization loses \$120,000.

It is interesting to note that the lost production happens while people are at work. Depressed people don't necessarily stay at home. They show up for work, but don't work efficiently. Though the *Times* article quantifies the cost of lost productivity, it is not clear that it takes into consideration the impact of depressed workers on other workers.

What is depression? Merriam-Webster's online dictionary defines depression as "a psychoneurotic or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping". The definition is easy enough to comprehend, but what is the solution to depression?

Traditionally, depressed people are referred to medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and/or counselors. Treatment consists of either talking therapy, invented by Freud, and/or medication. According to the *Times* article, the definition of adequate treatment is "at least eight half-hour sessions of counseling with a mental health professional or treatment with antidepressant drugs for at least 30 days combined with four visits to a doctor." Is this success? The assumption is that treatment is the solution. The principle of cause and effect suggests that for every effect, such as depression, there is a cause. So what is the cause of depression?

Sad to say that the mental health profession does not seem to have an answer, so the solution is to treat the symptoms. While it seems clear that some people have a chemical disorder requiring medication, this doesn't explain every case of depression. Is it possible that the root cause of depression is spiritual? The Bible (Philippians 4:7) talks about a peace that passes understanding. If someone is at peace, will they be depressed? Perhaps the solution to depression is to discover how to find peace. If employers want to increase productivity, would it not be wise to help their employees find the peace that passes understanding. Everyone would win - the employee would be free of depression and the employer would gain productivity.

## Web Site

I am pleased to announce that my Web site is up. The site is simple and easy to navigate. Background information on myself, an explanation of my business activities including comments from clients, and a list of FAQs are included. All newsletters are archived and can be downloaded. I am developing an on-line tape library. The first tape is on the site; others will be added from time to time. For your convenience, I've compiled a list of reference material. I am working on a book titled, **Timeless Universal Principles of Excellent Organizations**. Most likely this book will be published in E-Book format and will be accessible on the web site. Other related books and papers will be available on-line as they are completed. Notification and signup for seminars and other events are also available. I hope you will take a moment and look at the site. Please let me know if you have any questions and/or suggestions.

## Is There Personal Destiny?

Physicists posit that if one knows the position and momentum of each particle in a given system, then one can predict the position and momentum of each particle at any time in the future. While this perspective sounds simple, in reality it is very difficult. The problem is that the equations describing a system of more than two particles become a computational challenge. As a result, physicists developed a macro approach to systems called statistical mechanics. This theory describes the collective effects of a system of particles rather than the individual effects. For example, properties such as temperature and pressure define the collective state of a system. Thus each particle loses its individual identity.

Now let's apply the multi-body system analogy to human beings. Assuming that you believe that the universe was created by God, then the question is—does God create each human being for a specific individual purpose? Or the question can be posited in terms of a multi-body system. Can God solve the multi-body equations?



Some argue that the universe is like a clock wound up by the creator and now left to run down over time. Such a view assumes that, post-creation, the creator is passive toward creation. Others argue that the creator continues to be active in creation. Proponents of the latter approach argue that the creator works with purpose in mind; therefore nothing happens by chance or accident. (Note - Since created beings don't have the benefit of the creator's perspective in every situation, created beings talk about events in such terms as probability and fortune.)

The passive approach reminds me of the physicists dealing with a system of many particles. To know the future of each particle is too complicated. Is this the way the creator views creation? Or can the creator be actively involved in creation and therefore determine the purpose for each person?

If you believe that the creator is personally involved in your life, how does this impact the way that you live? Does this impact the way that you hire people or the job that you have? Do you look for people that are supposed to be in your organization? In his book ***Good to Great***, Jim Collins points out that one key to great organizations is having the right people. Collins' argument implies that (for each organization) there exists a set of right people. How can there be a set of right people for an organization without a creator who determines personal destiny?

**Your comments and questions are invited!!!**



Serving clients by providing business and financial advisory services with wisdom, skill, and integrity.

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Since 1987, Dr. Gerald R. Chester has been providing business and financial advisory services to clients. After receiving his Ph.D. in physics, Gerald moved quickly from the research lab into management. From 1978 to 1985, he managed his family's business, which prospered while growing at an average annual rate of 20%. As a business and financial advisor, Gerald utilizes his rigorous technical education and hands-on management experience to serve his many clients with seasoned balanced judgment. His clients recognize and value his expertise in both business and financial matters. Gerald's focus includes strategic planning, business analysis, business valuations, business plans, mergers and acquisitions, financial planning, investment strategies, investments, and personnel assessments. The Newsletter, *Gleanings*, is intended to provide a venue to share the insight and wisdom gained over the years working with dozens of organizations.

Gerald is a registered investment advisor.