

# Guideline 3 : Contentment



Humility
Patience
▶ Contentment 3
Delight
Kindness
Honesty
Generosity
Thoughtful Speech
16 Guidelines for Life <a href="http://www.16Guidelines.org">www.16Guidelines.org</a>

Respect
Forgiveness
Gratitude
Responsibility
Principles
Aspiration
Service
Courage

## Character Guide: Cona Contentment



Positive chants  
from each guide  
will help you to remember  
the most important ideas.  
Say these over and over to  
remember them.



Remember the fortune cookie that says,  
"It isn't our position but our disposition that  
makes us happy."



## Belly Blues Song

When I see something  
 I like a lot  
 I want to remember  
 I'm glad for what I've got.  
 If I don't look out,  
 if I am unwise,  
 I might take too much,  
 and end up twice my size!

Greedy makes me sorry.  
 It gives me the blues.  
 Take, take, take  
 makes my tummy ache.  
 (Take, take, take  
 makes my tummy ache.)



I I I I  
 IV IV I I  
 V<sup>7</sup> IV I I\*



\*Note:

These are the words/chords for a 12-bar blues song. Ask a music teacher to explain it to you. We are working on re-recording this and the chants. See Appendix 2 for updates, click the note symbol above or go to [http://www.16guidelines.org/wiki/index.php/Ready\\_Set\\_Happy](http://www.16guidelines.org/wiki/index.php/Ready_Set_Happy) and click on [Sound Files](#) to hear the latest version of the Belly Blues and the 16 Positive Chants! If you want to play along, the Blues is in E (of course) and the Chants use C and Csus4. Where is that music teacher...



## Contentment Activities

Try it now:

Cool...

Clear...

Water...



Photo by Caeman Toombs, 10yrs.

### Experiment:

### Not taking water for granted

Get two clean glasses of water as well as some soil from outside. Set one glass of water aside to drink later. Put a few scoops of soil into the other glass. Stir up the soil and IMAGINE while the dirt is swirling around that you don't have any clean water to drink. IMAGINE that you have to drink that water. Don't really drink it, but look at it. REALLY look at it.

Put the dirty glass to the side and get the clean glass of water. Take your time and drink the clean water slowly. Appreciate it. Taste it.

To practice your patience, watch the dirty glass until the soil settles to the bottom. Imagine your mind is calming as the water is clearing. When you are calm and the water is clear, pour out the dirty water onto a plant that can use it.



Aren't you glad you had a clean glass of water to drink? Realize that many people in the world do not have clean water to drink every day. If it was easy for you to get clean water you are very fortunate. Next time you are sad or angry because you can't have exactly what you want to drink, perhaps you can be content if clean clear water is available.



## Try it now: What's on your A List?



People say that contentment is not getting everything you want, but realizing what you already have. Often people who win the lottery are only happier for a short time before settling back to their original happiness level. Try the game below to raise your happiness level for more than just a short time. That's better than winning the lottery!

You have probably seen movies or read books where people realize what is important to them by almost losing it.

They may get separated from their family and then be so happy when they get back together. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could feel that happiness without first having to feel the loss of separation?

# A

### Game:

### Counting Blessings

What is important to you? What would you be sad to lose? Think about, or write down, things in your life that you would be really happy to get back if you were separated from them. Call this your A list.

To play this as a game, sit in a circle and take turns saying people or things on your A list. See how long you can go without repeating anything. It's fine to list toys and possessions, but don't forget family, and your physical gifts like sight, health, youth, and things you like to do or have learned, like how to read or walk!



While playing this game we learned we care about a lot of the same things. Then we learned we like drawing Cona!



## Try it now: Too much of a good thing



### Imagine:

### Built-in Goodness

Take your time to think of a favorite food of yours. Something that you really LOVE. Is this food good? Is it good by its very nature? Does it have goodness built in? Imagine you get this food every day for a week. Would it still be good? Good in the same way? What if it was the only food you ate for a week. For a month. How do you feel about it now?

At some point even your favorite food doesn't sound good anymore. The food itself is not good or bad, it is how you feel about it, and that is mostly in your mind. That doesn't mean you shouldn't enjoy it when you get it – go ahead and enjoy! Be happy! But at those times when you can't have it, remember that it's not as deep down wonderful as you sometimes imagine. This is true of things other than food, too. One child said, "It's like winning at a game. It's fun to win, but if you win all the time it's just boring."



### Try it for real: Am I really hungry?

Are you in the habit of eating at certain times or taking second helpings, whether or not you are hungry? If so, explain to your parents/caregivers that just for a day, you want to eat only when you are truly hungry. Listen to your body. When you eat, once you are no longer actively hungry, stop eating, even if you have food left. For a healthy person doing a normal amount of activity, it will not hurt for one day, even to skip a meal.

Knowing what real hunger feels like will help you to be more content when you have to wait a while to eat, and to appreciate the situation of those who deal with real hunger every day. You will know that you can manage in a situation where plans change. Mahatma Gandhi, a famous Indian politician who believed in non-violence, said, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not for anyone's greed."



## Try it for real: The best meal I ever ate!

“Thank goodness, we get to eat again!”

Have you heard someone say how food tasted better when they were very hungry? Perhaps it was because they were really focusing on what they were eating and not just being a robot, eating mindlessly. In our family, before every meal we say, “Thank goodness, we get to eat again!” It sounds silly, but we mean it! Try the experiment below to learn to be more aware and savor all your experiences, not just those involving food.

### Experiment:

### Experience your food

Choose a meal (or even a snack) when you are not in a hurry. As you eat, concentrate on every mouthful of food. Chew each bite a lot, really taste it. Don't read or talk or watch television. Maybe close your eyes. Focus hard on what you are eating. Did it seem any different than when you eat in the regular way? Sometimes people do this when they want to eat less because they taste their food more and feel full sooner. How did it feel to you?



## Try it for real: On the Rocks -- I have what I need if I don't feed my greed.



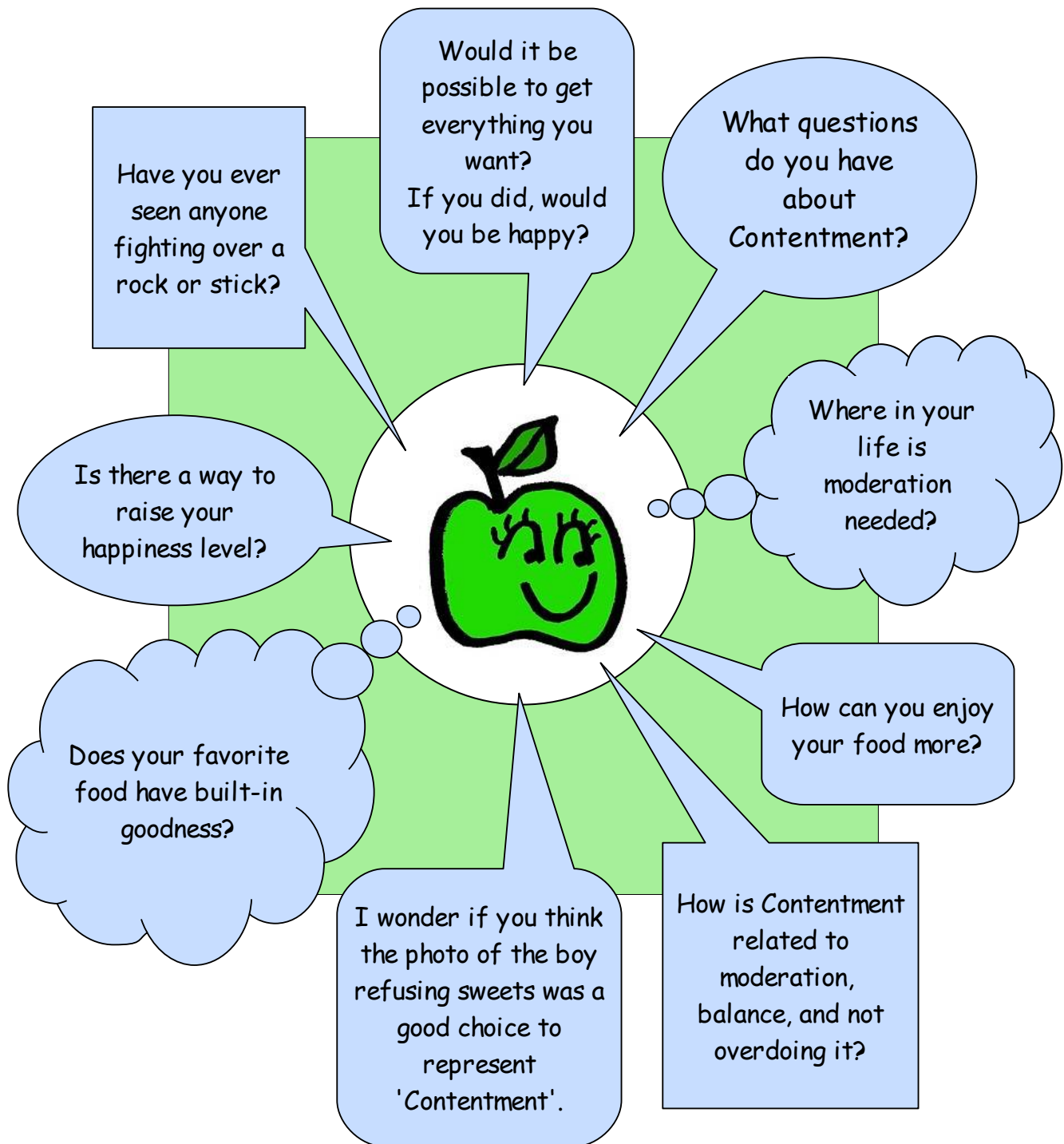
If you are fortunate enough to have a soft drink soon, think about this. When you pour the drink into a glass it takes time for the bubbles to settle. You may wait and pour more, trying to squeeze as much as you can into the glass. What if your glass were a little smaller? Your glass would already be full! You'd be done! Don't worry about getting so much. Try being content with the first bit. It's probably enough. Just because your glass is big doesn't mean you need to fill it up.



Have you seen children playing with rocks when someone wants the same rock and argues over it? It lasts until something else shows up...maybe a frog or a ball...then no one wants the rock anymore. Did the rock magically change? Only the desire for it changed.

Notice this week when this sort of thing is happening to you or others. Our wants, disappointments, and jealousies are mostly in our own imagination, based on false ideas of how great it would be to have that full glass or that rock! Watch how you react so you can be more content in these situations.

## Instant Replay for Contentment:



One ten-year-old said, "Being content makes it easier to enjoy someone else's achievements because you're happy where you are. Why would you be jealous?" And I said, "Well, that leads us right into the next guideline...Delight..."