

## LEISURE TIME AND HUMAN HAPPINESS

*Kari Archibald—Department of Recreation Leadership*

The purpose of my discussion is to define a desired state of being for sons and daughters of God here in mortality and describe what we know, as thinkers and researchers, about how to reach the desired state. Happily, we already know these things from sacred writings and modern-day revelation, but it is enjoyable to find evidence of divine truths in scholarship. As a scholar I feel happily in tune with my Heavenly Father when I read in 2 Nephi 2:25, “Men are that they might have joy.” I am on my Father’s mission in my profession. Since theology is the study of God—his divinity and our relationship with him—it is difficult to see my scholarship as something separate from my theology.

The study of leisure and recreation exists in order to enrich and enhance lives. The field of leisure studies is multifaceted and involves many disciplines. Scholars from the disciplines of philosophy, education, psychology, exercise science, biology, sociology, economics, government, and business (to name a few) may find much of what I have to express familiar. If a field of study has tackled questions about leisure, then recreation educators know that portion of their discipline. I cannot give a full discourse on the philosophy of Aristotle, but I know somewhat of his writings about the relationship between the use of leisure time and human happiness. And so it goes with each of the related disciplines. I hope my review will create a space for expanded discussions with those who do have depth in these disciplines. The science of my profession is to understand human behavior and what makes people happy. The gift of my profession is in effectively teaching and leading others in life-enriching experiences.

Nearly twenty-four hundred years ago, Aristotle posed the question “What is the good life?” He described the good life as *eudaimonia*, or the well-lived life. Aristotle’s word for this type of happiness, *eudaimonia* can be translated as “human flourishing.” According to Aristotle, *eudaimonia* involves a life filled with good works. Honor, wealth, and power are not important, but, rather, happiness is created by activity that causes people to act in accordance with virtues they possess. The well-lived life is possible if a person has the ability to choose and engage in worthy pursuits. For him, unhappiness is when he cannot do good things. Aristotle mused that “happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace” (Book X, Chapter 7). He believed that freedom from having to be occupied was leisure, and leisure was a necessary condition for happiness. According

**The well lived life is possible if a person has the ability to choose and engage in worthy pursuits.**

to Aristotle, *eudaimonia* can only occur if people have leisure, or time to freely choose activities for themselves.

How we use our time is at the core of my scholarship. In 2000 when President Hinckley made the announcement of Ricks College becoming BYU–Idaho, there was much discussion about the courses of study that would be offered. Understandably, the field of recreation leadership was not thought of by many as a high priority offering. Recreation courses were considered nice to have but not essential. It was with our usual professional inferiority complex that I met with Don Bird, the academic vice president at the time, to discuss the fate of the little department I was head of. He listened respectfully as I outlined for him the rewarding and challenging professional opportunities for our students. But I knew this was not the main reason this field of study belonged at BYU–IDaho. For this reason I started to discuss society, families, individuals, values, and spirituality in light of what scholars know about how individuals find satisfaction in their lives. The hard truth is that men and women often succeed or fail in life as a result of their leisure-time choices. Choices concerning the use of leisure time for individuals, married couples, families, and communities can literally be the fount of our joy or the source of our sorrow.

**The hard truth is that men and women often succeed or fail in life as a result of their leisure time choices.**

When we look at the social ills of our current society, they are not limited to, but they do include: pornography, sexual immorality, substance abuse, disease caused by a passive lifestyle, vandalism, gang violence, addictive gambling, all of which follow leisure-time choices. During the five-minute session with Don Bird, I was not able to cover the whole subject, but I managed to communicate the importance of leisure time in creating a life of meaning and depth as well as the perils of leisure time misspent. I argued that we were uniquely suited to provide strong, ethical leaders who could make a profound impact on society as a whole. When the list of the first seven bachelor’s programs to be offered at BYU–Idaho was posted, recreation leadership was on the list.

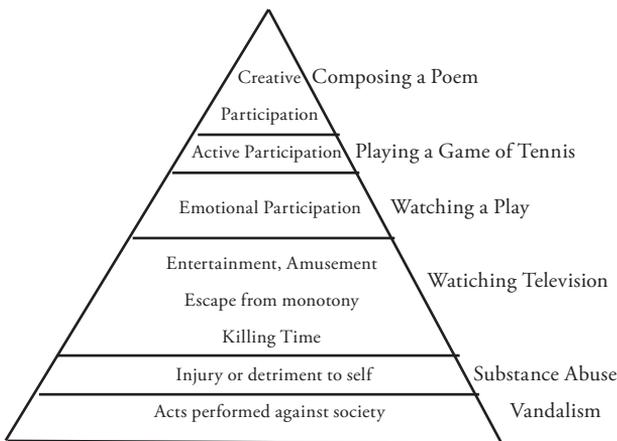
## LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND LIFE SATISFACTION

An early educator in my field, Jay Bryan Nash, stated that, “Happy people are actively engaged in the pursuit of some goal. They belong to groups; they are helping others along the way.”<sup>1</sup> In his book entitled *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure*, he diagramed a pyramid of leisure activities. He challenged his readers to rate their daily activities against this pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid he placed negative activities that individuals might choose, such as vandalism and delinquency, as *acts against society*. Just above these activities he placed *acts against self*. These are less damaging only because they impact the community at a lesser degree, although there are still impacts. Nash listed these activities as

“excesses” such as substance abuse. He would likely include at this level such modern-day options as a sedentary lifestyle, overeating, addictive gambling or any type of addictive gaming, pornography, and any number of other leisure time choices that destroy body, mind, and spirit.

Just above the negative line he placed activities where the individual was a spectator—activities participated in as an antidote to boredom. Examples include things done just to kill time or escape boredom. Nash describes these as merry-go-round type activities, where the rider gets off just where he got on. Examples he gave for the 1950’s included radio, television, motion pictures, pulp magazines, and cheap literature. These same activities could apply in the twenty-first century, and we would probably have to add some leisure choices involving the computer to Nash’s list.

The top three levels of his pyramid described activities which engaged an individual emotionally, then actively, and then creatively. A person would be involved emotionally if he or she was moved to appreciation. Although they did not paint the painting, they still were moved to appreciate the beauty or symbolism of the painting. An active participant, however, is one who, for example, plays in the football game instead of just watching, and the creative level involves an individual who might compose the piece of music or write the poem. Nash boldly challenged us to raise the level of our leisure activities. He felt strongly that too many activities low on the pyramid would result in a dulling of the intellect and senses, while increase in the activities higher on the pyramid would result in progress, development, and enrichment in an individual’s life.



## FLOW AND AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

Research since 1953 has supported Nash’s conclusions. Modern positive psychologists suggest that happiness, or well being, involves both positive

feelings and positive activities. Positive activities do not involve an emotion but a state of being such as absorption or engagement.<sup>2</sup>

Csikszentmihalyi found that physical health is impacted by the use of leisure time. For example, people who are active rather than living a life of vicarious reaction, and who watch television less, have better health. J. B. Nash and Csikszentmihalyi would be great fans of the BYU–Idaho activities program—more participants and fewer spectators.

Mike Csikszentmihalyi and Martin Seligman are pioneers in the field of positive psychology. Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian immigrant, is best known for his theory of Flow, the experience of doing exactly what you want to be doing and never wanting it to end. Flow is a highly gratifying state of being that can involve the mind, the body, and even social interactions. He discovered that these optimal experiences were reached by individuals through a variety of different activities but often in similar ways. After thousands of interviews with people from all walks of life and from all over the world, Csikszentmihalyi recognized that individuals described at least one, if not all, of the following characteristics of a Flow experience.

**Flow is a highly gratifying state of being that can involve the mind, the body, and even social interactions.**

The task is challenging and requires skill

The participant concentrates

There are clear goals

Immediate feedback

There is a sense of deep, effortless involvement

There is a sense of control

The sense of self vanishes

Time seems to stop

Flow has been reported by individuals engaged in tasks at work, such as a surgeon during a successful surgical procedure, a corporate executive closing a contested business deal, or a trial lawyer successfully arguing a case. Csikszentmihalyi also listened to men describe Flow who cut fish into filets.

Others describe this phenomenon while engaged in a freely chosen task such as skiing, playing competitive sports, playing a musical instrument, or painting. Some freely chosen tasks may seem like work to someone else. Home Depot and Lowes have cashed in on the Flow experience people can gain from home improvement projects. I relate to my students my refusal to purchase a snow blower because for some strange reason I often experience Flow while shoveling snow. Strangely enough, I also feel the Flow when mowing the lawn or working in my vegetable garden.

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi make a distinction between gratifying experiences and pleasurable experiences. Pleasurable experiences involve consumption that builds nothing for the future. They are momentary

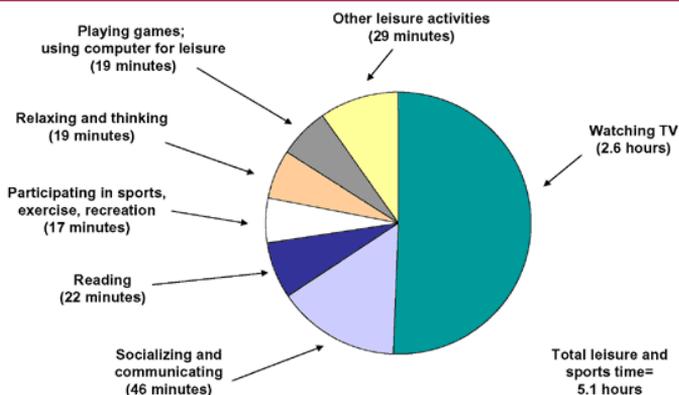
delights like a pleasant smell, a delicious taste, or a warm bath. Gratifications, on the other hand, may build psychological capital.

In one study, Csikzentmihalyi followed 500 teenagers, 250 scoring high on the Flow experience scale and 250 scoring low on the Flow experience scale. The youths who scored high on the scale spent a lot of time on homework, sports, and hobbies. On measures of psychological well being, these young people scored higher than the low Flow kids except that they felt that their activities were not as “fun” as the youth who scored low on the Flow scale. The teenagers who scored low spent a lot of time in front of the television and hanging out at the mall. The high Flow kids were more likely to go to college, form deep relationships, and experience success in life. The research supported the idea that gratifications may build psychological capital that strengthen the individual in the future, whereas pleasures that may seem more enjoyable give an individual little to draw on in the future. Engaging oneself in gratifying experiences requires effort, time, and skill development. There is no guarantee of success. It is hard work.

It is somewhat confusing, then, to see the statistics for time use among Americans. When given the choice of engaging in an activity that would give a person a rich, gratifying experience, or one that is a momentary pleasure, most Americans choose easy pleasure. On any given evening in America, do most individuals choose to read a good book or to watch half-hour sitcoms? Yet survey after survey shows that the average mood of an individual after watching television is mild depression.<sup>4</sup>

**Most Americans  
choose easy  
pleasure.**

### Leisure time on an average day

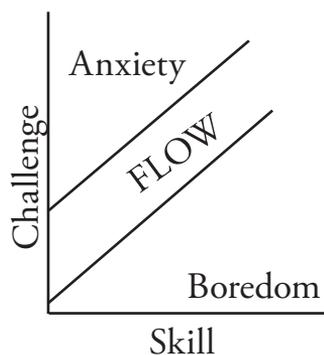


NOTE: Data include all persons age 15 and over. Data include all days of the week and are annual averages for 2006.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Some of you may know that nearly 25 years ago I spent three years as the resident director of the Ricks College Outdoor Learning Center at Badger Creek. As I think back on those three years, I realize that I experienced Flow nearly every day. While I lived there, my days were filled with meaningful projects to maintain and care for the facilities as well as lead and teach the guests. Every day brought a new challenge. Whether it was a blizzard that required me to shovel snow non-stop or catch and saddle 20 horses and prepare a dutch oven dinner for a family home evening group that would arrive that evening, I was completely absorbed. It was not all pleasant. There were many tasks that were exhausting and unpleasant. Temperatures during the winter were often subzero, and insects were maddening during the summer. Yet each morning I awoke with the sun coming through the window, not to an alarm clock, refreshed and excited for the tasks of the day. I went to bed when it was dark and slept a wonderful deep sleep. When I did have free time, I read wonderful books, took long walks or horseback rides accompanied by my dog, visited neighbors, planned and led outings for my Blazer Scouts, or played music on my dulcimer. During the summer I gathered wild huckleberries, raspberries, and strawberries, and when fall came, I gathered rose hips and serviceberries, and made jam. When the Christmas season arrived, I cut my own Christmas tree and used wheat gathered in the fall to make wreaths to decorate it.

At one point my dean visited Badger Creek, and seeing that there was no television there he ordered that one be bought for my cabin. I protested, but the television came. It sat unused during the time I lived there.



The United States scored lower on the average life satisfaction scale than Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands and Norway.

#### PURCHASING POWER AND LIFE SATISFACTION

We know intuitively, and research supports the realization, that money does not buy happiness. In fact the level of life satisfaction reported by Americans in 2006 was only 7.4 (on a scale from one to ten, ten being the most satisfied) despite having a high level of purchasing power compared to other nations.<sup>5</sup> The United States scored lower on the average life satisfaction scale than Switzerland, Denmark, Canada,

Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, and Norway. Interestingly, Ireland's level of purchasing power in 2002 was 52 compared to the U.S. score of 100.<sup>6</sup> The economic boom that Ireland has experienced recently, due to full entrance into the European Union, a low corporate tax rate, and a relaxation of protectionist policies, increased Ireland's purchasing power to 91 by 2005, yet the average level of life satisfaction actually came down from 7.88 to 7.60.

Nation	Life Satisfaction 2002	Purchasing Power 2002	Life Satisfaction 2005	Purchasing Power 2005
Denmark	8.2	81	8.2	81
Switzerland	8.4	96	8.1	85
Finland	7.7	69	7.7	73
Canada	7.9	85	7.6	84
Ireland	7.9	52	7.6	91
Norway	7.7	78	7.6	114
Netherlands	7.8	76	7.5	83
USA	7.7	100	7.4	100
Germany	7.2	89	7.2	73
Italy	7.3	77	6.9	67
Spain	7.2	57	6.9	65
Brazil	7.4	23	6.8	21
Argentina	7.3	25	6.8	27
Chile	7.6	35	6.7	29
Nigeria	6.6	6	6.4	5
China	7.3	9	6.3	10
India	6.7	5	6.2	5
Japan	6.5	87	6.2	73
Portugal	7.1	44	6.0	48
S. Korea	6.7	39	5.8	51
Hungary	6.0	25	5.6	41
Turkey	6.4	22	5.2	19
Estonia	6.0	27	5.1	40
Romania	5.9	12	5.0	23
Latvia	5.7	20	4.7	32
Lithuania	6.0	16	4.6	34
Russia	5.4	27	4.4	29
Bulgaria	5.0	22	4.2	22
Belarus	5.5	30	4.0	21

Table 1: Life Satisfaction and Purchasing Power

Source: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ICPINT/Resourcess/icp-final-tables.pdf>.

“Affluenza,” a PBS documentary produced by John de Graaf, from the Take Back Your Time movement and narrated by Scott Simon from National Public Radio, describes the sobering impact of our consumer society on our families, communities, and the environment. The documentary outlines the symptoms of affluenza—overconsumption and materialism. These lead in the direction of swollen expectations, hyper-commercialism, shopping fever, bankruptcy, fractured families, chronic stress, social scars, and exhaustion of resources. Individuals interviewed in this documentary describe how their buying habits and lifestyles have taken control of their lives. They feel as if they work to support the material possessions they own. Many homes have multiple garages just to provide storage space for the “stuff” that controls their lives. Yet Americans report increasing levels of depression. Some researchers attribute this to the societal treadmill we are on. We may move ahead economically, but we remain in the same position relative to the rest of society since everyone is on the same treadmill.

The rise in depression among individuals of all ages in wealthy nations is staggering. Csikzentmihalyi and Seligman suggest that overreliance on shortcuts to happiness—television, drugs, shopping, loveless sex, spectator sports, and food, to name a few—has made a significant contribution to the depression epidemic. I can hear J.B. Nash’s hearty agreement with this diagnosis.

We could take a look at the decline of ancient Rome to gain some insight into the impacts that these shortcuts to happiness had on that society. As Romans’ affluence grew due to military conquests, so did their leisure time. Political leaders concerned about controlling the masses and public sentiment developed elaborate ways of entertaining the public. The use of large arenas such as the Coliseum were used for frequent, entertaining contests involving struggles to the death between gladiators (or slave warriors), between gladiators and violent beasts, terrifying chariot races, and such violent and unproductive contests. An elaborate industry involving animal handlers, gladiator trainers, musicians, and stagehands was created just to produce the games. Roman society became the ultimate spectator society. The sobering fact is that they were spectators of human and animal suffering and violence. Historians cite the Romans’ inability to use leisure time in a productive manner as one reason for the fall of the empire. We do not have statistics on depression among the Roman people. Our society’s addiction to reality television, where we gleefully cheer and boo as we watch people suffer physically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically, has similarities to the Roman Coliseum that might be something for us to be concerned about.

**Historians cite the Roman’s inability to use leisure time in a productive manner as one of the reasons for the fall of the empire.**

## LEISURE AND CHOICE

For recreation professionals, the term “leisure” has a specific definition. For leisure time to exist, a person must feel free from constraints, have a feeling of positive outcome, be motivated by internal forces, and have a perception of competence.<sup>7</sup> My theology is grounded in the idea of agency, self direction, and ability. The Lord through his prophets has taught us again and again:

Ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for God has given unto you a knowledge and hath made you free. (Helaman 14:30)

For behold it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

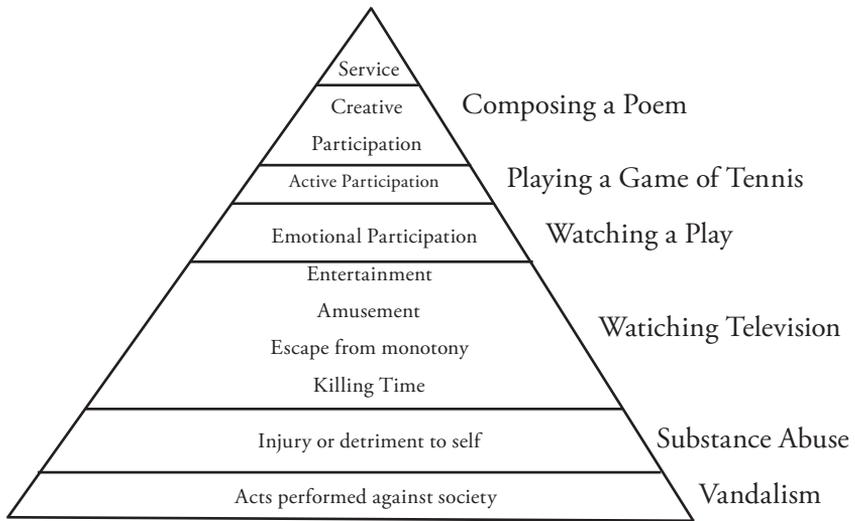
For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward. (Doctrine and Covenants 58:26-28)

A recent grassroots movement called Take Back Your Time is dedicated to encouraging a more balanced American life.<sup>8</sup> Proponents of this movement encourage individuals to choose to have more free time in which to engage in worthy pursuits. Although the types of worthy pursuits may differ from those envisioned by Aristotle, the philosophy is the same as Aristotle’s—happiness is the life well lived. Some suggestions of the Take Back Your Time movement include, choosing family over additional income, using discretionary time to become more involved in neighborhoods and communities, volunteering, developing a more physically active lifestyle, keeping the Sabbath day, having a night dedicated to activities with the family (sound familiar?), simplifying life by simplifying the need for possessions and activities that interfere with family interaction, and so on. Last year’s slogan was “Return to the Table.” Many possible tables were implied—the dinner table with the family, the game board table with the grandchildren, or the card table with old friends.

## LEISURE AND SERVICE

Former BYU Recreation Education professor Alma Heaton took the liberty of adding an additional section to the top of J. B. Nash’s Pyramid of Leisure Activities. Heaton found that those who choose to participate in service to others during their leisure time experience the highest level of satisfaction.

**Service is the most gratifying of all our leisure choices.**



As members of the Church, we have personal experience with this. This summer I took my son to the Missionary Training Center in Provo to begin two years of service in the Oklahoma Tulsa Mission. With Branson, Missouri, and Lake of the Ozarks in his mission, I don't know too many nineteen-year-old males who would write their mother a letter like the one I received after two weeks, expressing his overwhelming excitement and anticipation for going to Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Why are those two years on a mission the "best two years?" Aristotle, J.B. Nash, Mike Csikzentmihalyi, and Martin Seligman understand. A mission is hard, it is a challenge, and it involves skill development, creativity, active participation, service, and all kinds of worthwhile activities. A mission is *eudaimonia*, the well-lived life, and a missionary can experience Flow day after day.

**Many of us have experienced this joy that the Lord desires for us.**

Many of us have experienced this joy that the Lord desires for us. We experience it on missions, while serving in church callings, while attending the temple, while spending time with our families, and when reaching out to neighbors. Are works of service leisure? As Aristotle argued, worthy actions are not possible if a person does not have discretionary time, time free from the necessary tasks of life. We choose to participate in service during the time that we are free from work or self-maintenance tasks. Heaton and Seligman would argue that service is the most gratifying of all our leisure choices.

#### LEISURE AND OUR LIFE'S PATH

A number of years ago, James H. Austin wrote *Chase, Chance and Creativity*, a book describing the ways that persistence, chance, and creativity interact in medical research. He describes four kinds of chance (or luck) that contribute to discovery. The first type of luck is blind luck, in which discovery occurs due to nothing directly attributed to the researcher.

It is accidental luck. The second type of luck is the luck that favors those in motion. Individuals with curiosity and the willingness to explore and experiment are more likely to discover new ideas and solutions to problems. The third type of luck involves chance favoring the prepared mind. Unique past experiences allow the researcher to quickly form new relationships and associations. For example, Louis Pasteur quickly understood that a delayed experiment had created a weakened culture that later protected his research fowls when injected along with a strong culture. The last type of luck involves chance favoring individualized action. Austin proposed that hobbies and activities peculiar to an individual prepare him in unique ways for discovery. Alexander Fleming chose to study and work at St. Mary's Hospital in London. There the laboratory was primitive, damp, and easily contaminated by the London Fog, perfect for growing mold. Fleming had only chosen to study there because of his enthusiasm for water polo, and St. Mary's had a good swimming pool. It was his hobby of swimming that placed him in the ideal setting to discover the power of the penicillin mold.

Our growth and development in this mortal world is not solely dependent on what we learn in a formal classroom setting. Much of what we become is a result of a combination of our earthly experiences, including our leisure experiences. In fact, as James Austin proposed, much of what we do in our discretionary time has a strong influence on how our lives turn out—for good or bad. How many life changing choices such as substance abuse, immorality, pornography, sedentary lifestyles, etc., were choices made about how to spend our leisure time? Could our society and could we as members of the church benefit from some leisure awareness education and the development of leisure activity skills?

**Much of what we become is a result of a combination of our earthly experiences, including our leisure experiences.**

#### CHOOSING EUDAIMONIA

The students in my Leisure and Society class are required to keep a leisure diary for two weeks. During these two weeks they are to record all of the activities they participate in that fit the definition of leisure, freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, creating positive effect, and giving a sense of perceived competence. Some record church attendance as a leisure choice; others do not. Some put fitness activities in their diary; others do not. The students decide if the activity is leisure or not by how they feel when participating in the activity. A meal could be a self-maintenance task or a leisure experience, depending on how a person feels while participating in the activity and the manner in which they participate. I also ask them to record their level of satisfaction in each activity and whether they did it alone or with others, if it was new to them or not, if they did it at home or away from home, and if it involved some form of risk for them. Through an analysis of their leisure choices, they can

develop guidelines for future choices. These guidelines are based on what they learn about their elective behaviors and their level of satisfaction as a result of their leisure choices.

**Many students are shocked by the number of hours they spend on activities that they report as having low levels of satisfaction, such as watching movies or playing electronic games.**

Many students are shocked by the number of hours they spend on activities that they report as having low levels of satisfaction, such as watching movies or playing electronic games. They are surprised that they do not participate in highly satisfying activities more often. Often they claim that they do not have time for more time consuming activities. My goal with this activity is to encourage them to choose activities (even if they are more time consuming) that are higher on Nash's pyramid, to choose *eudaimonia*, and to experience Flow. It is more than fun and games—it is seeking gratifying rather than pleasurable leisure choices. It is building psychological capital, strengthening their God-given virtues, putting them in settings where they can freely choose to exercise character strengths such as creativity, forgiveness, patience, courage, fairness, gratitude, humor, appreciation of beauty, self control, persistence, and love.<sup>9</sup>

One of the drawbacks to teaching about examining leisure choices is the guilt I feel when I don't practice what I preach. But when I do what I know, my life is well lived. On a recent visit to my mother, who lives in Hawaii, George, my husband, and I took a two-day trip to Kauai. It would have been easier and more physically relaxing to just drive around Kauai and get out at the scenic viewpoints to appreciate the beauty. But I told George I wanted to hike two miles of the Kalalau Trail into Hanakapia Beach on the No Pali Coast. The afternoon we spent on the Kalalau Trail in the heat and humidity, climbing up the steep sections of trail, tripping on the roots and lava rock, feeling the strength of the wind on the points of the trail, and looking down the dizzying cliffs to the unbelievably turquoise blue water below was gratifying. It was not easy, it was not always pleasurable, but it changed who I am in small but important ways.

While on the trail George and I created a shared memory as we talked about our family and opinions about world events. We took care of each other by waiting at the top of steep sections, sharing snacks, and asking about each other's welfare. We shared a memory with strangers. We met people from all over the world, newly married couples on their honeymoon, older adults hiking alone as a personal challenge, and families assisting small children on the trail. At one point we helped the mother of a young woman who was feeling ill. We cheerfully gave encouragement to others as they neared the end of the trail, just as we had received the same encouragement and words of advice from others who had traveled parts of the trail we had not yet been on. Occasionally we were asked to take a picture of a couple or family, and they did the same for us. One woman helped us realize how lucky we were that the

trail was open. We had not realized that the trail had been closed for a number of days due to a wildfire. Her information made our hike more interesting as we reached the burned-out area.

As a result of hiking to Hanakapia Beach, we grew closer to each other, interacted with others in a way that would not have been possible in our rental car, physically experienced the wind, colors, smells, and sounds of the Na Pali Coast, and felt exhausted and invigorated by our physical exertion on the trail, ways I could not have been changed by viewing the trail from the highway overlook. The Koolau Trail is a rich, memorable experience for me now rather than a memory of a beautiful scene.

If you take a walk up to our department office in Romney 230, you will find the following quotation from Bruce R. McConkie on the wall: “Recreation is an essential and vital part of the gospel of salvation...a gospel that makes provision for every need of man, both temporal and spiritual.”<sup>10</sup> Our faith has a rich heritage in encouraging balance in our life. Joseph Smith was reported to have explained to an individual who criticized his fondness of playing with children by pulling sticks with them that “a bow that is never unstrung loses its strength.”

Brigham Young is reported to have encouraged the saints to divide their 24 hours by three and use eight hours for sleep, eight hours for work, and eight hours in activities to renew, refresh, and re-create. Wagon and handcart companies coming west always included musicians, and the saints were known to have dances, concerts, and games as they crossed the plains. Some of the first public buildings in the Salt Lake Valley were designed to provide wholesome recreation. At this year’s General Relief Society conference, President Dieter Uchtdorf taught the sisters that in order to be happy they must create and serve with compassion. I can hear a resounding “amen” from the scholars in my profession.

J. B. Nash closes his book *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure* with a story that illustrates the power of productivity in a life well lived. He tells the story in the first person, as if it were his personal experience. He was part of a group of graduate students at a prestigious university. On the night before their graduation, they invited a little-known faculty member to address them. Their choice of him as a speaker was a cruel joke, mostly to demonstrate how much they knew in comparison to this unknown scholar.

The speaker, realizing their purpose, accepted the invitation to speak and used the opportunity for one last teaching moment with these young men. He began by calling their attention to all of the beautiful items in the lavish banquet room they had rented. He spent a great deal of time describing the time, effort, and skill required by the laborers, artists, and workers to create the marble floors, the beautiful tapestries, the cut flower arrangements, the chandeliers, the murals, the cut glass, the

**Some of the first public buildings in the Salt Lake Valley were designed to provide wholesome and worthwhile recreation.**

**At first there were  
muffled chuckles  
from the young men,  
but as they became  
increasingly  
aware of how little  
they knew about  
the world that  
surrounded them,  
the room became  
silent.**

silver cutlery, and the linen tablecloths. As he described each item in the room, he paused and asked the young men if they knew anything about the creation of that item. At first there were muffled chuckles from the young men, but as they became increasingly aware of how little they knew about the world that surrounded them, the room became silent.

Finally the speaker admonished the young men, as they went about their lives' work managing the labor of others, to never forget to value those who create beauty with their hands. To illustrate the point he drew back an imaginary curtain and said, "I would like to introduce you to a young Galilean, Jesus of Nazareth." The room was silent. "I would like to ask you, Master, if there is anything in this room that you could create with your hands." The speaker slowly turned and faced the young men, and said while lifting the linen tablecloth to reveal the beautiful carved oak leg of the table, "The Master says he could build the table; he is a carpenter." ☺

#### NOTES

- 1 Jay B. Nash, *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure* (Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Co., 1960).
- 2 Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: Free Press, 2002).
- 3 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).
- 4 Seligman, 2002
- 5 R. Veenhoven, *Happy Life Years in 95 Nations 1995-2005*, World Database of Happiness, Rank Report 2006-2b, (www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl: 2005).
- 6 Seligman, 2002
- 7 Christopher Edgington, Donald DeGraaf, Debra J. Jordan, & Susan Edgington, *Leisure and Life Satisfaction: Foundational Perspectives, Fourth Edition* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2006).
- 8 J. De Graaf, (Ed.), *Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America* (San Fransisco: Berrett Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2003).
- 9 Christopher Peterson, & Seligman, M. E. P., *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- 10 Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1971).