

## Can You See the Opportunity?

Have you ever been driving to work and noticed something for the first time that was there all along? It could be a beautiful tree, or a house, or a mountain peak. There all along, but you never noticed it. We go through life missing many opportunities to smell the roses. My intention with these articles is to make you consider opportunities to reduce stress and promote health. To that end, let us explore ways to see what is already there, waiting to be discovered.

First, a little known story to illustrate this principle. When Columbus's armada arrived in the New World in 1492 the Native Americans could not see the ships off shore. They could see Columbus because he was a man and they had knowledge of a man; but they had no prior knowledge or experience of clipper ships, so they could not see them. The medicine-man of the tribe noticed changes in the wave action and currents of the water in the lagoon the ships were anchored. After three days he could finally see the ships and explain to his people in way in which their minds could understand so they could also see the ships. Now many reading this article may be saying to themselves, "That is outrageous. Not possible. McQuaid has lost his mind." Ok, that is an understandable first response. The interesting thing I will show you is that this phenomenon is happening every day in your life.

Do the following exercise. Take a \$20 bill and place it face up on a table. Put your hand across the bottom of the picture and ask yourself who is the president? Do you know who it is? Surely your eyes have seen the name, haven't they? Move your hand and see it is Andrew Jackson. In preparation of this article, I thought it was Thomas Jefferson. Keep the bill face up. What is the building on the reverse side? Do you know? Most people don't know what building is on the other side of a \$20 even though their eyes see the building every day. Now turn the bill over and notice what building it is. The lesson is the eyes see only what the mind knows. For many, they don't see the White House until you ask them to think about it first, to use their mind to make the connection.

Let's take it a step further. Turn the bill face up again. What is on top of the White House? If you don't know, how could that be? After all you just looked at it. The US flag is on top of the White House. Turn the bill over face up again. What lines the front of the building? You don't know? Turn the bill over and see the hedge that lines the entire front of the building. If you are like most people you never noticed the hedge. Now let's see what we have never noticed about the White House: chandelier above the door, four columns at front entrance, eleven windows on the second floor, ten on the bottom and a front door, and two trees to each side. Cool. The eyes see only what the mind knows.

Do you think it is possible to reduce your stress and improve your health with the above realization? The answer is yes. Here is how. Concentrate on looking for opportunities to be kind, grateful, forgiving and to have a sense of humor. Some specific examples would be to say to yourself before you go to the store you are going to be grateful and kind to the cashier and bagger. Open the door for someone. Help an elderly person carry their groceries. If someone is angry for any reason, whether at you or someone else, notice this

and forgive them. No need to analyze the situation, just pay attention that anger is present and forgive them. What we are doing is looking for the opportunity to engage in these virtues. We increase our awareness and choose the option to be kind, grateful, and forgiving. You can go to my web site at [drmcquaid.com](http://drmcquaid.com) and print out the articles written to help you see these stress reducing techniques that are waiting to be unleashed from your mind. Once you use your mind then you will see the opportunity to use them in the world.

It is a scientific fact that deep abdominal breathing reduces stress. You have been breathing since the moment of your birth, but have you discovered the power available to you by paying attention to your breath? Deep breathing is like noticing the breath for the first time in every second. Do you see where the power of your breath is? It's right under your nose.

Matthew McQuaid, DPM is a board certified foot surgeon practicing in Lakeport. He has a particular interest in Mind/Body medicine and its impact on healing. He is an award winning author and teacher. Please share this article with a friend. For more information please call 707-263-3727.