



1. I HAD NEVER SEEN TWO PEOPLE AS HAPPY all the time as they were!

They always seemed to be happy. They always seemed to have something secret to be happy about. What did they have in common? I'll tell you!

2. IT WAS THE LOVE OF GOD shining through their faces to the miserable world outside, God's love reflecting off their faces for all to see. That's what it was with these two strangers I had met the previous Christmas. Well let me tell you how it was...

3. I USED TO FREQUENT A BALLROOM dancing studio in a big city and it was an enjoyable place to go to meet people as well as get pleasurable exercise. I was frequently down in the dumps in my personal life. I was approaching 30 years old and unmarried.

4. I HAD HAD PLENTY OF GIRLFRIENDS but I never seemed to find anybody that was on quite the same wavelength as myself. I went to the dance studio for the first time about three years previously to the Christmas I refer to, mainly to boost my self-confidence with the female species of the race.

5. I TENDED TO BE A VERY RESERVED SORT OF PERSON before that time and had relied a lot upon my personal family (which numbered three sisters and two brothers and a lovable mother and a highly respected and loved father) for my personal contact and friendly chats. We were a very close family partly because we had moved around the country a lot following my father's job and partly because we were bonded by a family love fostered by that of my mother and father.

6. SO EVEN THOUGH I LIVED ALONE in a tastefully furnished flat and had all modern comforts including fancy car and clothes, there was an emptiness in my life which had caused me much pain and heartache and left my life very empty in a lot of ways, the cure for which I had never been able to discover.

7. EVEN THE DANCE STUDIO HAD LOST ITS ATTRACTION the year before that last Christmas, and I used to seek solace mainly at work which had by this time taken the place of wife, family and home and had become all these things to me in its own way. I used to really love my work, designing plastic machinery and allied equipment with the added satisfaction of being able to physically work at bringing the designs into reality.

8. MY SIX-AND-A-HALF-DAY WORKING WEEK was the only thing that stopped me going off the rails. I had worked from shop-boy to general manager over 12 years with the same firm and was in fact due to become a partner in the firm. Over the last four years of working there I had not had a holiday, and just as many days off as you could count on your fingers, so as you can see my work was my life.

9. IT DROVE ME TO INDULGE in all sorts of diversions, even poetry.

One Sunday morning when I was wall-owing in self-pity eating my breakfast before my journey to work, goodness how miserable I felt, how low, how lonely!

10. YET I HAD EVERYTHING I was supposed to have deserved. I was fancy free, could do as I pleased, had plenty of money, and time on my hands if I had wanted it.

11. I TRIED EVERY SPORT you can imagine and still managed to get in a round or half-a-round of golf on occasional evenings and Sunday afternoons, but even that lost its attraction.

12. I WONDERED OFTEN, WHAT WAS LIFE ALL ABOUT? Why were we on this Earth? Who or what was it that controlled us? I used to imagine the universe and how small the Earth must have looked from a million miles away and then how small the people would look and why?--Why?--Why?

13. THE QUESTIONS WERE ENDLESS. Was there a Big Brother? Was there a God? Why were the peoples of the Earth all different in their choice of gods? Were they different? The questions were endless, and eventually after frightening myself with the possibility of what was the truth, I used to again roll back into my dull routine life.

14. MY WORK AND MY FAST CAR were my thrills in life. They were the two things that I enjoyed most and could control. My very nature made me restless and my birth sign was often the reason for my loneliness. I was born an Aries and had all the untrained, uncontrolled attributes of the typical Aries Ram.

15. I LOVED FEMALE COMPANY and enjoyed sex, but for me there had to be a deeper bond between man and woman than just a night or two in bed learning about each other and enjoying each other's bodies.

16. THERE HAD TO BE SOMETHING DEEPER, a spiritual bond, an under-

standing, but in my restlessness I would never allow anyone to get close enough to me to find out how I really was inside, deep down inside. I don't think even my family really understood me. They thought I was some kind of a nut, always at work:

17. WHY DON'T YOU GET MARRIED? Why don't you have some time off? --Etc., etc. Was it that I could not face up to the responsibility of marriage? No! I considered myself to be quite a responsible person and still do. Was I happy alone? No! I was the most unhappy person around underneath.--Was I? Why? Why? The questions I asked myself were endless in my search for the truth.

18. WHAT WAS THE TRUTH? I had been a church-goer from the age of seven when I was a choirboy in the Church of England denomination, and I had never been again since the age of 15 or 16, apart from a couple of weddings. But even when I went I had never been aware of the God I was worshipping, our Lord who had sent His Son to Earth to save the peoples of the Earth from a fate worse than death.

19. WHAT WAS THE BIBLE? Who had written it? What was it really all about? It was so long ago I hardly remember what my feelings were at the time. I remember quite a few sections of the Bible and the prayers that we used to chant, etc., but had never really looked into the Bible, never studied it at great length, but had been aware of its content both then and later at school.

20. I HAD UNDERGONE A RENEWED INTEREST when, at about the same time as I started at the dance studio, my dear sister gave me a New Testament and Psalms, because at about that time she had been saved and accepted Jesus Christ as her Saviour, and at the time I wondered just what sort of rubbish this was that she was talking of!

21. SHE SPOKE OF HAVING THREE DEMONS driven from her body and knowing that Jesus was in her heart and was her strength and salvation. What a lot of rubbish!...But it nevertheless left me with many doubts in my own mind. Here was an intelligent young girl who had all these problems and miseries that no one had known about or listened to and had had them cured by the acceptance of a Spirit-being into her heart.

22. WHAT IS A SPIRIT?--I WONDERED. Surely this was nonsense! Who needed spirits and Gods? How could they influence one's life? How could they have an effect on one's life? One's life was one's own, and one could control it if you had the self-discipline and the strong control that I had. One could control one's life as one saw fit.

23. WHAT WAS THIS that the Lord had given us this life by His will? I managed quite nicely: I was healthy, I had a good job, plenty of money, my life was complete, I was happy...I was happy...

24. NO, I DAMNED WELL WASN'T HAPPY! I was one of the most miserable sods around inside. Sure I was kind and happy and joked with people and made fun of myself and lived life to its full in my own way. But happy? No, I damned well wasn't! I knew lots of happy people like my family. They were--no they weren't! They were as miserable as I was!

25. NOT ONE PERSON I KNEW in my circle of friends and acquaintances was totally happy. They were involved in the hustle and bustle of trying to make a living, dress better than their neighbours, have fancier furniture, colour TV before their friends and new cars that took their financial toll on their income at the expense of their bellies and their peace of mind.

26. IN OTHER WORDS, every one I knew was quite the accepted normal person, accepted by other normal

people as being happy and pleased with their lot, but not one of them could really say they were happy or normal.--No!

27. WAIT!--THOSE TWO STRANGE PEOPLE from the dance studio! They were foreigners and were always smiling. They always looked happy. I'd never seen Americans close in my life before, never actually took one in my arms and danced with her before, as is the accepted thing whilst ballroom dancing. But I got quite close to these two and they were always happy.

28. GOODNESS! WHAT A FLURRY they had caused at that quiet little studio! They were a very odd couple. They broke all the unspoken rules of the studio and looked as though they didn't give a hoot either. She kept sitting on his lap and running her long slim unpolished fingers through his hair, kissing him whenever the chance presented itself, much to the jealousy and frustrations of the rest of us there who would just love to have had her sitting on our laps and running her fingers through our hair in public!

29. HE ENJOYED EVERY MINUTE OF IT. He looked as though it was his way of life. He was a different looking bloke. He looked old enough to be her father with a few years to spare, his hair brushed carefully back. He used to wear the same tweed jacket and trousers every time I saw him, his well-worn but cared-for shoes as ever highly polished. His whole presence was of calmness and unhurried humour, his face constantly creased with a smile.

30. SHE WAS MY ENGLISH IDEA of a typical nice American girl, her long hair usually combed in a natural way hanging down her back, her mid-length or super-short clothes always set off with simple shoes and very leg-flattering dark tights or stockings. Her whole bearing was clean and simple, but, as with him

also, she had something about her that was different.

31. IT TOOK ME SOME WEEKS to quite understand what it was, and then I understood: It was in the eyes! Yes, that was it!--The eyes! Those windows to the soul, the tell-tale witness to the inner thoughts. These two people had these really soft warm eyes. They melted as you looked at them. They invited you to look into them. There were eyes that spoke to you. They seemed to say, "We love you!"

32. I COULD RELATE TO THESE EYES so well because when I was with her on the dance floor and she looked up at me and stroked the back of my hand instead of gripping it with icy claminess as is the usual thing and as the stiff ballroom dancing protocol usually demands, it made me purr with inner delight and joy to be with a warm-hearted person who was pressed against my body and with whom I felt completely at ease.

33. AS WE MOVED AROUND the dance floor her smile looking up at me made me glow with inner pleasure and excitement. She was, as I used to call her, my beautiful smiling portable ego-trip. She was so sweet!

34. I FELL IN LOVE WITH HER! She was like a little sister, simple and happy, clean and bright and a constant joy to be with. Unfortunately for me, there were at least 10 to 15 other men there who seemed to have the same idea and wanted every dance with her.

35. THE THIN-HAIRED OLD MAN I thought was her father was so happy to see her enjoying herself with all the men. I think I would have gone green with envy if all these different men were dancing with my girl, but he didn't seem to mind, and in fact he seemed to encourage her to leave his lap and to mix with the other men.

36. HE WAS SO KIND. He was in great demand himself from the older

women, but it was common knowledge that he had a heart condition and could not move around too quickly or dance with too much exertion because of it. But none the less he had a really good time himself and enjoyed a closely embraced shuffle around the floor with a great variety of women, making them really happy with his deep-voiced murmuring and chucklings in their receptive hungry ears.

37. HIS NAME WAS DAVID AND HER NAME MARIA, although at this time she introduced herself by another name. When said with an American accent her name really had an unpleasant harshness about it which was not at all the sort of girl she was. She was so sweet and slim and fairy-like.

38. I USED TO REALLY ENGINEER my chances to dance with her, always making sure I was in the vicinity when a change of partner was called for, but she wouldn't always dance with me even when I was close by. She wanted to keep all her friends happy...I wasn't used to this sort of treatment--I wanted every dance I could...but she had her way. Ha!