

Anybody who has read my stories knows that I am a guy who embraces our differences. Heck, I've used the word 'Diversity' so often, I don't even have to spell-check it anymore, and that alone speaks volumes for me.

People are the most contradicting animal on this planet. We all migrate into repetitious routines that we call our comfort zone, but then we become depressed as we feel our life has no value because it isn't going anywhere. And instead of changing our repetitious routines, we dig ourselves deeper into our routines because, well, nobody likes change after all. Of course this all makes perfect sense to us, right?

Marriages become so repetitiously routine that we end up spending a hundred bucks a week going to counseling. Hey, why not spend a hundred bucks on that night taking your wife to a different restaurant every week? Better atmosphere, breaks up the routine and you can talk about whatever you want to there. And I didn't even charge you for that advice!

We all spend most of our waking hours going through routines that have become so repetitious we can do them without thinking about them. That's what makes us so similar with the rest of the animal world. On the Discovery channel, they call that survival. In our world, we call it boring.

Pastors at churches are always looking for new programs to keep their church family involved and interested. Here's a novel idea: have a policy that every sixth Sunday everybody has to sit in a different location. Kind of a musical pews type of thing. Keep your congregation away from the rut of sitting in the same place week after week after week and they become energized, meet new people and become much more involved in the life of the church and it doesn't cost you a thing. Why do you think Corporate America has 're-orgs' every other year or so? Give them a different cubical, a few different tasks and you keep things fresh and productive - that's called the bottom line.

Now that I've saved marriages, churches and businesses out of the kindness of my heart, let me get to today's topic which frankly has nothing to do with any of this.

I have two programs that I spend my free time helping out with. One is the church youth group, where I serve as a CORE team member - which I have shared with you in a previous

column. The other is a TV show called We Believe, where I serve as a publicist/secretary/ writer and anything else that I can do to help out. Both programs bring me a great feeling of involvement and keeps me from drowning in the repetitious routines of life.

The other day, I met Jim - the host of We Believe - for lunch to go over some of the projects I've been helping him out with. After work, I met up with the CORE team members for dinner to plan out the next couple of weeks of youth groups.

When I got home, I started thinking about my meetings and realized what a contradiction my life has become.

When I get together with the We Believe people, I'm always the young kid. Most of the people involved with the program are older than me, but I never feel left out. My ideas are always welcome and everyone I deal with seems comfortable with me even though I am such a young buck.

When I get together with the youth group of course, it's a different story. I'm the old man and though there is a degree of guardedness which is understood - a fifty year old single guy hanging around a bunch of teenagers? PLEASE - as the kids and parents get to know me, they come to realize that I am not only harmless, but bring a lot of life experiences that they can tap into as they strive to find the paths of life that they wish to travel.

With one group, I feel like the kid, but with the other, I feel like the old man. However, in both groups, I feel welcome and that's the important thing. I'm using my God-given talents to help others out in a positive way and in doing so, I'm creating an environment that helps to make those inevitable repetitious routines almost enjoyable.

Those who know me know that I have always been young at heart, and that probably serves me very well in both groups I'm involved with. Becoming older and wiser is in understanding that those repetitious routines will always be a part of our lives, but they can become a welcome part of our lives if we learn to mix in some activities that challenge our comfort zone a little bit. They call that balance, I suppose.

Just A Thought