

some observations ...

POVERTY INFLUENCES WELLBEING

Children and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds have, on average, lower levels of physical and mental health, and higher levels of behavioural problems.

INDIGENOUS STATUS INFLUENCES WELLBEING

Indigenous children and young people have, on average, much lower levels of physical and mental health.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS

Mental health problems and lags in social and emotional development often appear in early childhood and are predictive of lower levels of wellbeing at older ages.

TRAINING

School staff need to be trained and supported to recognise, address and (where appropriate) refer young people with a range of physical, mental, social and emotional problems.

PROGRAMS

A number of programs have been developed to promote higher levels of wellbeing among children and young people by providing them with positive strategies, skills and habits.

COMPLEXITY

Young people often face multiple, inter-related problems that are best addressed together rather than one at a time in isolation.

COOPERATION

Greater levels of cooperation between schools, health services and other community groups and agencies are needed to address the complex challenges to young people's wellbeing.

PARENTING

Parents and families have a key role to play in supporting the social and emotional development of young people.

picking up a thread ...

Many young people are experiencing a sense of alienation.

- unconnected/disengaged
- not interested
- unable to see relevance/meaning

(a malaise)

Long term engagement and
commitment depend on 'catching'
and 'holding' young people's
interest.

Challenge:

How can we help young people to find personal relevance / meaning...

-- not only in what we teach,

-- but in life itself?

“Spiritual Wellbeing”

- a sense of connectedness to something larger than oneself
- a sense of meaning/purpose
- a sense of personal value



Research suggests that **a sense of meaning** positively influences:


- health
- resistance to stress
- life satisfaction



For most Indigenous Australians, spiritual wellbeing depends on a sense of connectedness to the land, to the sea, to other people and to one's culture. Aboriginal spirituality mainly derives from the stories of the Dreaming.



www.dreamtime.net.au



“There is a substantial and consistent relationship between meaning in life and psychological wellbeing.”

Debats, DL (1996). Meaning in life: clinical relevance and predictive power. *The British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 35, 503-16.



“When you engage in work that taps your talent and fuels your passion—that rises out of a great need in the world that you feel drawn by conscience to meet—therein lies your voice, your calling, your soul’s code. There is a deep, innate, almost inexpressible yearning within each of us to find our voice in life.”

Stephen R Covey
The Eighth Habit



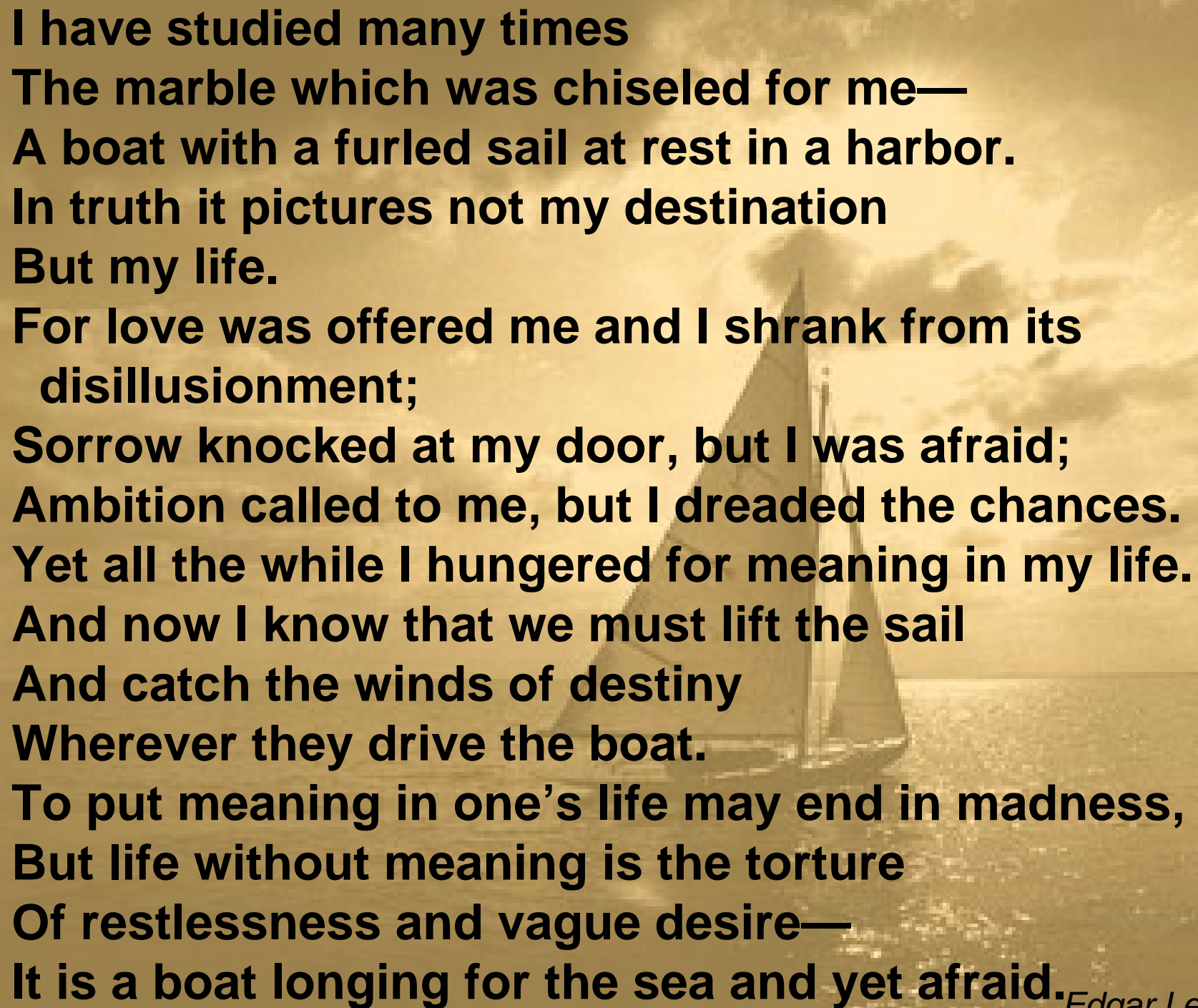
“Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself.”

Viktor Frankl, author of
Man's Search for Meaning

a key to emotional wellbeing ?

-- helping young people to find
meaning in their lives

(voice / passion / purpose)



**I have studied many times
The marble which was chiseled for me—
A boat with a furled sail at rest in a harbor.
In truth it pictures not my destination
But my life.
For love was offered me and I shrank from its
disillusionment;
Sorrow knocked at my door, but I was afraid;
Ambition called to me, but I dreaded the chances.
Yet all the while I hungered for meaning in my life.
And now I know that we must lift the sail
And catch the winds of destiny
Wherever they drive the boat.
To put meaning in one's life may end in madness,
But life without meaning is the torture
Of restlessness and vague desire—
It is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid.**

Edgar Lee Masters