

## Jazz Up Your Life

Ed Hays | Aug. 14, 2009

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Our lives are crowded with old routines that we play out each day note for note just as we have done for countless yesterdays. Daily habits, of course, make life easier since no thought is required to do the next task, but habits also deaden. So consider improvising on your daily life.



Improvisation as a way of life is based on the musical theory, "No music

can be imprisoned by marks fixed upon a page." Improvising isn't just straying off the straight and narrow; it is creatively straying, like when one plays jazz. In this uniquely American music, one hand plays the melody as initially written, while the other hand improvises with notes to accompany and harmonize with the original score. By improvising, an old, familiar musical theme is creatively transformed into something new. Today, as jazz musicians would play an old song in a new way, do the same with some old daily routine and prayer. Jazz it up by harmonizing old routines with new twists, and you'll find your actions and prayers are suddenly fresh and alive.

*Since habits deaden the soul,  
inspire me to jazz up my life  
in how I do the dishes and how I pray,  
and in my ways of loving you!*

From *A Book of Wonders* by Ed Hays

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### **Cause of Death: Ran Out of Words**

The Native American Cheyennes believe that at birth each child is given so many words, and when he or she has used up their allotted amount, they die! Recently, studies may reveal a divine partiality in word generosity since they show that an average American woman utters around seven thousand words in a day, while a man uses just over two thousand. Man or woman, and regardless of whether or not you believe the Cheyenne about being given only so many words to use in life, consider speaking less and listening more. A major childhood achievement is when parents are able to teach their child how to talk. Sadly, no one at any age teaches us how to talk less and listen more. Therefore, the art of being silent must be a self-taught talent, and it may become a most enjoyable talent. The Yugoslavian news agency reported Peter Mustafic of Botovo, Yugoslavia, after not saying a word for forty years, suddenly began talking at age ninety. When asked about his silence, Mustafic said, "I stopped speaking in the 1920s in order to escape military service, and then I simply got used to it and enjoyed it."

*Within your reach are the hidden, rich rewards  
of peaceful enjoyment and insights into others,  
if in every conversation you have the strength  
to hold your tongue and quietly pay attention.*

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### **Prayer action suggestion:**

Jazz up the way you love your neighbor and the stranger. Help another in a new way, maybe a more challenging way or a riskier way.

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