

Foreword

Seven years ago, I was fortunate to preview Jim Moeller's *A Journey of Reflections* and offer a foreword for it. What an honor to now be invited to write the foreword for Jim's latest effort, *Just Thinking*.

As with the previous book, Jim's work can be an important part of your life and a trusted companion on your spiritual journey.

What I've always loved about Jim's writing is his openness and honesty. This book is a window into the thoughts and realizations of a humble and sincere critical thinker, a man who isn't afraid to show his weaknesses and his humanity. In his great wisdom, Jim shows himself to be a common man with the same strengths, faults, and weaknesses we all share. And revealing that humanity can lead readers to a new sense of expansion and growth. For me, one of the most important aspects of this book is a gentle, loving encouragement to rise up and keep pushing forward in moments when I might feel weak or defeated.

In reading Jim's thoughts and realizations, I find that not only can I be inspired, but my own intuitive process is beautifully stimulated. What a joy to awaken to my own spiritual depth, my own abilities for deeper thinking. Jim shows us that we must be cautious of trying too hard when things are not going right. Things aren't going well, so to make them better, "I try harder." And the more I do that, the worse it gets. With each "try harder" moment, we depend less on God. And when depending on God less, we have to try even harder. It's one of the paradoxes of life, and Jim illustrates this wonderfully in

this book.

As you read through this collection of thoughts, you'll no doubt notice that Jim muses on a variety of subjects—the 12 steps, loss, human interaction, love, faith, a higher power. His words also encourage flexibility in life, and clearly show us the futility of worry. I once heard that worry is a bit like sitting in a rocking chair. It's certainly something to do, but it doesn't get us anywhere. Jim clearly shows us that faith in a higher power can alleviate many worries, while creating the sense of peace we all crave.

In imagining the audience for *Just Thinking*, I think that folks with varied backgrounds and interests can find a treasure here. Certainly those in a 12-step program will find truth and clarity to assist with their sobriety. But Jim's approach is non-denominational, and his thoughts will also ring true for regular church-goers, those without a formal religion, those who love life and enjoy deep thought, those who need comfort, and even the average person with a seeking mind. Jim's audience is nothing less than a world in desperate need of these thoughts and reflections.

Although you can easily read this book in a few sittings, I also see this as a regular companion, one that calls readers back on a daily basis. Kept close at hand, this book could offer consistent hope and guidance. Reading even one or two thoughts a day can make a huge difference in your life. Like rich chocolate, each entry can be savored, mulled over slowly and purposefully, adding a bit of clarity and order to a chaotic world.

With *Just Thinking*, Jim Moeller has given all of us a tremendous gift. Approach the book in that spirit. Take these gifts of contemplation and allow them into your life. Like me, I suspect you'll return to these thoughts again and again. This book and these thoughts just keep on giving.

Can there be a better gift than that?

Martha Foley
Big Bear City, CA
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Prologue

In 1980 my controlled world crashed in on me. Thanks to the god of alcohol, I was losing my family, and my drinking had taken me from a nice home to a one-room apartment with a mattress on the floor.

One might assume that my struggles were caused by bad parenting or a tough childhood. Not so! If I could have chosen my parents and grandparents, they would have been the exact same people. Sharing time between my small-town home and my grandparents' farm gave me the best of both worlds. I learned about working at an early age, but enjoyed the benefits of town living with many friends.

After I hit bottom, I ended up in a treatment center in Wickenburg, AZ, called The Meadows. Wendy, my counselor, told me something very important the first day. "Jim, you are going to have to make a choice. You are going to have to decide if you want to live or die."

The next five weeks could best be described as a journey to hell and back. Wendy came at me from every direction as she tried to destroy the ego that had gained so much control in my life.

Somewhere during those five weeks she demanded that I start keeping a journal. If she could not get inside of my head one way, she would do so another way.

I did, and I continue to do so today. Everything you are about to read comes from the thousands of pages of personal essays. Each is a snapshot of a

thought during a particular moment in time.

Those "particular moments" in the eyes of many were slightly unusual. Even at an early age I would argue with family members that we could do more of God's work by helping others instead of sitting in church.

Although an above average athlete and recruited by many colleges, I often showed up for school under the influence of alcohol.

When my college peers were trying to find ways to escape Vietnam, I signed up. After spending six years flying jets on and off aircraft carriers, it was time to move on.

Success in sales came easily as I quickly moved up the corporate ladder until I allowed alcohol to drive my decisions. I was fired.

Along the way I tried many different things. I oil painted, helped cook meals for the homeless, and became a long-distance runner. I also bought a liquor store! This was not a good idea for someone with alcohol problems, but it did speed up the conclusion.

Besides having Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Engineering, I went back to school and was nearly finished with my Ph.D. in psychology when I founded Serenity, a music label. It grew into one of the most respected relaxation labels in the world, continuing to grow until the declining economy closed the stores of 90% of its customers.

I quickly became one of the many Americans that

begged for a job, any job. Finally hired by an office supply company, most nights I packed and loaded thousands of boxes in the beds of semi-trucks only to crawl home exhausted. Eventually I was let go.

It took another 18 months to find work. There were weeks where oatmeal was the only food eaten. Hundreds of phone calls were made to and from creditors as I tried to find ways to repay my debts.

In between all this, I continued to attend 12-Step meetings several times a week. It again emphasized one of the great rules of the universe. When you help others, you are helping yourself as well.

You will read my thoughts about being loving and its evil cousin, ego. Other times I write about staring into the bathroom mirror while trying to capture the honesty that stared back.

On many days the subject of forgiveness is seen in my words, probably because of my personal struggles to forgive myself for past actions.

There are many references to a 12-Step program. The Steps have guided me and millions of others, on a path of personal peace. However, if the day ever comes that I again choose to drink, it will not be the fault of this 12-Step program, but rather my decision to turn my life over to the ways of ego and alcohol. Since March 12, 1980, I have made a daily choice of "sobriety and God over alcohol and ego."

As you read you will see many references to God. No, I'm not talking of a vengeful God with a long beard that decides good or bad in each life. I am talking of a loving presence, a loving energy that is

available to each of us. In my writing, you will see references to Higher Power, Power greater than I, and Source. Each is a way of saying God. As someone told me decades ago, "A horse by another name is still a horse." No matter what one chooses to call God, it means the same - love.

I often refer to ego. My definition of this word is self-absorption, self-centeredness, and "it's all about me."

I know that many of my thoughts may step on the reader's toes. Early in my spiritual journey, my mentor, Dr. Robert Merkle, would start each class with, "Remember, everything I say may be wrong." Do not forget that these are my thoughts, my perceptions, and certainly should never be considered anything more than that.

Blessings to each of you,
Jim Moeller

Is the answer yes, or is the answer no? I doubt any two words can more determine the direction of our future.

Maybe we ought to stop and allow a Power greater than us to enter and help choose the right word.



Pain is horrible and often overwhelming. However, it seldom compares to what I feel when I am fearful of the pain.



I really like learning new lessons; but no matter how much I try, I can't learn anything to help me change my past.



We don't lose our dreams. Sometimes they just get pushed aside and sit there awaiting our return.



I told a friend recently how hard it is to make it through the day without worrying about something that may take place tomorrow.

Even though I can do little about what I am worrying about, if I allow it, it sneaks in from tomorrow and sucks all the good out of today.



What am I supposed to do while I am here on earth? Maybe I'm to make the most of who I am while I'm here.



Maybe my life will get better if I get a new car, a new home, a new husband, a new wife, a new job, or a new...

Maybe what I need is a new mind.



Prayer is difficult. Many people think there are exact words to be said when praying.

So is there a good prayer for those of us having difficulty praying? Sure. Each day we just list the things we are grateful for. I don't think there can be any better prayer.



Turning it over to God is difficult. However, turning it over to God without my assistance and management is even more difficult.



When someone speaks to me, what do I hear? Do I hear what they are saying, or do I hear what my mind decides is being said?



The more I work at not being god, the more the door is left open for God to come in.



I grew up with a religion, and have attended churches most of my life. This is an observation. Religion, unfortunately, is most often about following rules versus a relationship with God.



Sometimes I get so wrapped up listening to my little gods, the one's spelled with the little g's, making it difficult to hear the real God, the one spelled with the capital G.



"All it takes is willpower."

How often have you heard that? How's that willpower working for you when you want to make a change in your life?

Not too well for me either.



I often hear people say, "God has blessed me. God has shown favor on me, etc." I suspect most people only say this when their wishes turn out the way they want them.



Younger people may have younger bodies, but they lack a key component held by the older person: memories.



It is difficult to masquerade as a fake. Finally, and normally at the most inopportune time, the mask comes off and the real person is revealed.



If I believe there is a Power greater than I, and the only time I attempt to connect with that Power is at church on Sunday; then a single certainty exists: I don't believe that there is a Power greater than I.



I often take happiness for granted. Then a change takes place and the happiness disappears. It's after the happiness is gone when I make a discovery: how precious it was.



When emotional pain is at its highest level, I want to become most active in manipulating and controlling what is causing the pain.

When in fact, it is the time I most need to turn it totally and completely over to a Power greater than I.



Often after I make a decision, the consequences of the decision make my life difficult.

My first thought is that I made a mistake in my initial decision and should retreat.

Over time I've learned this: just because my decision caused difficulty, it didn't necessarily make my decision wrong.



“The best things in life are free.” There is a close relative to that statement. “The best things in life are most appreciated after they are gone.”



Valentine's Day. Many believe it is a day to go out of our way to show another how much we care.

Why must there be a special day to show caring? Seems like it should be done every day.



There is a key ingredient to faith. One cannot have it unless one is also willing to believe.



When I sit down with pencil and paper to write, I have no idea what will come out of the pencil.

Life is like that. We can do all the planning we want, but ultimately the day will be decided by what comes out of the spiritual "pencil" residing within.



On a daily basis, am I living what I believe? If I'm not, then it's hard to imagine what I believe is really what I believe.



If I can begin to focus on living one day at a time, I can incorporate a new beginning each day.

If I'm willing to allow a new beginning each day, my day will truly be different.



I cannot prevent occurrences from happening to me. However, I can prevent those occurrences from taking over and controlling the rest of my life.



Each day I have to choose between one of two words. This choice will set the course of my day. "My" will or "thy" will.



I shake my head when I hear we are waiting on our political leaders to lead us. It isn't going to happen!

What is wrong with us listening to the Voice from within and leading ourselves?



As much as I dislike it, some questions just do not have any answers.



With all the chaos in the world, it's easy to be fearful.

When the fear starts to sneak in, one must be reminded that the Bible says 365 different times "to not fear."

