

*The Independent Nation of*

# *Barbequia*

*An easy-going guide to rethinking  
independent simple living*

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## Where The Hell Is *Barbequia*? An Introduction

Barbequia will be hard to find on a map since it is not just a place, but an attitude and a lifestyle, as well. There are many words or terms that are out there that can be used to describe Barbequia, including Nirvana, Heaven on earth, Shangri-La or Paradise. The problem is that these words are of such an esoteric nature that they tend to defy practicality in our crazy world and they seem to be that proverbial dragon we chase without actually grasping it; what we are after lacks the form that our minds can grasp. In spite of the esoteric nature of these terms, most everyone would love to experience any one of them, so we refer to these terms to give you the general idea of what Barbequia is about.

I want to clarify up front that Barbequia is not touted as the true way, the only way or even as the best way for you. It is not the “definitive work” on the subject as there is no such thing. It is merely a guide to something that is proven to work for many and we (there are and have been and will continue to be many collaborators to this dynamic work) are putting it in print for our own reference and to share it with anyone who is interested. Glean what feels right with an open mind and leave the rest as a possibility in the future – or not. This is an ongoing work and, while the attempt is to define in linear terms what Barbequia is, will not really be possible as Barbequia is different to everyone and exists on so many levels of the human experience.

Several years ago I reached a point where I realized that happiness was derived from who we are and what we do – our attitude and lifestyle – not what we had. One of

the simple pleasures I enjoy is the back yard and patio. I spend as much time as possible out there decorating, trimming, pruning, planting, resting in the swing, eating breakfast or dinner that prepared on the barbeque grill, and doing a lot of talking and sharing with those closest to me. It all started when I rented a very small house from a good friend in Portland Oregon. It's an older home with a fenced yard in a working class neighborhood of Southeast Portland. After several weeks of minor modifications, decorating and some TLC, we created what we called our "Little Cottage". We spent many hours in the yard wading in our little above ground swimming pool to beat the heat of summer, drinking a beer or two on the patio while we talked, and cooking up a storm on the barbeque. To me, this was Heaven on Earth and some of my most memorable moments have been spent in these surroundings.

We had already named our little home Simon so it seemed appropriate to name our back yard as well. After all, it was where we went to get away from the stress of work and a crazy world. There were a few simple rules: No fighting or contention (although friendly debate is encouraged); no negativity and criticism. This would become a safe haven for the expression of feelings, thoughts and emotions; a very open and inviting, safe environment - a refuge from daily "reality". After a bit of thought about the name, we came up with Barbequia, a union of the quintessential summer barbeque and Utopia, which soon after became "The Independent Nation of Barbequia".

Since that time in Portland, the concept of Barbequia has expanded incredibly and it has come to represent the qualities of Nirvana, Heaven on earth, Shangri-La and Paradise in a practical way. Barbequia now encompasses all aspects of life: the physical shelter we call home, our recreation and the places we go to recreate, spiritual life,

financial life, our interaction with others, our profession; in short, all that we do becomes based in Barbequia and therefore a part of it.

The purpose of this book is to share in some depth the concept of what is now called Barbequia and how to apply it in a practical, simple way. It is important to be open to the concepts and realize that the specifics (places, events, scenarios, stories, and people) are for illustrative purposes only. The specifics of what I am sharing are *my* Barbequia, and your Barbequia (or whatever you decide to call it) will be different in form and practicality. However, the concepts are Universal Principles that I cannot take credit for - only share - as they have come to me from far higher places than my own mind.

As we proceed, keep in mind that in all areas of life, growth of any measureable nature has an inherent degree of discomfort, even pain closely associated with it. Barbequia by its design and nature will require in many cases some radical thinking, some uncomfortable confrontation of old beliefs, paradigms and thought patterns, not to mention the creation of new habits all of which promote personal growth which in turn may produce some emotional and maybe physical discomfort. The beauty in this is that it is only temporary and the benefits said growth will provide overwhelmingly dwarf any discomfort to the level of insignificance. I guess what I'm really trying to say is it aint always easy but it's definitely worth it.



## **The Independent Nation of Barbequia – a Definition**

As I mentioned in the Introduction, Barbequia is not just a place, but also a lifestyle. Barbequia is the created in the combination of place, physical surroundings, environment, and activities that promote happiness, love, respect, growth, fun, recreation, pleasure, and self-fulfillment.

At first, it may seem that the concept of Barbequia is based in selfishness as it revolves around the individual, couple or family and is all about us – what makes us happy – not about pleasing or impressing anyone else. The first step towards the fall of Barbequia is doing something to please the ego, or worse yet, to please or impress someone else. Barbequia is a very personal, intimate place that inevitably becomes sacred, adding to its power, as we will explore in future chapters.

For the Independent Nation of Barbequia, “Independent” is not meant to imply any form of physical segregation, separatism or succession from any society or political entity; in fact, it has nothing to do with any of these. In Barbequia, our independence is that of thought, expression, and belief systems, as well as independence from negativity, capitulation or compliance for the sake of acceptance. Barbequian independence embraces personal individuality, open-mindedness, non-judgment, financial integrity, emotional health and an out-of-the-box approach to anything and everything. Independent means that we accept responsibility for our decisions and for their effect on

our life and on those around us. We embrace the power of choice and know that we are exactly where we choose to be at any given time or station in life. We make no excuses for our self, but realize that we can modify any condition by choosing differently. Independent means we are non-dependent on outside sources for approval, a sense of worth or self-esteem, as we know these are all controlled by our choices.

The word Nation denotes a group of people of one or many origins of like mind and communality in purpose and existence. It is much more than a mere geographical area. The Nation of Barbequia, while almost redundant by adding the word Independent, is exactly that – an independent group of people striving to implement the virtues and concepts of Barbequia in their lives. For the purposes of this book, therefore, we are all citizens of the Independent Nation of Barbequia, or can be.

The creation of your own Independent Nation of Barbequia entails the assimilation, implementation and practical application of these principles, qualities and virtues in our life to the highest degree possible. Barbequia is an on-going process so there is never a point when you can sit on your laurels and feel like you have “made it”. This attitude is a destroyer of Barbequia. We aren’t about thinking we are “enlightened” because once you think you are you just shut the power off to any light. However, we are about the pursuit of enlightenment. We are less about any kind of result and we are all about enjoying the process, the moment. Barbequia is about truly living in the present and not for “when I retire” or when “I have created my wealth” or “when I have this or that”.

Barbequia is about enjoying the abundance that already exists and we sometimes fail to see. It’s about appreciating the beauty of our reality and the ease with which it is

changed or altered. It's about understanding that "Energy flows where attention goes"<sup>1</sup> and focusing our attention carefully. Barbequia is about fostering an attitude of gratitude in all aspects of life. It's about recognizing the abundance of what really matters in life, and focusing on that, rather than on what we think is missing. This book is meant to be a practical introduction to these aspects of our existence, so welcome to the inner halls of the Independent Nation of Barbequia.



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<sup>1</sup> King, Serge Kahili (1990). *Urban Shaman*. Simon & Schuster.



## Ego Feels Good, Barbequia Feels Love

Barbequia as we mentioned is all about you. It's about doing what you love and enjoy. It's about living your dreams now and working to perfect them over time. (In Barbequia we reserve the right to alter, cancel, modify or otherwise adjust our goals and dreams at any time – if not all the time.) It is about creating a place that is your personal sanctuary that goes with you wherever you go, and that lets you live in your own little world while still interacting with the crazy one. It's about being at peace with yourself, others and the universe.

You will notice that in the descriptions of Barbequia there are no references to “feeling good” and, in fact, the few made are to illustrate what we don't want. Instead we refer to being at peace. If you think back to any moment that really “felt good” you will notice that for it to do so, there had to be some ego involved. Give it a shot – think about any moment, memory, event, that really made you feel good. Picture it in your mind, relive it, and recreate that feel good moment. Now this is where I usually get an objection because my contention is that no matter how righteous or noble your moment, if it made you feel good, it was ego-based and therefore neutral. By neutral I mean that whatever you did, created, or thought is neutralized or weakened by our Ego's drain on its energy. Okay, so here we delve into some hocus-pocus. For those of light mind, follow along and you'll get it; for those who need to understand the science – look at it as a metaphor.

Every thought, action, event, and moment in time we participate in has a certain amount of energy. It can be looked at as the potential to realize, karma points, or a degree of “deserve-ance of blessings”. However you look at it, there is energy nonetheless. The problem with ego is that it is such an energy hog. I am certain we have all spent time with someone with a huge ego. Do you know one of those people that can’t seem to get enough of themselves, and the topic of every conversation is them? It can be exhausting. But no matter how much you feed that ego or they feed it themselves, they can never get enough. Have you ever known an egocentric to all of the sudden stop and say, “Okay, I have had enough of myself, from now on it’s about everyone else”? That’s because ego is a black hole – it sucks up anything around it and never seems to get enough.

So what’s the difference between “feeling good” and “being at peace” and why should I strive to be at peace vs. feel good?

Feeling good is when you just handed the homeless mother a \$20 bill and she broke into tears as she thanked you and blessed you, and you walked away with that damn Id-dance-a-jig-if-I-could-dance-a-jig-and-not-look-like-an-ass feeling in your chest. While the deed is noble and certainly a blessing to the homeless lady, the effect is telling of the spirit it was done in. While ego feels good, being at peace or Barbequia feels love - there is little emotion involved in the outcome other than love. This allows the energy of what we do to be used in its entirety for the end or reality we are creating or participating in without draining any off to the ego.

To illustrate this concept a bit more, let’s look at some historical examples at the risk of cliché. When I imagine what being at peace looks like I imagine someone like

Gandhi, Mother Teresa, a Zen Master or Jesus of Nazareth. I imagine them based on my study of their lives, conducting themselves quietly, and living the principle of don't let the right hand know what the left does. Somehow I don't picture Jesus jumping up and kicking his heels while saying, "yes!!!" after resurrecting Lazarus. I'm certain Lao Tzu didn't say, "Who's your daddy" as he penned the last chapter of the Tao Te Ching, and Gandhi wasn't chanting, "go Gandhi - it's your birthday" as his philosophy of non-violence effectively changed a nation and brought down the grip of a tyrant. And yet I am certain that in each case, it felt just right. They operated out of love and felt love in its purest form as they experienced life and shared their enlightenment with others.



## Enlightenment

Now here is a word that evokes reactions in others that cover the spectrum of human emotion. To the “New Age” crowd, it is viewed with reverence and as the ultimate goal. On the other side of the spectrum the word evokes disgust and near nausea. No matter where in the spectrum your views or definition of enlightenment lie, and whether you call it “a perfect knowledge of all things, understanding the mysteries of God and creation, reaching a degree of perfection”, or whatever - it is a process - and a goal. So for purposes of this work, we would like to clarify the Barbequian view of enlightenment, so as we refer to it, there will be no emotion evoked at all, just understanding of what we are talking about.

A lot of people spend a lot of time and money on self-help type books, seminars, New Age theories and philosophy in order to become “enlightened”. All of us are searching for something to help us feel like we have a grasp on what is going on around us spiritually, emotionally and more importantly, what is going on *inside* us. We may have become disenchanted with our social or religious circles, we may just feel like we don’t fit in; we may have self-esteem issues or any number of things that motivate us to become “better”, or improve ourselves. While these are all noble causes and worthy of addressing, far too often we are looking to the outside for the answers to our hang-ups when the answer is inside us. Let’s face it - if you had parents, you are screwed up and if you are a parent, you’ve screwed up your kids! Nobody wants to, but we get our

hang-ups and complexes through our relationships, upbringing, and environment and most of it comes about during our formative years. So, the fact is we all have issues and challenges to overcome and hence strengthen our character as well as the whole of the world experience. The beauty of this is that it is exactly the way it is supposed to be.

In Barbequia, enlightenment is the process of understanding our self, others, nature, and the spiritual aspects of life. It is NOT a state of being that comes with a diploma after so much reading, learning, and seminars or even knowing what the hell Deepak Chopra is talking about (although there should probably be a diploma for that). Enlightenment does not come from books or seminars - that is knowledge. Enlightenment comes from experiencing life with an open mind and heart.

It seems that we spend so much time trying to figure "it" out, that by the time we do, "it" has changed on its own and our time figuring "it" out was pretty much wasted. We as humans, just like life itself, are very dynamic, and when healthy, are constantly changing. So it makes sense to make wise use of our study time - especially when it's about trying to figure things out.

While books and seminars (knowledge) are important, they are just as useless as the beautiful encyclopedia I spent way too much money on and never used, if we don't know what to do with the information. If we are acquiring information due to a sense of lack or emptiness, or a drive for self-improvement or self-esteem, then we are setting ourselves up for some disappointment and frustration. First of all, information is not always true, and yet there are always threads of truth in just about any information. Knowledge is only knowledge when the information is accurate. The only way to know if the information you glean or choose to accept is accurate is by how you feel about it

and how you implement it in your life. If it works for you, then it's your truth. Useful knowledge will tend to be uncomfortable because it implies personal responsibility for everything we are, do, say, accomplish or fail to accomplish. Useful knowledge will compel us to move out of our comfort zone and address issues we may not want to. But when we do, we feel a degree of excitement, but more so a higher level of power and self-confidence. This in turn allows us to learn deeper and more powerful things. The secret to doing so is to experience life with an open mind and heart.

Notice we say experience life – not live life. Everybody lives life – going day to day with his or her routine, throwing in some fun, excitement while working to accomplish something in the end. Very few people experience life because it requires some letting go of outcomes. It requires trusting that the Universe will give us every opportunity we seek and at the same time simplifying what we seek.

How can one experience anything other than stress in what we know as today's world? Our values are focused on physical achievement – a bigger home, a nicer car, better clothes, and we go to church on Sunday to feel better about it all because, after all, what we are really working towards is “eternal life” or “Enlightenment”. I don't mean to offend the avid churchgoer; I only mean to present the possibility that what we say we want and what we do to get it are two very different things. Experiencing life may very well include going to church, but it means realigning our daily actions with our values and letting go of the traditional focus of accumulation and gain as the ultimate goal.



## Be Your Own Best Friend

All the information in the Universe is only a bunch of letters and numbers unless we can assimilate it and implement it in our life. But when it comes to information about being happy, at peace, living a loving life, we need some fertile ground to plant the seeds that will grow into Barbequia. That fertile ground is us; who we are, our attitudes, our outlook and most importantly our “in-look” or how we see our Self.

I have a friend with a very friendly and cheerful personality. She has always worked with people in some type of customer service scenario and has a way of making everyone go away feeling happy. She has a philosophy that she shares with anyone that asks her if she is ever in a bad mood (not a common occurrence). Her philosophy in her own words is as follows:

“I am very selective of the people I spend time with since I want to surround myself with positive upbeat people. If I were stuck with someone else 24/7 I would want him or her to be in a good mood, so why would I want to hang out with myself if I was grumpy? The way I see it, I have to be with myself twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, so if I don’t want to hang around a grump, why would I be one if all I have to do is choose not to be?”

This insightful philosophy is so simple and yet so profound. Being cheerful and happy is a choice, regardless of the events that surround us. In 1985 there was a very



large earthquake in Mexico City that caused a vast amount of death and destruction. During the long weeks of rescue, recovery and clean up, the environment took a toll on most of the volunteers, public servants and the surviving residents. There was a nurse that stood out from the masses that was a Red Cross employee working on the front lines of treating the injured in the emergency room of a small clinic in the south part of Mexico City. I don't recall her name but I will never forget the effect she had on everyone's life as she greeted every patient with a warm smile and a word of encouragement. No matter how stressful the workload became, she chose to be upbeat and positive, reassuring the injured as well as their family. She compassionately comforted the family of those deceased and cheerfully served her patients, never letting on to the gravity of their injuries. One patient in particular who had suffered massive internal injuries and broken bones stated 6 months into his recovery that this particular nurse was the reason he was still alive. "She was so calm and peaceful and she never said a negative thing about my injuries. In fact she constantly spoke to me about the things I would do when I recovered. My day started with her smile and I will always be in her debt for what she did". Those are powerful words of appreciation for something as simple as being upbeat and positive. The effect we can have on others is really beyond our ability to comprehend and yet the lion's share of this effect is on us, and how we see our Self.

A true friend is one that has the best interest of everyone at heart. A true friend is positive and builds on the positive, and rejoices in the accomplishments of others out of love for them. To be a true friend, we must start by being so to our Self. If we let "the grump" or "the downer" rule our mood time, we will notice that we attract the same

type of people. If we choose to be upbeat and positive and be around that type of people, it will become increasingly easier to become that on a permanent basis. There is a Spanish proverb that says, “Tell me who you associate with and I will tell you who you are”. While this may be a bit too black and white for most tastes, the people we choose to be around are a good indicator of what we are like as we all have an influence on each other. This emphasizes the importance of being selective about the people we associate with on an on-going basis. By this I don’t mean to imply that we should be rude to anyone or shun anyone, but I do mean that we may want to focus our effort on developing relationships with people that are positive, upbeat and that have qualities we would like to emulate. We also advocate making an effort to actively avoid people that may have a negative effect on us. Part of being your own best friend is selecting positive friends for yourself. Let’s face it; it is not anyone’s job to save the world or to cram our personal philosophy down the throat of someone that isn’t interested or ready. So why would we choose to associate with people that will bring us down? Life is too short to spend time trying to “fix” (most of us call it “help” since it is easier to justify) someone else – especially if we understand that we can’t help anyone to progress and grow until we help our Self, and the process of doing so will inevitably have a positive effect on those that *are* ready. And those that are ready will inevitably have a positive effect on us as well. Be a true friend to yourself by seeking the company of positive people and avoiding those that are not.



## The “Need” for Approval

Everyone feels a need for approval at some level and at some point in their life, and some go to their grave still clinging to this perceived yet unsatisfied need. Expecting approval from outside sources, and worse yet, basing our level of self-esteem on said approval, is similar to waiting and somehow expecting to win the lottery to solve our financial problems. In our minds we may think we deserve every penny of it because maybe we have bought more tickets than we can justify over the years. Obviously waiting for the lottery to solve our financial problems is asinine, but is it all that different from waiting for someone to give approval when they haven't and normally don't? Even if they do in other cases, if we are waiting for something that up until now hasn't come, maybe there are more productive things to do with our time and energy.

A very basic principle of Barbequia is to live independent of outside sources of approval for self-esteem. The reason for this is that outside sources have absolutely NOTHING to do with either. We are who we are, and based on your spiritual or religious background, you are an integral part of Universal creation, you are a child of God, you are a part of God/Goddess or God/Goddess is manifest through you. Whatever your view on the matter is, we all have a core of divinity or divine potential. We will start from the premise that we believe we have divine potential of whatever sort works for you. The fact is, we are far greater than we see ourselves as being and therein

lies the key; and until we come to this realization, we will tend to seek approval from others.

By definition, approval requires a judgment. In order to approve, we first need to evaluate and assess, then based on *our* frame of reference, we make a judgment and hand down a verdict – approved or denied (disapproved). By looking for that from others, we are asking them to do that which we all want to avoid – pass judgment– and yet we go through life whimpering about how we want people to stop judging us. No wonder we get caught up and confused in the downward spiral of the whirlpool of the “need” for approval. Approval from or for others is a vicious cycle leading nowhere we want to go.

Barbequia is about loving acceptance that needs to start internally and then it can effectively be shared. While it is possible to accept others without giving our self the same courtesy, you will notice the qualifier “loving”. The difference between accepting and lovingly accepting is the difference between resignation and honoring. To merely accept someone including one’s Self, all that is needed is to resign one’s Self to the perceived reality and conform. To lovingly accept someone including one’s Self, requires seeing and honoring the divinity in all of us regardless of our lifestyle and choices. Our lifestyle and choices will have their own fruits, which we can enjoy or dispose of accordingly and they are for the individual and the individual alone to deal with. The choices we make have no reflection on the degree of divinity within us, only our level of recognition of that divinity. Ponder that for a minute.

Loving acceptance is the divine substitute for approval and an integral part of a Barbequian life. The way to receive anything that matters is to give it away freely. By

striving to lovingly accept everyone, we will consequently feel the receipt of the same in our own life. It is the perfect starting point for eliminating the “need” for approval.

Maybe we don't exactly love our self to give that loving acceptance to others, and that can be a frustrating scenario to contemplate. However, there is a very simple solution. The first step is to want to love our self, and then all we need to do is act as if we do. It is a proven fact that if we act in any given way long enough, we will eventually adopt it into our belief system or lifestyle. In order to begin lovingly accepting our self so we can do so for others may require a bit of the philosophy I call “fake it 'til you make it”. If we start from a desire to lovingly accept our self and begin acting as if we do (i.e. lovingly accepting others) we eventually will and in both cases the power and integrity will grow exponentially to the point that it is an integral part of who we are.



## 6

### **Pick Your Battles**

Life is replete with events that will play on our fears, which will tend to manifest themselves in anger. If we look at any moment of anger in our past in an honest way, we will see that the underlying emotion is fear caused by a sense of lack of control. The driver next to us swerves into our lane nearly causing a wreck. Our adrenaline starts pumping and the fear of potential injury sets in. At this point we have a decision to make – to be grateful nothing happened, let the adrenaline run through our system and go on our way or to be angry and flip the person a one-finger salute risking an escalation of what most likely started as a mistake.

Your teen-age daughter arrives home from a date several hours late. The thoughts of all the possible scenarios have run through your mind playing on your fears for hours. As she skips through the door with what to you is a stupid grin on her face as if nothing has happened, you have a choice. You can lay into her and yell at her about how irresponsible... what the ... blah, blah hell was she blah, blah ...damn-it! Or you could choose to sit her down and explain how worried you were and the reason you were worried is because you love her and how she won't be using the car for a week or going on a date for a month and you hope next time she can show you that she is as responsible as you think she is as you give her a hug and tell her how glad you are she is alright – but she is still grounded.

What I want to illustrate is the fact that we have a choice as to how we will react to ANY situation. We can choose to allow our fears to take control and manifest themselves in anger, or we can choose to identify our fears, and realize that they are just fears and deal with them appropriately.

The same principle applies to being offended. When we allow our self to be offended, it is because an event has played on our insecurities (fears) and our response is indignation, hurt, anger, revenge or any combination thereof. Being offended is a choice and choosing to be offended is the weakest response to a threatening event. It requires no effort other than allowing the offensive scenario to play in our mind and our insecurities will take it from there. The choice was to allow our self to be offended. On the other hand we can realize that when an event takes place that plays on our insecurities, we can choose to see the reality that the event is only an event and it has no reflection on who we are.

The case where a person directly attacks another verbally is a classic scenario where most people take offense. The Barbequian philosophy is that one person's insult is only their manifestation of their own fears through anger - it has nothing to do with the reality of the person being attacked. The recipient of a verbal attack can choose to be offended or choose to realize that another person's words are just words in frustration, a reflection of how they feel about themselves, but third party words cannot change who we are.

As we implement the Barbequian philosophy in our life, we will notice that we conduct our self in a calm, easy-going, manner and we will be our Self with quiet

confidence as we come to appreciate our divine nature. When we are in this state, we cannot be hooked into anger.

Another aspect of picking your battles is not allowing yourself to be drawn into an argument. An argument is nothing more than a contest to prove who is right. A friend of mine is a great example of someone who will not argue – she has no need to be right. If she has a differing point of view on any given subject, she will merely say something like “what do you think about ...? Or how do you feel about...?” Rather than feel the need to be right and prove it, she will merely ask questions and listen to the answers with an open mind. She knows that another person’s point of view is just that, and if they see it black and she sees it white, then it is black to them and white to her. By asking questions, she can understand why they see it black and not white. There is a big difference between a friendly debate and an argument, and while a debate will open up a world of new possibilities and points of view, an argument is a narrow-minded approach to imposing a point of view regardless of the possibility of alternatives. In Barbequia, a friendly debate on a controversial subject, or any subject, is welcome while the participants are of open mind and have no need to be “right”.

Last but not least, prioritize what events you will allow to put you in a reactive mode. Life has a multitude of small fires to put out or tasks that could be done at any given time. It is important that we prioritize the things we do and things we react to so as to not sacrifice our values and goals for short-term distractions. A while ago, I was engaged in a conversation with a friend about a very personal matter he was going through that was having an effect on his relationship with his wife when my phone rang. Of course we are conditioned to answer the phone when it rings because ... it’s



ringing - so I did. After about 5 minutes of meaningless conversation on the phone, I returned to the discussion with my friend to find that he no longer was as interested in speaking to me about it. I gave a higher priority to the phone than to what was really important at the time and I lost an opportunity to share in the life of someone I care deeply about. Since then I have become best friends with my voicemail. It is okay to not answer the door or the phone if what you are doing is important. Hell, it's okay to not answer just because you don't feel like it. Pick your battles and reduce your stress.



## **Barbequia is Personal Independence**

As we have pointed out, the term independence in association with Barbequia has nothing to do with separatism, segregation or succession. The term refers to a state of non-dependence on outside factors or influences for our happiness and well-being. As we come to terms with who we are and mature in our understanding that we are an extension of the Universal Creative Force, and as we embrace and celebrate our individuality, our confidence will grow to levels of quiet dignity never before experienced.

When we understand that we are no better or no less than any of the other billions of forms of life that share this planet with us, but rather we are an important part of the collective that makes the Universe such an awesome example of balance and perfection, we will understand that pride and judgment are a foolish waste of energy. This particular concept never fails to spark a bit of resistance in the more “traditional” circles I associate with. Our western religious background has instilled this sense of elevation over all other forms of creation and in our arrogance we have come to accept this delusion of grandeur as fact and acted upon it in a destructive way.

The Barbequian view on this matter is one of equality with all of creation in terms of our “importance” with the understanding that each creature has different roles. We choose to elevate ourselves along with the rest of creation to a single level of perfection and balance where none is more important than the other in the big picture.

This attitude is not one of demotion, but one of rising above the realm of ego and entering into that of humility. True independence requires humility in order to truly free our self from our personal prisons of narrow-mindedness, judgment, depression, stress and capitulation for acceptance.

Our level of personal independence is directly proportional to and driven by our level of humility. It is interesting how the word humility is viewed in such a negative way in today's world. It is viewed as weakness and a lowly state when, in reality, humility is shedding the ego, the need to judge, the need to amass and be recognized for what we have, and is an attitude of quiet dignity and stately poise that comes from the supercharged self confidence it engenders. Where is the lowliness in that?

There are attributes or qualities that we can develop that are not only conducive to, but a vital part of, Barbequia. The development of these qualities is an on-going process, as is the implementation of Barbequia; a process to be enjoyed and experienced in order to learn what works and what doesn't. Again, it is remarkable how many people look to books to become suddenly happy, transformed, enlightened or saved. What would be the point? Let's say that was possible and all we had to do was read a book and *viola* - instant transformation. Then what?! I don't know either and have no interest in exploring something that isn't there. The development and implementation of these attributes is inevitably a process to be enjoyed.

As we shed the ego and develop a sense of humility and self-confidence, we will start to see and appreciate our own personal quirks, tendencies, likes, and tastes and we will allow these to be expressed in our words, actions and dress. Barbequia is about the discovery of new tastes, look, behaviors and habits through exploring the spectrum of

possibility with an open mind. When we can manifest our individuality through our outward appearance and we are open to that manifestation, reserving the right to change at any time, we will discover a new side of fun to life.

Now let's not confuse a desire to rebel with a desire to explore our taste. When we do it in a spirit of celebration of individuality in humility, we will find we are more successful at accurately portraying that individuality. Not only is this a fun process, but also very revealing and healing when done in the proper spirit. Manifestations of anger and rebellion weaken us, while those of celebration and exploration strengthen us. Barbequia is about exploring new things in all aspects of life and adopting those that work for as long as they continue to do so. The trick to enjoying this process of exploring new things is to have and maintain an open mind. We will benefit immensely by broadening our horizons and being open to new things, cultures, food, places, music, people, clothing, furnishings, art, and in essence all things that will certainly enhance the quality of our life.

Barbequia is freedom from the need to judge and condemn. To judge is such a debilitating thing and its ugliness is responsible for unimaginable pain, death, destruction, sorrow, damaged relationships, broken homes, wars, racism, hate and insecurity. Nothing positive has come from the perceived need to judge and yet when we are able to remove that need from our life, the difference it makes in the quality of our life is beyond what feeble words can describe.

It is important to differentiate between judgment and wisdom in choices. Every day we are faced with the need to assess and choose in order to determine the ongoing course of our life, and this is a normal and necessary process. Judgment on the other

hand is applying a label or adjective to associate with the situation or person based on our limited frame of reference rather than merely choosing the course we will take from this point forward.

The interesting thing about judgment is that our conclusions are never accurate nor can they be, as they are based on our own insecurities and frame of reference. Since nothing in creation shares our exact frame of reference then we don't have a valid standard to compare to or judge by - life is far too dynamic for that. When we judge others or their actions, we are merely comparing them to what we think we should do under similar circumstances and who the hell are we to assume another person's experience is anywhere similar to our own? Easy enough to vocalize, but striving to live this principle can be a challenge.

At one stage in life I worked as manager of a pet store in a large shopping mall in Portland, OR where I came into contact with a very wide variety of people, from the rich and elite to the homeless and the conservative to the flamboyant. One morning a customer came into the store and as I glanced up at him, I was shocked by what I saw. He had a shaved head that was covered with tattoos, his cheeks, lips, eyebrows, ears, nose and even the back of his neck were pierced and had some form of hardware run through him. He was over 6 feet tall, dressed in a leather jacket, jeans and boots. His hands were tattooed and my comparatively conservative frame of reference immediately threw me into judgment mode as I verified the phone number for mall security and reluctantly approached him to help him quickly before he scared away any "normal" customers. My assistant who was far more mature than myself in this area beat me to him and greeted him as she always does in her cheerful way and helped him

get the food he came in to purchase for his pet rat. After helping several other customers I realized that she was still talking to this guy and seeming to enjoy it. As they walked over to the register to check out, I joined the conversation and as I spoke with him, I realized how immature and stupid my judgment had been. To make a long story short, this gentleman was the kindest, most sensitive customer I ever met at that store. Over the following months, he taught us great lessons of love and respect for animals as he shared his love for them with us. He taught us lessons in love for others as we watched him interact with other customers and help answer their questions in such an unexpected gentle way. But above all, he taught us not to judge a person by his outward appearance, which brought us to the realization that we just can't judge at all. I hate to think what I would have missed out on had I not stepped out of my comfort zone and joined in that conversation that day.

Barbequia is that place where we can freely and safely experience independence of thought, expression, beliefs and the weakening effects of fear, negativity, judgment capitulation and the need to be accepted. It is a place in your heart, your home, your work, your back yard and your life where love and humility are the emotions of choice and growth, learning, sharing, acceptance and understanding are the way of life.



## Financial Independence

By financial independence, I don't mean independently wealthy. It means living within your means and striving to simplify your financial life. It means finding the lowest comfortable lifestyle, attaining it and appreciating it for what it is. If you are thinking, "what the hell does that mean?" that's okay, it will make more sense as we go on.

For more years than I care to admit, I labored under the delusion that I would build my wealth, and live my dreams the American way and live happily ever after. I was successful, however, at proving that no matter how much you make, it will never be enough as long as you are merely focused on building wealth.

The Barbequian philosophy of financial independence incorporates at the core level being at peace with and grateful for who you are and what you have. There are basic needs that every human has, but there are degrees of luxury within those needs that can go from the most basic to the most opulent and excessive. The trick is to be in a place personally and spiritually that allows you to determine what that minimum common lifestyle is, free from the influence of the ego. And on the flip side, if you will let go of the ego enough to honestly explore this issue you will find that the more you simplify, the more you grow.

I grew up in a wealthy environment for the better part of my life. My father is a successful entrepreneur and he provided what anyone would call a privileged lifestyle to my family. We lived in the resort city of Cuernavaca, Morelos just south of Mexico City on a paradisiacal estate with maids, gardeners and all the luxuries money can buy. I was a very lucky person in the eyes of many and I was a cursed person in the eyes of others -and both were right. My parents were very religious people and we were brought up under the philosophy that “obedience is greater than sacrifice” and needless to say we were all pretty gung-ho about our beliefs and our religion.

We all grew up to hold positions of leadership in our church and we all learned the entrepreneurial drive from Dad, which carried over to our adult lives as a great foundation for living “the good life”. At the risk of inspiring the need to deploy the Waaaaahmbulance, while we had all the luxuries a human can want, I can honestly say that I do not know my dad. While driving a brand new sports car from the time I was 15 was pretty cool, I would have given anything for my dad to go camping with me, or take me fishing, or just spend some time with me. I would have given anything for my dad to have taught me some respect for my mother through his example rather than his belt. And while I don’t mean to demonize my father, because he is a great guy, my point is that money isn’t everything and, in fact, it is almost nothing in the realm of what is truly important. And yet we spend most of our life chasing after it.

I have to chuckle when I see these late night ads for programs that you can buy to teach you how to create wealth. I find it interesting how over the years they have evolved from the “get rich quick” of the 80’s to the philosophy of creating wealth so you can help others – through a business model based on “integrity”, “honesty,” “a desire to



help others". This has a huge appeal to a populace of the new millennium with a broad focus on political correctness, sensitivity, and enlightenment, where the so called "New Age" thing is increasingly chic and religion is becoming a central part of life again. The marketing of these programs is very effective and there are a lot of people that truly believe in and subscribe to the philosophy of creating wealth in order to help others that are "less fortunate". I have to wonder why, if their plan is so successful, they are spending so much time and effort selling the plan rather than executing it. Could it be that selling the plan is more profitable?

I have some very good friends that came by to visit and share their new business venture with me. They told me how they went to the seminar and were impressed with the presentation so they bought the "starter kit". They were so impressed and so desirous to participate in a program whose very foundation is to create wealth so you can bless the lives of others, that they traveled to various cities around the country to attend further training seminars. Now they have set up their LLC, printed their fliers and are anxiously waiting for the phone to start ringing. This particular program helps people who are in financial trouble avoid losing their home by buying it. They even have a nifty little magnet sign on their car that says "We Pay Cash for Homes" with their number on it.

They shared with me some moving stories they heard at the seminars about a waitress who through casual conversation with her customer mentioned she was a single mom with a \$1000 mortgage payment, working two jobs trying to make ends meet. When she picked up the signed credit card receipt she noticed an error and ran out to catch her customer. He said, "There is no mistake. How much is your mortgage

payment?" "\$1000" replied the waitress. "And how much is the tip?" asked the customer - and the waitress broke into tears as she realized he had just given her a month of mortgage payment as a tip.

The next story was about a homeless boy who was asking for some spare change and the gentleman he approached handed him a bill. The boy stood there with tears in his eyes as he saw the first \$100.00 bill he had ever held in his life. My friends were proud to share that the person involved in both stories was the President of the company they are working with and how they can't wait to be able to do similar things.

At first these stories are moving, inspirational and motivating (an excellent marketing combination) and anyone with a heart would love to be in a position or have the opportunity to do anything like that. Just hearing those stories feels good, so it must feel incredible to actually do it. Anyone who has participated in any altruistic act or act of kindness and generosity knows that it is a great feeling, but we still have the fact that what feels good is ego-based.

When I hear these moving testimonials for creating wealth to bless other people I keep going back to the examples of great people who blessed countless lives and I wonder when did Jesus of Nazareth say, "Be ye therefore wealthy so ye can bless the lives of those who are not"? I haven't read anything to that effect in the Bible, the Tao Te Ching, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Koran, the Talmud, the Essene Gospel of Peace or any other scriptural book I have read.

Do these wealth creation programs work? Sure they do – if what you want is to increase your income. However, if “energy flows where attention goes” as Dr. Serge Kahili King says – and it does – where is energy focused on a wealth creating program? On creating wealth!!

The nobility of the principle of creating wealth in order to bless others cannot be discounted or questioned. The Universe (God, Allah, Yahweh, Great Spirit, Goddess, or who or whatever greater force you believe in I will refer to as “The Universe”) uses all of us to bless the lives of others in many ways. The world is in need of people who can give 1000-dollar tips and 100-dollar gifts. People who show that type of generosity will certainly be blessed themselves, but these are “in the moment” or “short-term” blessings. So as we remove Ego from the equation, we see that these stories are marketing tools to focus our attention (therefore our energy) on creating wealth in a way that meets the basic criteria for “goodness” regardless of your spiritual or religious background and it has huge “feel-good” (ego) appeal. If you want to increase your income and improve your lifestyle, that’s great! And if that is what you want, you should do it. But let’s be honest with our self and focus the attention appropriately. If our intent is to create wealth in order to bless others, and we *truly* desire to bless others, we have a recipe for failure from the start due to a conflict of focus. If our intent is split between 2 goals, as is our focus, neither gets the benefit of all available energy to bring about fruition.

Throwing money at a problem is seldom, if ever a solution, it’s a band-aid. So the people who sincerely want to help and bless the lives of others that fall for the marketing of “creating wealth to bless the lives of others” have done themselves a grave

disservice. By focusing attention on creating wealth, that is what they will do. So now, they can - if they have the strength of character to actually do so - go around passing out band-aids to be placed on cancerous sores. At best they can hand out a temporary fix to an ongoing problem.



## A Mixed Blessing

At times, “blessing others” through monetary generosity can do more harm than good. When I was about 14 -years-old, I left home (ran away sounds so dramatic) to see what the real world lived like. I packed my backpack, strapped my pellet gun to it and hopped on a bus to Tuxpan, Veracruz on the gulf coast of Mexico. I arrived in the evening and met some friends in the Zócalo or town square just as I was wondering what the hell I was going to do for the night, and they invited me to stay at their place. We walked for miles to the outskirts of town, paid a few centavos each and climbed on a pickup truck which took us into the hills a few more miles. Then we walked over cow paths to the house ...hut. It was late and I was tired, so I slept in my sleeping bag on the dirt floor that night with some chickens and a couple of pigs. In the morning I met the rest of the family - all 8 of them, and I was better able to survey my surroundings.

The Gomez family lived in a shack made of stick walls with mud used to fill the cracks; it had a corrugated tin roof with a main room, a kitchen and one bedroom. The bathroom facilities consisted of a hole with a semblance of a structure around it with a sheet for a door. There was no running water so it had to be brought from the well about 300 yards away. The Gomez family lived on a large piece of property (about 20 acres) that had been in the family for generations; the oldest married son lived in his own shack about 100 yards away. The rest of us - Doña Carmen (mom), Don Roberto (dad), Luz Maria (17), Raul (15), Beto (14), Freddy (11), Carmelita (6) and myself - lived

in the hut I just described. Now, in spite of the extreme poverty, they were a very happy family. Don Beto made a living by renting a truck from a friend and using it to transport cattle for the nearby ranchers and the auction yard. He would use the money he made to pay the rent on the truck and the rest was his to take home. Doña Carmen had her hands full with chores around the house and preparing meals. The boys and I were in charge of milking the cows, and getting the cows and horses down to the pasture for the day (where we had to watch them so they weren't stolen). Meals were very simple, but the Gomez family always made sure I ate enough. Apparently, it gave Doña Carmen a huge thrill to see me eat her cooking.

After the first week I started asking where LuzMa was or Beto, or whoever was missing when we ate and I finally found out that they were all taking turns not eating so I could eat at every meal. Needless to say, once I learned that, we all took a rotation and I spent a lot more time hunting for food in the jungle. We ate some weird things those days - even for them - but if I shot a couple of parrots we had parrot and rice, if I happened to sneak over to the next village and shoot a chicken, we had chicken and rice. We had feasts of martin, armadillo, iguana and we raised our own chickens, geese and cattle and we all helped in the garden so most of the meals were pretty conventional.

Don Roberto was a handsome easygoing guy, never in a hurry. One day he told me to come with him into town, so we made the trek. On the way, I asked where we were going and he said "you know that plot of land over on the second hill with the big Mango on it"? "Yes" I replied - I had mentioned several times how much I enjoyed sitting under the mango tree and just looking out over the grassy hills and watching life ease by. "Well, it's going to be yours," Don Beto said. "You are family to us, and no

matter what happens in your life, you will always have a little piece of property you can build a house on and raise a garden and some critters on.” He explained that were going to the Notary office to have it put in my name and he would be the trustee until I turned 18. He also told me that his children would get the rest of the land and he was sorry he couldn’t give me more, but this way he knew that I would always have a place to live. Now to put things in perspective, my allowance back home was more than he made in a week. I had more clothes in my closet than they all had put together and this man was taking me to have part of his inheritance put in my name so I would always have a place to call my own. To say I was blown away is a gross understatement. We got all the paperwork done and he paid his earnings of the day to the notary and it was official. I was now a landowner and part of the Gomez family. In all, it was a wonderful, happy time. The only way I knew we were poor was because I had a different background to compare it to, but we had a lot of good times.

One day Don Roberto and I were walking to the far pasture and we cut through an orange grove. The trees were in bloom and the sight and smell were just incredible. Don Roberto sat down and said: “Here, sit down. These blossoms are only here for a few days and if we get too busy we will miss them. Today we are going to enjoy them before we go get the horses.” So we sat for what to a 14-year-old seemed like forever, but I must admit, I enjoyed every moment of that pit stop. It wasn’t until much later that I realized Don Roberto was teaching me to slow down and smell the flowers. At the time I thought his priorities were messed up, but later I realized he had them just right.

I would go into town and call home every few days and update my family on what I was doing and before long my whole family came out to Tuxpan to spend some time with this wonderful, generous family. I returned home after a few more weeks and over the next few years we developed a close relationship with the Gomez family.

My father is a generous man and his philanthropic undertakings have been a boon to many communities in Mexico. I learned later that after meeting this great family that so generously took me in as one of their own, my dad purchased a great big new Dodge truck with a bed rigged for hauling cattle and gave it to Don Roberto. Now I was impressed with my dad; his gift was in monetary terms more than Don Roberto would ever see in a lifetime. But I was glad that dad was so generous and willing to “bless” the Gomez family that way. Now Don Roberto wouldn’t have to rent from his “friend” that dilapidated hunk of junk for such an unfair amount. Now Don Roberto could really get a business going with the auction yard and the local ranchers. They were set, and dad had shared his wealth to “bless” the life of this wonderful family.

However, this fairy tale has a different ending. About six months later, I heard that one of my dad’s employees had gone to Tuxpan to deliver a truck. I asked him why he took a truck to Tuxpan and he told me Don Roberto had been in an accident and rolled the truck so they had it taken on a flatbed to Mexico City to be repaired and Jorge had just returned it to Tuxpan. I didn’t think much of it until about five months later when I heard that Don Roberto had been involved in another accident and the truck was totaled. This time, dad was not willing to fix it. I was a bit upset with my dad at first, and then I learned that Don Roberto on both occasions had been drunk and in the company of several prostitutes. The sudden wealth had gone to his head. He was seen



as a very rich person in the area because he not only had a truck, but a brand new one. Suddenly women wanted to ride with him as well as other things. To make a tragic story short, the once happy, united family came apart like a rotten burlap bag. Don Roberto left his family and things went downhill from there.

In this case the truck was a band-aid. The Gomez family didn't need a truck. In this case there really wasn't a cancer, just humble living conditions that we would judge as poverty. If the band-aid gives the person a false sense of wellness, then the band-aid itself can cause the cancer and if the cancer under the band-aid kills the person, what good was the band-aid?

Now this doesn't excuse anyone from the responsibility of his or her choices nor does it imply total responsibility of the person applying the band-aid. It merely illustrates how blessing the life of others through money isn't necessarily a blessing. On the other hand, being who you are and giving of yourself, your talents, time, love, and concern will always be a positive contribution or blessing. Truly living in Barbequia is just that - a positive contribution to others by being who you are and sharing that with pleasure.

I have a friend who is a very talented stylist who commands a lot more than I have ever paid for a haircut. He knows that we would not ordinarily visit his salon, but every few weeks he will call and say "Heather and I would love to have you over for dinner this week and you are probably ready for a trim. What day works for you?" I go over and enjoy a great dinner with my friends and get a haircut. Invariably I would let them know how much I appreciate it and invariably they would express what a pleasure it is to do it for me.

A fashion conscious person could have taken pity on my lack of style and given me 40 dollars and said “Here, I would like you to go get a cut and style”, which would be a very nice gift and, while a bit awkward, it would be appreciated. However, the difference is huge between the two scenarios. In the first case, Keith and Heather (who prepared dinner) shared a part of them with me, so I was not only the recipient of a cut and style, but also of a part of who they are through what they do. The positive influence or blessing to me is much more than the gift of dinner and a cut and style – It is the friendship, love and pleasure that they share that energizes the gift to the level of blessing lives vs. a mere gift.

In the story of the Gomez family and the truck, while the gift was incredible, it was just a gift. Had my father chosen to share who he is through love and friendship rather than the easier route appealing to the ego, things may have turned out differently. Maybe Don Roberto could have seen the struggles and challenges Dad faced with his family because of the time he spent at his job. He may have learned how wealth requires a very high level of responsibility, and maybe a bit about the entrepreneurial thought process as well as a plethora of virtues, strengths and weaknesses that dad could have shared with him. Maybe my father could have avoided one or all of his multiple bypass surgeries had he learned from Don Roberto how to stop and smell the orange blossoms or maybe he could have seen how happy they were in spite of the fact that they had very little in terms of monetary value. I wonder if Dad would have noticed how Roberto interacted with his kids and how many things they did together as a family.

While this is all mere speculation and could well be filed in file 13 as “coulda shoulda”, I think it illustrates how blessing the lives of others through our wealth is far less effective than doing so by sharing who we are with them. In the Barbequian scenario, both parties win as both participate in the sharing, as it is inevitably mutual if we are open to the fact that everyone has something to teach us as well as something to learn from us.

Going back to the great people in history, they all shared their philosophy to bless others, not their money. They share their understanding and enlightenment by example and teaching.



## Financial Integrity

Two words that on their own are classic “power words”, but put them together and you have one huge bill to fill. As we explore this subject, we are going to find that as with any subject of value, there are many levels that it applies to. For example, we will see that financial integrity is not so much about honesty in our financial dealings, but also about honesty with ourselves about how we view money. We will see that it not only refers to living within our means, but to adapting our lifestyle to live our dreams - today - not “when I retire”. It’s about a healthy view of money and the inevitable role it plays in our life for now, as well as understanding the spiritual dangers it poses. Financial Integrity is about how the financial aspect of our life affects the whole of the rest of it. It’s about finding a healthy understanding of money and how to enjoy it without letting it rule you.

Our society has engrained in us the belief that possessions, money, and nice things bring value to the individual as well as status. While this may be generally accepted as true, status based on what you have rather than who you are is pretty shallow and devoid of integrity. Many of us have some deeply seated issues with money that vary from a belief that we are not worthy or don’t deserve wealth, to a frustrated, entitlement-based delusion that somehow we deserve to be wealthy and it is “owed” to us, to anything in-between. So we go about our lives focused on finances and the accumulation of money at the expense of financial integrity and with little success -

either we acquire and amass wealth at the expense of other more important things, or we become angry, frustrated or envious as we see others that have more than we do.

In a conversation I had, I was explaining the basic principles of Barbequia regarding the concept of financial integrity and freedom, and the person I was speaking with let me know what his perception was: “Your philosophy is one of complacency, irresponsibility, settling for whatever life happens to throw at you, and a hippie escapist cop-out to justify your lack of success.” An uncomfortable silence followed as I looked for my jaw on the floor and mentally reviewed the conversation to see where I had failed to properly convey what I meant. Then it hit me... He was right!! From his perspective and based on his belief system, with the limited information I had shared with him, my philosophy was exactly what he stated and I wasn’t going to change that by preaching to him. I also realized that the concept of Barbequia is not one that can be shared and understood in a casual conversation and even once the principle is clearly understood, it isn’t necessarily going to be eagerly adopted by everyone – and that’s okay.

FINISH THE CHAPTER WITH A CLOSURE ON EACH PERSON’S TAKE OF WHAT FINANCIAL INTEGRITY IS.



## The Lowest Comfortable Lifestyle

In today's materialistic world, there is a horribly misguided view that success is measured by what you have, the size of your house, your job title and paycheck, the car you drive and the clothes you wear. Every year more people file bankruptcy than the prior year because we get caught up in a race we can't win. Young couples are going into incredible debt to buy the largest, most luxurious house they can. Many of these people after a couple of years haven't even furnished these oversized boxes of debt and many end up losing them as well as their self esteem when times get rough. We have been conditioned to see ourselves as well as others through the ugly tint of what we have rather than who we are and how we treat each other. I could go on and on about the downfalls of our materialistic world, but the point is made.

The Barbequian philosophy is one of simplification through minimalization. Reality is that what we have, live in, drive or wear have absolutely nothing to do with who we are. The most difficult aspect of Barbequia to embrace and incorporate is reaching a point when you can let go of the need to feed your ego with material possessions and you find comfort in and gratitude for what you have. Many see this as a complacent or mediocre attitude, but it really isn't once you understand the whole concept.

The lowest comfortable lifestyle is not a Gandhi-spin-your-own-cloth-live-on-a-hippie-commune lifestyle. It is just as it says, finding the lowest *comfortable* level of lifestyle you are willing to live. If you are fortunate, it is a choice and an on-going process. Sometimes we have little say in the matter and life throws the lowest comfortable lifestyle at us, but either way, it's still a choice and an ongoing process.

Barbequia itself was born through this very process. Some years ago, I was living in Salt Lake City, UT in a beautiful condominium in a very nice part of town. One day my wife at the time was speaking to a friend in Portland, OR on the phone and she was mentioning how much we missed living in Portland. I heard her say "I'll talk to Dave and call you back" and she hung up the phone. The next words were "Dave, we need to talk." Now usually this means I'm in trouble, but somehow this time I knew it was something else. She explained that our friend was interested in moving out of her house and wondered if we would be interested in renting it. The thought of going back to Portland seemed to cloud all judgment and we agreed that it was a good idea. Now I had never seen the house and she had only been there once and didn't remember that much about it, but we called our friend and agreed to rent her house.

A couple of months later the moving van was pulling up to our new home. I had been told that it was very small, but I didn't get a figure in square feet. I was ready for a small house, but when we pulled up I quickly realized that the moving van had more square footage than the house and the van was packed to the gills. I had never parked my car in a garage that small, much less lived in a house that small. We had already gotten rid of more than half of our belongings in an effort to scale down, but how we were going to get all our stuff in a tiny little 650 square foot house was a

mystery to me. Well, we didn't - we rented a storage unit and figured out real fast what items were important and what ones were less so. We moved the stuff we wanted into the house and the rest went to a storage unit.

The first week or so was a blurred mixture of culture shock, disbelief and lots of unpacking, arranging, repairing, cleaning, and yes, a few tears. As the weeks went on, and we settled in, we called the place "our little cottage" and we found that not only did we fit quite comfortably, but there was a unique spirit about the place that seemed to give it a personality, so we named the house Simon. I decided to take advantage of this opportunity to start a new life so to speak. Through a myriad of very positive events, the fact that the little house was on the wrong side of the tracks became one of the biggest blessings in our lives. I realized that picking out the belongings that were important to me and getting rid of the rest was as if a huge weight was lifted off me. The more stuff I got rid of the better I felt. I recalled reading in several places including the Tao Te Ching and the writings of Dr. Wayne Dyer about the virtues of letting go of attachments, but I had no idea how wonderfully liberating it was until I actually started to scale down. I was amazed at how much stuff I hauled off to charity that only a few weeks prior as we packed it in the moving van I was sure we couldn't live without it. Simon for me symbolizes the lowest comfortable lifestyle. Smaller would be impractical (or a tool shed) and larger would be unnecessary. Simon is exactly what Barbequia is all about.

The lowest comfortable lifestyle is a choice because we have to choose to downsize and feed the soul by creating memories or amass more stuff to feed the ego. It is an on-going process because we need to make the choices every day and we may



adjust our choices from time to time. There is no right or wrong about it and that's the beauty of Barbequia – it's whatever is right for you.

Does this mean that Barbequia is the smallest house in the crappiest neighborhood you can stand? Of course not! My brothers for example have small children at home, which bring other factors into the equation like school districts, neighborhood environment, reliable transportation, etc. So their Barbequia is very different than mine. The Gomez family's Barbequia was different than mine just as everyone's will be. The sense of fulfillment and peace comes from the process, not from justifying where you are at currently and calling that Barbequia. All growth requires a bit of pain, but the pain or loss is only temporary while the growth is eternal. So...



## **Downsize, Downsize, Downsize**

There are many therapeutic effects from downsizing and getting rid of all the stuff we accumulate over the years that have a direct impact on our physical and emotional health. There is a reason that the great ones lived a simple lifestyle and it is simply the fact that we don't possess possessions, they possess us. The more stuff we have the more we are a slave to our stuff. This is because the ego is never satisfied and unless it is kept in check through some high-speed cultural change (i.e. getting rid of stuff) we will never have enough. Unless we force ourselves to get rid of stuff, we won't; it's human nature - it requires a focused effort.

Just as downsizing has therapeutic effects, the accumulation of stuff has adverse effects on us as well. My grandfather was an extreme example of stuff accumulation. He had a good job as a researcher for the University of Utah where he was in charge of the radio-electronics lab of the cancer research wing from the time he returned from WWII until the day he retired. Over the years he had access to all kinds of electronic components and gadgets, not to mention the military surplus items he constantly brought home to his shop. His shop and garage were off-limits to kids as we were growing up unless he was in there and had invited you in. The garage was a 4-car garage and you couldn't get a scooter in there to save your life for all the stuff he had stashed in cabinets, cupboards and boxes. It was wall-to-wall fascination for me my whole life and as I grew, he would teach me about electronics and he would have me in

his shop to learn and help him. The more I learned, the more fascinated I became with all the stuff he had.

During my high school years, I had the opportunity to live with my grandparents and I would explore his secret realms while he was at work, but on occasion he would know it and all hell would break loose. I never understood why it was such a big deal or what was so sacred about his stuff, but it was apparent that whatever it was, it was important to him. Grandpa passed away at the age of 80 and I had the privilege of caring for him during last year of his life. My wife and I would make sure he ate, I would bathe him and we did all we could to make sure he was comfortable while the cancer ran its inevitable course. He had been like a father to me and had put up with my teenage shenanigans to an extent that was above and beyond the call of any grandparent. He was truly a wonderful role model and the best grandpa anyone could ask for - he was just a jackass about his stuff.

Shortly after grandpa's death, I inherited the task of cleaning out his house and the sacred sites of the basement, the shop and the garage. We worked for months sorting through it all, and the whole family was amazed at the things he had. But as we filled a 28-foot dumpster with the obsolete electronic components, equipment, and junk that he had treasured to the extent of alienating those close to him over, I couldn't hold back the tears as the irony sank in. As we irreverently threw box after box of his precious treasure into the dumpster, I realized that all this stuff had become a burden to him in his later years. He didn't know where the hell to put it all, but he couldn't bring himself to get rid of it.

While grandpa is an extreme example, we all have stuff that we accumulate that we don't need, yet we hang on to it because "some day it will come in handy". Whatever the reason, it is stuff that weighs us down physically and emotionally. The down-sizing process is tough, and it may be easier to do in steps, but whatever you have, if you haven't used it in 6 months to a year at the most, you don't need it and you would be best served by getting rid of it.

My mother recently implemented this concept of Barbequia in her own life and is now experiencing a level of freedom she never knew existed. Mom has a good sized home with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths and a 2-car garage with a fair amount of stuff she accumulated over the years as well as inherited from grandpa. She decided to simplify her life and rent her home out, which was far too large for her needs, and rent an apartment instead. After several yard sales, trips to the donation drop off of the local charity, and lots of trips to the dumpster, she pared down to what was truly important to her, and the more she pared down the more she realized that there isn't that much that is truly important. Now, she is able to better focus her efforts on her business, her finances on productive things rather than storage units and repairs and she has the freedom and flexibility to travel and do the things that she wants, when she wants or as her business needs. The most important part of this is her own testimonial about how much better she feels and how much more productive she is, just by downsizing. If you haven't used it in the last year, get rid of it – sell it, donate it or throw it away.



## **It's a Job – It's NOT Who You Are**

All of us need to earn a living in one way or another to pay our bills and provide the lifestyle we choose for our self and our family. Ideally we are doing something we love, living our bliss and making money doing it or in some way working towards that. While the whole Wayne Dyer idea of doing what you love and loving what you do for a living is to say the least, ideal, it is not quite as easy as he makes it sound in his books – at least that has been my experience. But easy was never appreciated unless you are changing a tire in a snow storm or something. There is a lot to be said about getting up in the morning and looking forward to going to work. And while making a living at living your bliss is the ultimate goal, some of us are doing it and some of us don't even know what the hell our bliss is yet – and that's okay.

Barbequia is not about perfection; it's about the journey there. Our occupation, profession, career, or job is just a means to pay the bills, to allow us to do the things we enjoy if we can't do them as part of our job; to be able to enjoy our free time with the people we love, doing the things we love. I can't begin to enumerate the people I know that define themselves, their sense of self-esteem and who they are by what they do for a living. Basing our sense of worth on what we do for a living is a very shallow view of our potential and a difficult concept to manage when an age of corporate downsizing, alternative global workforce (PC for cheap foreign labor), stock market instability or our own shallowness can change our professional life in a pen-stroke-minute. While a job

can and should be a rewarding experience and we should do something we enjoy doing for a living, even if it isn't our bliss, life is far too short to feel stuck at a job you dislike.

During my professional career, I have covered the entire spectrum from president to maintenance, from employee to owner and I have never been happier than when I realized that whatever I did to earn a living, it was merely a means to do the things I really love with the people I really love. When I chose to downsize and scale down my lifestyle and adjust my job accordingly, it only got better. Barbequia is living what you love today and your job is just a job. It has no bearing on your personal value as a member of society, to your family or anything else - it merely allows you to receive fair compensation for services rendered so you can pay your bills and have enough left to do what you love.

I look around at the people I know and watch as they go deeper and deeper into debt, work longer and longer hours to "provide for their family" and I can't help but wonder if having the newest car, or the bigger home, the nicer clothes, can possibly compensate for children growing up spending less time than ever with their parents, being raised by the television or the video game console. It is tough to justify scarcely seeing your partner or spouse who is supposedly your best friend, the one you choose to be with for life, the person you love most in this world so you can have a nicer car, or a bigger house. It took me a couple of failed marriages to figure out that my wife would rather have me braid her a hemp bracelet and spend time sharing our life together than for me to be working into the night so I can give her a diamond tennis bracelet to compensate for my absence.

We hear so much about how both parents have to work full time these days or a family just can't make it. Well, frankly, that's a load of horseshit and this next story illustrates why I say that. I had a neighbor named Mike who lived next door in a small house with his wife and six kids. Mike worked for a trailer manufacturing company on the assembly line. His wife Julianne was a stay-at-home mom, so things were tight financially, but that was one happy family. Mike went on a date with his wife once a week, and while they were modest evenings out, it was quality time they spent together feeding ducks at the park while they ate their 99 cent burger and shared a 2-liter bottle of root beer. They had a "family night" every Monday evening when his family got together to play games, discuss family matters or their religion, and they always had a treat that Julianne had baked or made earlier that day. They only had 1 car, but that was fine because Mike either walked or rode his bike to work.

While the rest of us on the block were working into the evening to pay our mortgage, our cars and to get that riding lawn mower, Mike was home playing with his kids in the back yard. While the rest of us would work and work and work some more and barely squeak out a trip to Disney Land or Mexico for the summer family vacation, Mike would often be seen walking with his kids to the Tastee-freeze for 59 cent ice cream cones or strapping his old canoe to his car and heading up to the reservoir with the family for his day off. Those of us that lived on that block in Clearfield, UT would often feel sorry for Mike since he lived in the smallest house by far and obviously didn't have the nice things we did. How foolish we were to feel anything but a desire to be just like Mike. He is still happily married to Julianne and his kids are getting college educations, married to wonderful spouses (like their parents) and they are a very close,

loving family. If you ask any of Mike's kids how they feel about their parents, they will use words like love, respect, best friend, always there for me, and the most moving is the statement from his youngest, a set of twins who very proudly say they want to be just like their daddy in every way.

Well, the rest of us got our nice cars and the riding lawn mower as well as the occasional or obligatory family vacation, but not one of us that I know of have what Mike has. It is with deep pain in my heart and regret that it took me as long as it did to figure out what Mike already knew back then – what is really important in life. I believe my ex-wife gave my riding mower to Mike when she sold the big old house after our divorce and all the time I wasted feeling sorry for Mike, I could have used far more productively for my family and myself by learning from him. Mike's job paid the bills and allowed him to spend time with those he loves. On the other hand Mr. Director of International Marketing here has nothing to show for those days of late nights and weeks of travel but an ex-wife, resentful children and the lessons of the one that had it figured out – the quiet guy that worked on the assembly line - Mike. While the responsibility of one's choices and their consequences cannot be placed on a job, misplacing priorities is a choice that does have consequences.





## **Live Within Your Means - But Live Well.**

The key to living well is less about how much you make and more about how much you spend. The highest contributing factor to the number of foreclosures, bankruptcies and the associated marital stress and its consequences, is the lack of discipline and the “I want it now” syndrome. In a world of fast food, quickie marts, a pill for any malady, instant anything and microwaveable everything, we have come to expect all of our whims and wants to be immediately satisfied. It’s a world of instant gratification where credit card companies can’t print the cards fast enough and the average household has more credit card debt than ever before. We just can’t seem to survive without these gadgets that somehow we survived without up to this point. We have become a bunch of insecure, immature adults that feel we have to have stuff to be someone. God forbid you leave the house without your cell phone, PDA or your day planner – you might as well leave without your pants.

Living well has little to do with the gadgets we have, the vehicles we drive or the money we spend. I am not advocating an Amish lifestyle nor do I fail to see the virtues of technology, but when our lifestyle and technology drive us to spend more than we make, it becomes a problem.

The Barbequian philosophy on finance is very simple: with very few exceptions, if you can't pay cash for it, you can't afford it - so don't get it. On the other hand, if it is important to you, plan for it, budget for it and appreciate and enjoy it when it is rightfully yours - when you have earned it (an obscure concept these days).

Living well means doing the things you love to do and still having a \$20 bill in your pocket just in case you happen by an inviting bakery or a coffee shop. It means balancing your lifestyle and your job so you can do the things you love today and still prepare for tomorrow. The beauty of Barbequia is that nobody but you decides where that balance is, and while the more we simplify, the more we experience the financial and emotional freedom, you have to see that for yourself and progress toward that at your own pace. There are no certificates, diplomas of recognition, standards to meet or curricula to assimilate in Barbequia - you just get there by enjoying the journey and implementing the lessons along the way.



## **Retirement? Enjoy Life Today While You Still Can**

When we think of retirement we usually conjure up images of exotic and frequent travel, lazy days in the sun, finally having all the time you want to do the things you have dreamed about for so long. Everyone has his or her ideal of what retirement is or should be. So, we set out to our jobs and carefully plan our 401K and other investments so by the time we reach 65 we can finally settle down and really live out those golden years with the thought of not having to get up at any particular time in the morning or having to go anywhere unless we want to, or better yet, the ability to go wherever we want, whenever we want and have the money to fund it. Ah, the golden years! At this point we hear the blood-curdling screech as the turntable arm and needle are dragged across the vinyl version of Vivaldi's 4 seasons that was just playing as I enter with a reality check.

If we take a moment to think about it, most people that retire either die prematurely or they get so damn bored they go back to work, or worse yet, they just hack it out driving their spouse or each other crazy 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Yes, there are those who retire to the ultimate dream of retirement living and have a wonderful, productive life giving those golden years a spit shine - but these cases are the very rare minority. While most of us want to believe we will be the exception, statistics as well as real life show that 90% of us won't be, and a fair percentage of those

that are the exception will become so at a cost in terms of relationships and things important that may negate the very value of the sacrifice they made. So, life can be a beautiful teacher if we will only take the time to look at the lessons all around us.

We want to make it perfectly clear that Barbequia is about responsibility in financial matters and that includes preparing for that stage in life, the so-called golden years, in one way or another, so your needs are met and you are not an unnecessary burden on others. We do not mean to imply that we advocate being stupid about the inevitable arrival of old age. With that said, let's take a look at those around us, the vast majority of retirees, and the facts that surround as well as the activities that comprise the retired lifestyle. I once lived on a street where I was literally surrounded by retirees. ~~In fact, I often refer to the street as "Geriatric Park".~~ While I thoroughly enjoyed the neighborhood and the great neighbors who became my friends, they are also the poster folk of middle-class retirement. Each household had its unique routine, but in general days were spent reading the morning paper, sitting on the porch, talking to the neighbor for hours about the latest headlines on CNN or the pipes on that gal on the Lawrence Welk Show the night before, the cost of health care or the pain of their afflictions. The 5<sup>th</sup> wheel or RV sat in the drive ready for the next of the 1-2 trips a year to see the kids or the Grand Canyon. The Cadillacs, Town Cars and Buicks came and went as groceries were purchased or for trips to the doctor or the rec center. Some folks were tethered to oxygen tanks, others mulled around the yard looking for weeds to pull or worked in their flower and vegetable gardens. Looking at my grandfather and father's retirement days, both having amassed a sizeable net worth during their working years, they both seemed to follow a similar pattern, spending a bit more on stuff, and in my Dad's case,

spending time between new business ventures and going to the cardiologist. Not exactly what I think they intended retirement to be. My point is that by the time most people retire, they are too old and sick to do all the things they dreamed of while they were socking away their money and planning this great retirement.

The Barbequian philosophy on retirement is retire when you ~~are too old and sick to do anything else~~ HAVE to, but live life to the fullest doing what you love NOW.

A friend named Ray who lives in Langley, BC Canada illustrated this philosophy to me through his example. Ray loves to fish, tend his garden, barbeque meals in his back yard, spend time with his kids and his wife and they all enjoy skiing. I met Ray when he was in his 40s; the Mexican Government referred him to me for assistance with his interest in foreign investment. While we determined there were better ways to invest his money more securely, we spent most of our time having fun. We went water skiing, fishing, we went to see the sights of Mexico City and we developed a great friendship. When I had the opportunity to go see him in Canada, he took me to see the sights there; we went to the air show, to the coast, we went fishing and we spent just about every evening in his back yard enjoying a cold beer and a wonderful barbeque with his family. One night all his kids were there with their significant others; other nights, it was just Ray, Gloria and myself, but every night was a wonderful evening spent talking about a variety of subjects enjoying the pine trees and the forest feel of his back yard. At times during the day, the phone would ring, Ray would be in his home office for a while and take care of whatever the issue was and other times Ray would have to excuse himself and he would go to a job site. I said to him "I thought you were retired"? He said, "You assumed I was retired, but I won't retire until I'm ready to die. I

live like I'm retired by doing what I love now, while I still can". He went on to explain that if he had a conventional view on retirement he would plan it so he could spend time with his family, go fishing, skiing, barbeque in his back yard at least 3 times a week and play with expensive sound and video equipment. The problem he said is that if he waited until he retired, his family would be off in their own lives and probably not terribly close to him and Gloria and he didn't see the sense in waiting to do the rest either since it was what he loved to do now. So Ray decided to be retired his whole life and work so he could be. Ray loves nice audio and video equipment and he loves to be with his sons, so they have a business installing home theatre systems in multi-million dollar homes. He makes enough to pay his bills, do the things he loves - today - and put a little bit away every month for when he ~~is too old and sick to~~ can't do everything he loves anymore. Ray is the embodiment of Barbequian retirement.

A person I know has tried every **MLM** out there and now works with a start-up company attempting to create wealth in order to be able to retire and spend their days in Alaska hunting and fishing. Another person I know is hell bent on saving enough money to buy a nice houseboat and retire on Lake Powell. The logic of this approach eludes me, as anyone that has been to Alaska knows that while it is beautiful, unless you are a very special kind of person, you can only handle it for so long. Then throw in endless death and destruction in nature and it would get real old even for the people that host hunting shows on cable TV. If you have spent any time on a house boat, you know that after the second week, not only are you stir crazy, but you are ready to kill everyone else on board. The Barbequian approach to these scenarios would be to adjust

your job and lifestyle so you can spend 2 weeks every year of your life in Alaska or on a houseboat and not get tired of it.

My personal Barbequian retirement consists of spending every weekend possible camping in the rain forest or staying at a hotel on the coast of Oregon walking along the beach with my partner and my dogs, collecting sand dollars or catching Dungeness crab and shell fish for dinner. When I'm not in the forest or at the coast I am in the original Barbequia - the back yard - enjoying a meal prepared on the barbeque, good friends, great conversation and a glass of wine or a cold beer. Other times, I may venture to the waterfront, the Saturday Market or any of a number of festivals or concerts in the park hosted by our fair city. I have no need to buy stuff, but I love to enjoy food and people, both of which are in abundance at most of these activities. I can spend hours traipsing through the forest or along the banks of the Wilson or Clackamas rivers chasing faeries, swimming with the salmon, or just meditating in one of the most beautiful environments on earth. This is what I love to do and I am not willing to wait until I am too old or sick to do it, so I adjust my lifestyle.

I live in a home like Simon, which is very affordable, comfortable and suits all of my needs for shelter and is a place I love to come back to. I work in simple jobs so I can have days off during the week to avoid the crowds at the beach and enjoy the quiet of the forest. I reserve the right to change jobs at any time and I live free of fear of being fired or laid off because my needs are modest, my skill set varied and ample, my work ethic is strong and my attitude is one of "it's just a job and I was looking for one when I got this one". I live within my means and I budget according to my priorities, which I discuss frequently with my spouse, as these priorities, like all in Barbequia, change from

time to time. We live our bliss today while we save for tomorrow by living within our means. As we add this aspect to those already discussed, Barbequia takes shape as heaven on earth without the delusion of what may be, based on when we retire. Life is about experiencing the joy of it every day in every way. Those who wait to do so when they retire will find that they never learned how.





## Barbequia is Honoring All Life

To honor life means to respect, appreciate, love and ultimately revere life and all forms that it is manifest in. It means to develop a healthy and balanced perspective of our role as humans among the collective of life we share this planet with. This is not meant to be a discourse on morality or advocacy for extreme measures or chaining one's self to trees. The Barbequian view on life is simple; all forms of life are precious and to be respected and loved in their role.

This subject is one of great controversy, and while eastern philosophy has a huge head start on the western philosophy on life and our role as humans, we are becoming more aware that the delusion of superiority that we subscribe to is as barbaric as our treatment of the early inhabitants or those forced to be inhabitants of the American continent. We have a notorious background of a severe lack of respect for life in our culture that has become an integral part of it. Our struggles for the elimination of racism and discrimination, the amount of senseless violent crimes, and the predation and abuse of children are a blatant indicator of this fact. While I won't address these indicators, ~~assuming anyone reading this probably isn't part of the KKK or a pedophile~~, there are less extreme indicators and many ways that we can more fully honor all life.

One more subtle indicator is the yearly ritual of "the hunt" in which otherwise "civilized" humans dress up in odd looking outfits armed with high powered fire arms and spend days tracking down and killing some of the most beautiful creatures on the earth under the pretense of "wildlife management". While I was in college, I decided to

take a course in wildlife management and found quickly that our arrogance and pretentiousness knows no bounds. I find it humorous and quite amusing that we think that we can in any way shape or form “manage” wildlife. As if Mother Nature is so stupid, it’s a good thing we finally showed up to help her out and show her how it’s done. Of course our background in eco-management speaks for itself so it should be no surprise that anyone with a brain (or not just wanting to justify their barbarism) would realize that the commonly held view of respect for life is not quite cutting it. Barbequia is about raising the bar and stretching our comfort zone while enjoying life, so our view will differ greatly from the common one.

With that said, it is important to note that we do not advocate or preach a particular degree of respect or a particular lifestyle as that is an individual choice. We do however want to share what we have identified as the lowest level of the concept from where we can all build upon. It is important to keep in mind that for the most part, we will cover the basic levels of honoring life. This does not mean that it is the “ideal”, it is merely the starting point from where we need to part – it is the lowest level for the weakest of the Barbequians to expound upon.

In order to have self-respect, we must have respect for others – in fact our level of self respect is prominently displayed for the world to see by the respect we show for those we come in contact with. While self-respect is a precursor to honoring one’s self, respect for life is a precursor to honoring life. So let’s look at the Barbequian approach to respect for and honoring life.

We recognize that every form of life has an integral and important purpose in the collective of creation, so we respect each life’s right to fulfill that purpose to its fullest

extent. We also recognize that part of the cycle of life is death and through death others live and the cycle continues. We see in nature how the food chain works and we accept that for life to continue, some life must end. As human, we are omnivores, meaning that we are designed to eat a variety of foods from a variety of sources. In fact, we need that variety to be healthy. I am often asked if I am a vegetarian or vegan since my views on honoring life are no secret and to some seem very strange and even radical, and the answer is no, I am not. I have wonderful friends and family who are vegetarians out of respect for life and they refuse to eat animal protein and that may well be a higher level of the concept, more so now days that the technology is available through vitamin supplements to compensate for the very important elements we need and derive from meats. However, my approach is not as drastic. If we look to the early native inhabitants of our continent for some insight on the matter, we will learn that they did eat meat, they hunted and killed their meals, but they did it for the most part in a spirit of gratitude and respect. That is the key to the Barbequian approach - gratitude and respect. If we choose to eat meat, we can do so in a reverent way, and as our native ancestors, we can do so sparingly and without waste. We can be selective about the meats we choose, as there are many options for drug free, organically grown, free range and humanely killed sources of animal protein. By being selective about what we consume and where we get it we are not contributing to massive mechanized industries that raise animals in deplorable conditions with no regard for anything but profit, and still eat meats. It may be more expensive and less convenient to drive to the whole foods market to buy free-range, hormone free, humanely killed chicken than it is to run to the nearest grocery store and pick up a package of Tyson chicken; but it's a lot easier, more convenient and cheaper than raising your own.

Honoring life does not stop at what we eat or what is killed so we can. We are surrounded by life that we tend to take for granted, ignore or outright abuse and yet it deserves more from us. More important to each one of us than what other life deserves, is the fact that we NEED this higher level of self respect that is developed and demonstrated through respect for life, if we are going to develop our full potential as sentient beings pursuing enlightenment. If we look at this concept logically, the honoring of life can be developed within the individual first through honoring of one's self, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> party effects are the natural consequence of this. In today's society, we are bombarded with negativity, guilt and a lack of self-esteem that makes this approach more difficult. However, the reverse approach works as well. As we strive to develop a love, respect and honor for life around us, it will inevitably have a positive effect on the level of love, respect and honor we have for our self. The beauty is it works either way you approach it.

There are endless examples in our daily life and activities where our attention and focus is needed in order to implement and continually increase our level of respect and honoring of all life. We will address many in general terms and others in more detail. Yet, all of this is merely intended to pique ones consciousness of the matter and open the endless possibilities and opportunities to implement this concept according to our level of emotional, spiritual and moral maturity and awareness.



## **Our Mother Earth**

A very basic and integral part of Barbequia is a sincere love and respect for our planet and the resources she provides for the continuance of life, as well as the sensory satisfaction and pleasure of all of her creatures. In recent years we have become more aware of the issues of conservation, ecological responsibility and the simple fact that we can't continue to take and destroy without regard for the future or the well being of the planet. While as a society we have made great strides in reversing a lot of the damage we have done through ignorance, indifference and industrial exploitation, there is a long row to hoe and it is important to realize that it is an ongoing process that never ends as long as we inhabit this planet and consume its resources.

It is also important to realize that we can inhabit the planet, consume its resources and have a good existence as humans in relative harmony with our mother earth, but it requires that we all get on board and do our part to help keep her healthy and clean. Again, I am not advocating any drastic measures or joining the ranks of those so in need of purpose and devoid of self respect that they cause harm or interfere with the liberty of others through senseless acts of destruction, defiance, terrorism, grand standing or any other drastic measure to force their opinions and beliefs on society through their actions. These people and groups not only harm the greater cause through their actions by alienating themselves from the masses that they deludedly think they

can change, but they operate and lash out in anger and hate which is at best counter-productive. Barbequia is about closer integration with the bulk of society (not alienation), teaching through quiet example and bold sharing of philosophy while actively doing our part to make a difference. We cannot stress enough the importance of cultivating a deep-seated love and respect for our Mother Earth through getting to know her through exploration, getting to understand her through study and through reversing or neutralizing the damage to her by doing our part by participating in conservation activities.



## Recycle

A simple and increasingly easy way to contribute to the preservation of our Mother Earth's resources is through recycling. Most communities have a recycling program that makes it as easy as placing recyclable materials in a container and hauling it to the curb once a week. The worst case scenario is that one has to take the items to locations that collect or actually recycle. Regardless of the convenience factor, recycling is a way we can all make a huge impact. The only excuse for NOT recycling is laziness, indifference, ignorance to the issue and its impact on the environment, or entitlement, none of which are desirable or positive attributes.

There is no excuse for not recycling in Barbequia. It is just a matter of starting with one material type that you consume the most of (cardboard, newspaper, plastic, aluminum), collecting it and getting it to the curb or the nearest collection site. As the habit of recycling that particular material develops, add new materials, and before you know it, you are making a pronounced and effective impact on the conservation of our Mother Earth's resources.



## Nature & Wildlife

While the industrial revolution had a tremendous effect on improvement of quality of life and productivity, it also had a tremendous and inevitable effect on the separation of humans from nature. This separation is at the root of the ecological disasters we are faced with in today's modern world and while we do not suggest we revert to a medieval lifestyle, we do advocate a return to contact with nature at every possible opportunity to do so. The importance of this in terms of physical and emotional health is immeasurable, not to mention the fact that our modern lifestyle robs us of fresh, clean air, it burdens us with countless stressors, and it tends to numb the sense of connectedness to all things we share in spite of our insulation.

We cannot stress enough the importance of making the time to enjoy nature as often as possible. By making opportunities to explore and enjoy nature, we will inevitably reduce our level of stress, improve our health through exercise and fresh air, and we will renew and nurture our love, appreciation and respect for nature and its perfection. There is a lot to be said about the healing effects of spending a couple of days in the forest or walking on the beach, swimming in the river or lake, hiking just to hike, looking for wildlife and enjoying the quiet and peaceful surroundings. This can all be accomplished with varying degrees of "comfort" and while an RV with satellite TV,



microwave oven, and an Xbox is better than not getting out there at all, Barbequia is about balancing simplicity with comfort and finding comfort in simplicity.

As we venture out into nature, it is important to do so with an attitude of respect and equality. We have no need to place ourselves above any other form of life, but rather interact with nature as a part of her, another of her many components. Barbequians in nature are the stewards thereof because we can be – we have the capacity, therefore we have the responsibility. As stewards, we have no ownership or authority, just responsibility to care for and protect. This means we make a conscious effort to leave a place better than when we arrived by removing any litter left by others, picking up cans, bottles and plastic mindlessly dropped by those of lesser conscience. It means we do not disturb the wildlife and certainly never harm it in any way shape or form. While we may carefully handle some forms of wildlife if we are able to do so safely and responsibly, we must go to great lengths to replace the creature exactly where and how we found it. Better yet, take a picture to be enjoyed forever and leave the animal or plant alone. We must tread carefully leaving nothing behind but footprints and those are lightly placed so as to not needlessly trample vegetation and wildlife harborage. Being a Barbequian Steward means not cutting down live trees for firewood, but using what nature has already discarded, being cautious to completely extinguish any flame and cover any traces of burning, and ideally, only doing so in designated areas or using camp stoves that minimize impact.

When we think of nature, we immediately think of forests, lakes, oceans, and mountains and we somehow don't consider that nature and wildlife are also inside our homes in the form of plants, pets, and insects that venture in, as well as in our yard, the

parks and green areas in our cities and even the urban concrete jungles as our fellow creatures inhabit all of these.

Plants are a controversial subject, but Barbequia is about simplicity in theory and practice, so we see plants as a source of food, decoration, air purification and vital to the sustenance of life on our planet and therefore a part of our stewardship. When we invite a plant into our lives for food in a garden or decoration in our home or yard, we acquire a responsibility for ensuring that the plants life purpose be fulfilled completely and to the best of our ability. This means we provide water, appropriate soil, nutrients, and care until the plants purpose is fulfilled. In the case of a carrot, this is a short-term thing and in the case of a tree, it's ongoing. However, the responsibility for the Barbequian Steward is the same.

Spending time in the forests, on the beach or in the mountains or desert is by far the more effective if not at least the more dramatic form of interacting with and enjoying nature. However, we can and should appreciate, love and respect the nature and wildlife that grace our urban developments as well, and with the same fervor. I am extremely saddened when I see kids with pellet guns shooting beautiful birds or squirrels that have done nothing to deserve premature death, or someone killing a spider because they happen to be afraid of it. And while I won't go on a tirade about senseless killing, I will make my point. More troubling than children with pellet guns are adults with high-powered weapons setting the deplorable example for the children to follow. I made myself watch one of those hunting shows on cable TV once recently and they were hunting deer. The guy was completely camouflaged, on his belly with a high-powered rifle on a bipod fitted with a scope waiting for this buck to walk onto the

dirt road. As the deer approached the road, the hunter took aim and fired and the deer ran about 50 feet and fell to the ground. At this point I was horrified and baffled as to the challenge involved or how this qualifies as sport since you would have to be an idiot to miss the deer but more of one to want to kill it in the first place. The hunter let out this blood curdling yell and ran over and picked the buck up by the horns for the camera to see, unable to contain his excitement hooting and hollering about what a beautiful buck and what a great shot as the animal wretched and twitched as life left its body. The anger I felt at first was admittedly unhealthy as I realize it was based in the fear produced by my inability to do anything about the situation I was watching, but the sadness was inevitable as I wondered why, and what events took place in that guy's past to promote such barbaric behavior and lack of respect for life to want to kill something even he admitted was beautiful just because he could. And we wonder why cases of child abuse, torture and sexual predation are so rampant. We apparently have a skewed view of the value of life and how can we place value in one area when it is non-existent in others? Either we value and honor life or we don't. We can't make excuses or exceptions based on species any more than we can based on age, gender or race. While my intent is not to compare the morality of the hunt with that of child abuse, the underlying principle of selfish gratification, lack of respect and honoring of life is at the root of both scenarios.

There are simple things we can do to implement the principles of honoring life and nature around our homes and yards. First of all, there is no need to kill any bug unless it poses an eminent danger and even then it is debatable when the bug can simply be collected and released where it doesn't pose a threat to humans. Sure, it is more

inconvenient to relocate it than simply squashing the poor thing, but the inconvenience is what elevates us from usurper to steward in Barbequia. While all spiders can bite, there are only a few that are actually dangerous and most have benefits in terms of insect control that far outweigh their potential threat. If you see a bug in the house that you would rather wasn't there, move it outside. If you happen across any other reptiles, rodents or animals that we have labeled as pests, then it is important to find a way to cohabitate or have it removed by a capable, qualified person that will relocate it rather than destroy it. It is important to keep in mind that 90% of pest infestations can be avoided by proper sanitation practices. Keep a clean home and eliminate food sources and access sites and you will eliminate most of the potential for pests.

If you see an animal and you find yourself thinking about shooting it or how to kill it, it may be time for some introspection and honest soul searching to determine why you harbor such anger, violence and disregard for life. What events may have conditioned you to be so prone to violence and bloodshed? It is something that most of us have to do as we evolve in Barbequia. In my youth I did prematurely end many lives that did nothing to deserve it but merely be there. As I mature, I have realized that I did have issues with anger that were unleashed in a way that just aggravated things. There comes a time when we have to just stop being pissed off, stop being the victim and looking for the universe and everyone else to feel sorry for us. We need to look at our dysfunctional past as a series of choices and stop blaming or resenting our parents or family for the abuse, neglect, or whatever it may have been and accept responsibility for our own life and happiness. Then we can make the shift to steward as we learn that our choices are not good or bad, just choices with natural consequences, the sum of which

have made us who we are today. We have the power to modify who we are today any way we please through our ongoing choices. Now we can move forward and step into the role of steward and protector and develop the love and respect for all living things that is necessary to evolve in Barbequia. If as Barbequians, we develop and nurture a respect and honor for all life, we inevitably become more loving, peaceful, tolerant and aware of the connection between all things.



## **Barbequia is Actively Experiencing Life**

This concept is foreign to the vast majority of the population for a number of reasons, not the least of which is “efficiency”. We have brought upon ourselves a curse in the name of productivity that has certainly increased output, but has dramatically decreased input. We tend to organize our lives in scheduled segments based on the desired goal or outcome. This organization is excellent for increasing efficiency but it also puts the focus on the goal, forsaking the road to the goal, which is really where the enjoyment comes from. We get up in the morning at a certain time to get bathed and dressed, eat breakfast and are on the road to work in order to be there by a certain time. We maneuver through our routine just as we have for years focused on getting to work, completing our tasks at work, getting home in time for dinner, catching up with world events on TV and to bed in time to be up and at it the next day. Weekends are planned out and executed in a similar fashion and we achieve a sense of fulfillment from our measurable accomplishments.

Barbequia is about this and much more. What I have described is merely living life. If you add a bit more attention to your surroundings it may even be experiencing life, but Barbequia is about actively experiencing life and the key word here is actively. To experience life, we need to be aware of the endless sensory input made available to us everywhere we are. In other words, we need to be aware of our surroundings, the beauty that surrounds us, the people who influence us, the animals that depend on us,

the events that unfold before us, and contemplate their effect in our lives and be grateful for that effect. This in itself requires a concentrated effort to break out of the mind numbing schedule we have set for ourselves and allow ourselves to experience life. But to actively experience life, we need to take it a step further. Actively experiencing life means actually going out of your way to find new experiences, meet new people, engage in new activities and see new sights, while appreciating and loving the effect they have on our life.

I know someone that lives in the South East sector of Portland OR and travels every day to the Lloyd Center Mall where he works. The trip to work was so instinctive, he often found himself on I-205 headed to The Lloyd Center when he intended to go to Clackamas, which is in the other direction only to cuss and say something like "I'm just like a mule, let me go and I'll head to work or home and that's it". After some exposure to the Barbequian philosophy, he decided to start implementing the concept of actively experiencing life and to start he simply altered his route to work. For the next week, he took a different route each day and made an effort to notice, take in and appreciate as much as he could along the way. The following weekend, he had a full day with his wife and family visiting some local shops they had never noticed before, enjoyed the most impressive magnolia tree they had ever seen, ate BBQ sausages at a small German restaurant he had noticed and visited a new park they didn't know existed. By going out of his way and allowing an extra 10-15 minutes drive time, he actively experienced things that allowed him to further actively experience more things. This concept applies in every aspect of our life. Work is only as monotonous or boring as we want to make it.

Not long ago, I was working for Verizon Wireless in customer service and having never had that particular career experience before, I have come to the conclusion that everyone should have to work in retail and a call center at least once in their life. If everyone had that experience, this world would most definitely be a better place because we would all be a lot nicer. With that gratuitous philosophical plug out of the way, my point is that while I was working for Verizon Wireless, my job became extremely monotonous, lacking in challenge and well, it's a call center - need I say more? Just as I thought I couldn't stand another day, I realized that actively experiencing life applies to work as well and I found ways to experience my job. Every call became an opportunity to learn about other's outlook, problems, reactions, etc. I found I could have fun when others around me were frustrated, bored or just going through the motions. My partner, knowing my situation, would periodically send a text message to my cell phone saying "in the next hour you have to use the word *urinate* in a call". It was fun, funny and hard to do appropriately, but made experiencing my job become a lifestyle through a period of concerted effort.

This is an important concept worth reiterating - we create a Barbequian lifestyle through a period of concerted effort in the various areas of our life. This effort or focus will create the habits we want to adopt and as they become automatic, we focus on something new or higher. It is an ongoing process that builds on what is already mastered. This illustrates another concept I will insert briefly at this point before going on. In Barbequia there are no "masters", only disciples with more or less experience in any given area. We realize that we can always add to whatever we think we have mastered, therefore mastery as such doesn't exist. We also realize that by considering



one's self a master of anything, it limits our ability to expound on that area any further, ensuring the squelch of mastery.

Our modern society has a plethora of things to offer for us to actively experience life, and all we have to do is look for them. Most cities have a local periodical with information on local events, concerts, festivals, fairs, markets, and restaurant reviews. Make a habit of walking to the nearest shop that has the local periodical, pick it up every week and glance through it. Watch for what's going on in your locality and go experience it, break out of your comfort zone and try something new. Many of the activities are free or nearly free, so to experience something new every week or so, isn't far-fetched. By doing so, we open our minds and hearts to possibilities never before imagined with rewards in terms of personal growth beyond description. All we have to do to get this snowball rolling is start actively experiencing life and life will take it from there.



## Make it a Party

Having a party is a huge part of Barbequia and while we are the **partyingest** people on the planet, it doesn't mean you have to get drunk or otherwise altered to have a good time. A party in Barbequia can be just like what is traditionally viewed as a party, but more often than not it is very different. While we are all about good food shared with friends and family, good beer and wine and a big to do, we will cover those celebrations more in the section on Traditions. For now, we will cover making the dull and mundane fun again by making it a party. In Barbequia we strive to honor the child in all of us (a big part of who we really are) by finding wonder in simplicity, beauty in nature, no need to judge, and fun in a party. So, when you feel down, life is kind of dull, or if you just feel like you need to kick it up a notch - make it a party! The philosophy behind this concept is simple; it is nearly impossible to NOT have a lighthearted day when you are having a party. Now when it is all said and done, we could say that we are living Barbequia if every day is a light hearted day because a light hearted day means we are happy, free of judgment, full of love and enjoying the experience of life. So, for the time between our present reality and actually living a full-time Barbequian lifestyle (in other words from now on, since we know we master nothing) for those days that just need a boost, make it a party!

A friend of mine told me about how a few years back he and his wife had allowed themselves to reach a point in their relationship where it just seemed blasé, no “spark” and they felt stuck in a rut. They talked a bit about it but never concluded anything but an agreement that they were in a rut. One day shortly after discussing the matter, he was given an invitation to a “Bringing it Back Party” the next day after work. When he arrived home, there were balloons on the outside of the house and a sign that read “Bringing it Back Party Inside”. He went in the house to discover more balloons, a fire going in the fireplace and a wonderful dinner that his wife had prepared and that they proceeded to eat on the floor in front of the fire. By the end of the evening, the rut they were in no longer existed.

We can make it a party for just about any occasion and while exotic food is fun, most of our parties are done with whatever is in the pantry, which may be accented with a special treat or item on the menu.

~~Theme night makes a great party too. Do an oriental, Polynesian or other ethnic themed dinner. Sophisticated parties are fun too. Spam and Ritz crackers (in lieu of foie gras and water crackers), Hamburger Helper with a side of mixed vegetables, rolls and jello cubes for dessert, all served using your best china or stoneware, best flatware and crystal and you have to behave as if you were having dinner at the 4 Seasons~~

Kids love the concept of making it a party and as far as I can tell they don't outgrow it. Have a pizza party - which means hang out, watch a movie and eat pizza together. Celebrate your pet's birthdays, all holidays, make up your own holidays, and most of all, use your imagination for as many ways as you can to have a party and a light hearted day.

## Simple Pleasures & Frugal Luxuries

Here we delve into a realm long forgotten by most of us thanks to a crazy world, which places more value on what than who, things than memories, results than processes, and finding pleasure in what we have rather than who we are and what we do.

Barbequia is about finding beauty in simplicity, and experiencing luxury within our financial means. While anyone can experience pleasure and luxury with enough money, it takes a well-grounded, creative person to find pleasure in simple things and experience luxury while being frugal. All of these qualities are positive and will contribute immensely to your spiritual and personal growth regardless of your income level so income is irrelevant in this as well as all aspects of Barbequia. As we implement the concept of enjoying simple pleasures and frugal luxuries, we will quickly realize how our perspective changes with regard to our priorities and what it takes to “make us happy”. We will discover that our happiness has nothing to do with what we have or what we accomplished, and more to do with what we give, what we learn, and how we love. We will discover that pleasure is based on our attitude and that gratitude for simple things brings pleasure from those things, which in turn produces more gratitude. Then this gratitude, being intensified by our pleasure, quickly transforms into the ever-elusive and often-considered urban or religious legend - joy.

We will also discover that once we are able to enjoy simple pleasures and experience frugal luxuries, our ability to responsibly handle wealth will be significantly increased. So, what are these simple pleasures and frugal luxuries? Well, as is usually the case in Barbequia, they will be different for everyone. However, a few examples of our own simple pleasures may help illustrate the point or put it in perspective.

Simple pleasures are making it a party, taking 20 minutes to enjoy a fresh brewed cup of coffee or herbal tea, making breakfast on the grill and eating on the patio; watching our kids play on the beach as we look for sand dollars and shells; taking a walk in the neighborhood and enjoying the variety from yard to yard; spending time with our animal companions and watching them interact and play; feeding the ducks in the park; watching the birds and squirrels eat from the various feeders around the yard; planting flowers and a vegetable garden; mowing the lawn. Before you dismiss mowing the lawn as a simple pleasure, I have to say I hated it because it was something I had to do on my day off. But, when I started seeing the lawn as the living part of Barbequia it is, and appreciated its cosmetic as well as practical contribution, I found myself enjoying it. It wasn't a chore anymore; it was fun – a simple pleasure that gave visible results as an added reward. The point is we each need to actively search to find the simple things that give us pleasure and make a point to enjoy them as often as possible.

Frugal luxuries are an integral part of simple pleasures, but frugal is a relative term as is luxury. While running water is a part of normal life to us, it is a luxury to literally millions of others we share this planet with. While flying around in his own jet is pretty normal to Donald Trump, it's a big luxury to most of us. So frugal luxury for purposes of Barbequia are those enjoyed once you establish and reach the lowest

comfortable lifestyle – whatever that may be for you as discussed previously. Again for illustrative purposes a few of our own frugal luxuries may help make the point or put it in perspective.

Frugal luxuries are going to a free concert in the park; making a day trip to somewhere new; taking a portable barbeque grill into the woods for a picnic and going on a hike; getting up early to watch the sunrise while enjoying a cup of herbal tea or coffee or staying out later to watch the sunset while enjoying a glass of wine; taking time to take a candle lit bubble bath – even if you have to raid the birthday candles in the kitchen drawer and use the kids Mr. Bubble; dusting off the fondue and actually using it; having fresh cut flowers on the table, and guys listen to me on this one. With the exception of very few months, fresh flowers are available at a reasonable price and if you pick up a small bunch on your way home from wherever it will be the best 5 bucks you spent that week if you happen to be in a relationship of any kind. These are just a sampling of our frugal luxuries, but the important thing is to identify your own and enjoy them as often as possible.



## Traditions

Traditions give us a sense of identity and stability as they are passed down from generation to generation, and while most are loved and revered, we just don't seem to give them their place of importance in our life. If we give it some thought, most of us can come up with some traditions we observed as kids and some may have even been adopted in our independent lives and our children may adopt some as well. But chances are we would have to think about it and frankly whether they are adopted across generations or not, traditions are fun, something to look forward to and a wonderful opportunity to - you know it - make it a party. So, traditions are an important part of Barbequia.

For the most part, traditions revolve around holidays, so these are the easiest and most obvious to implement. To get started, all we need to do is identify the holidays we celebrate and draw on the past as well as our creativity to come up with our own holiday traditions. I celebrate most major holidays just because they are easy to celebrate and I have traditions for each one. I also have Barbequian holidays of my own, with traditions for them as well. For example, I celebrate the first day of spring as Barbequia New Years; our celebration of new beginnings, when we adopt a New Year plant that may stay indoors or end up in the yard weather permitting. We have a New Year dinner and pop a bottle of champagne while Bob Marley, Burning Spear and Shaggy liven up the afternoon with some reggae music.

While we celebrate the Yule, we also capitulate to Christianity's invasion of a timeless holiday to further a religious agenda by inertia as we celebrate Christmas. Christmas Eve is turkey dinner and hanging out with family. My partner will ask what food or candy memories each person has of Christmas and she will make it to be enjoyed all day. Christmas day is the opening of presents, a spread of cheese balls, turkey, deli cheese, chips and dips to be enjoyed all day by everyone and anyone who graces our home that day. Christmas day dinner is prime rib, vegetables, rolls and a nice red wine. It doesn't matter what you celebrate or how you do it, just establish some traditions and enjoy them.





## About the author

Dave "Pawpadog" Moreno is a tree-hugging, animal-loving jack-of-all-trades with a passion for the outdoors, handy work and creating Barbequia – his own version of paradise – wherever he goes. Trained as a (insert education), he grew up in a highly dogmatic religious community as a child, youth and young adult, while also experiencing the benefits and challenges of a business-focused life, he was able to break away and begin an often painful, yet wondrous, journey to discovering life's essential truths for himself, adapted into the form of tenets for The Independent Faith Church, a trans-denominational church that welcomes all in love, peace, respect and focus of intent. You can read more about Dave's journey or about how you can create your own Barbequia by visiting the at IFC website.

**Propose to be inserted in Chapter 5 after paragraph 2.**

Even when we are on the path of this realization, we will find that looking for approval is deeply engrained in our behavior and we will find ourselves unconsciously looking for approval even when we may have written a chapter in a book on the subject.

Not that long ago, I went to see a gentleman to get some help with some body/energy work I felt could help me. My mother who has long been an inspiration to me and a mentor in many ways on my spiritual path set up the appointment and accompanied me. During the session, I was asked very intimate and personal questions regarding my current belief system and as I gave my answers, I would unconsciously glance over at my mom. The person conducting the session noticed and after a few times he asked “do you always look to your mother for approval?” I don’t care what culture you are from or how much sensitivity you may pride yourself on having developed, but as a middle aged man, that question while obvious and valid, initially has a humiliating sting to it that has a tendency to curdle ones testosterone. As I sat there talking my ego down, I realized that I obviously felt some need for validation from my mommy. And my mind is racing - Holy ... shiznit, did I just say mommy? Son of a ... I’m a fully... I don’t need... I... but... Ah, hell! So what’s that all about? As I aloofly answered “apparently”, it hit me that the tendency to seek approval is very deeply seated and in some cases manifest by

an extreme disconnect and façade of not caring about approval from others but it's there none the less. The important thing is to see it and accept it and then decide whether it is based in valid argument or insecurity. When we do or say anything or act in any way that we are at peace with, we do so in alignment with our higher self, so when we are at peace and we find our self seeking validation, all we need to do is ask whether we think the person we are looking to would have a better idea what is in our best interest than our higher self. While the answer is obvious, we need to hone some loving acceptance skills.

**Propose to be inserted in Chapter 7 at the end of paragraph 7.**

Remember that as we mature we change and things that may not have appealed to us before may prove to be very enjoyable now and things that may not appeal to us now may appeal to us down the road. As new things present themselves or old things we didn't care for at one time, we will benefit from an open mind and allowing the possibility that they are being presented for a reason that serves us – give it a second chance. Discriminating on past experience will inevitably deprive us of beautiful growth experiences and exploring with an open mind will open countless doors. We will know if, what and when

something is appropriate and in our best interest, and if we find something isn't, we always reserve the right to change our mind.

The more traumatic an experience in the past may have been, the tougher it will be to revisit something similar today and yet if we dare live on the edge and risk the potential for past trauma knowing we have a new perspective and with the intention of creating a positive experience, chances are we will. Not only will we have added to our repertoire of experience and new pleasures but we will have effectively erased the past trauma.

**Propose to be inserted in Chapter 10 after paragraph 3 (final).**

Financial integrity for our purposes has nothing to do with morality as morality is very subjective and for the most part contrived to control the masses more than evolve the species. We use the word integrity not in the ethical sense but the literal sense of wholeness and balance. Barbequian financial integrity is

