

analysis of the poem desiderata

An Analysis of the Poem Desiderata: A Journey into Peace and Serenity

Introduction:

Are you seeking solace in a world often characterized by chaos and uncertainty? Do you yearn for a path towards inner peace and contentment? Then Max Ehrmann's "Desiderata," a timeless prose poem, offers a profound and insightful guide. This comprehensive analysis delves deep into the heart of this beloved piece, exploring its meaning, its enduring relevance, and its practical applications for navigating the complexities of modern life. We'll unpack its key themes, examine its literary devices, and ultimately, discover why "Desiderata" continues to resonate with readers across generations. Prepare to embark on a journey of self-discovery and reflection as we unravel the wisdom embedded within this remarkable poem.

I. Understanding the Context and Origin of "Desiderata":

"Desiderata," meaning "things desired" in Latin, was penned by Max Ehrmann, an American lawyer and poet, in 1927. However, it remained largely unknown until it was reprinted in 1950 by a Baltimore church, leading to its phenomenal rise in popularity. This unexpected success speaks to the poem's universal appeal and its ability to address the fundamental human need for guidance and tranquility. Its anonymous publication initially fueled speculation about its origins, adding to its mystique and contributing to its widespread dissemination. Understanding its historical context helps us appreciate the cultural climate that shaped its creation and the enduring wisdom it imparts.

II. Key Themes Explored in "Desiderata":

The poem's core themes revolve around the pursuit of inner peace and self-acceptance amidst the challenges of life. We'll dissect these themes in detail:

Self-Acceptance and Inner Peace: "Desiderata" emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance, encouraging readers to embrace their individuality and find peace within themselves, regardless of external pressures or judgments. The poem suggests that true contentment stems from inner harmony rather than external validation.

Gentleness and Kindness: The poem advocates for treating others with kindness and gentleness, regardless of their behavior or beliefs. It suggests that maintaining composure and empathy even in the face of adversity is crucial for fostering harmonious relationships.

Avoiding Extremes: "Desiderata" cautions against both excessive ambition and crippling self-doubt. It promotes a balanced approach to life, suggesting that striving for moderation and avoiding extremes is essential for maintaining mental and emotional well-being.

The Importance of Authenticity: The poem encourages readers to be true to themselves, even when faced with societal pressures to conform. It advocates for living a life of integrity and authenticity, aligning one's actions with their values.

Facing Life's Challenges with Grace: The poem acknowledges the inevitable hardships and disappointments of life, yet emphasizes the importance of facing these challenges with grace and resilience. It suggests that learning from setbacks and maintaining a positive outlook is crucial for personal growth.

III. Literary Devices Employed in "Desiderata":

Ehrmann masterfully employs several literary devices to convey his message effectively:

Simple Language and Imagery: The poem's straightforward language and accessible imagery make its wisdom easily digestible for a wide audience. This simplicity, however, does not detract from its depth and profoundness.

Repetition and Parallelism: The use of repetition and parallelism creates a rhythm and flow that enhance the poem's memorability and emphasizes its key messages. These stylistic choices contribute to the poem's overall impact.

Moral Instruction and Guidance: "Desiderata" functions as a form of moral instruction, providing readers with practical advice on how to navigate the complexities of life. Its guidance is presented not as a set of rigid rules, but rather as gentle suggestions for a more fulfilling existence.

Universal Appeal and Timeless Relevance: The poem's themes transcend time and culture, resonating with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This universality contributes to its ongoing popularity and relevance.

IV. The Enduring Legacy and Relevance of "Desiderata":

The poem's enduring popularity speaks volumes about its timeless relevance. In a world increasingly characterized by stress, anxiety, and uncertainty, "Desiderata" offers a much-needed message of hope, peace, and self-acceptance. Its wisdom provides a roadmap for navigating the complexities of modern life and cultivating a more fulfilling existence. Its influence can be seen in various aspects of popular culture, reflecting its widespread impact and continuing relevance.

V. Conclusion:

"Desiderata" is more than just a poem; it's a guide to living a more meaningful and peaceful life. By embracing its wisdom, we can navigate the challenges of life with grace, cultivate inner peace, and foster positive relationships. Its message of self-acceptance, kindness, and resilience continues to inspire and uplift readers across generations, making it a timeless masterpiece.

Article Outline:

Title: An Analysis of the Poem Desiderata

- I. Introduction: Hook, overview of the analysis.
- II. Context and Origin: Exploration of Max Ehrmann and the poem's initial obscurity.
- III. Key Themes: Detailed examination of self-acceptance, kindness, moderation, authenticity, and resilience.
- IV. Literary Devices: Analysis of language, imagery, repetition, parallelism, and the poem's instructive nature.
- V. Enduring Legacy and Relevance: Discussion of the poem's continued influence and impact.
- VI. Conclusion: Summary and concluding thoughts.

(The body of this outline has been expanded upon above.)

FAQs:

1. Who wrote "Desiderata"? Max Ehrmann, an American lawyer and poet.
2. When was "Desiderata" written? 1927.
3. What does "Desiderata" mean? "Things desired" in Latin.
4. What are the main themes of "Desiderata"? Self-acceptance, kindness, moderation, authenticity, and resilience.
5. What literary devices are used in "Desiderata"? Simple language, imagery, repetition, parallelism.
6. Why is "Desiderata" still popular today? Its timeless message of peace and self-acceptance resonates with modern audiences.
7. How can I apply the principles of "Desiderata" to my life? By practicing self-compassion, kindness towards others, and moderation in all things.
8. Is "Desiderata" a religious poem? No, it's a secular poem with universal appeal.
9. Where can I find the full text of "Desiderata"? Easily accessible online through numerous websites and resources.

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analysis of the poem desiderata: Desiderata Max Ehrmann, 2002-10 Written 75 years ago, Desiderata achieved fame as the anthem of the sixties' hippie-dom - the subject of many millions of posters and handbills - and famously narrated by Les Crane in his 1971 song version of the poem. Over the years Desiderata has provided a kind and gentle philosophy, a refreshing perspective on life's bigger picture. This new presentation of the prose poem will bring it to the attention of a new generation. The origins of Desiderata were, for many years, shrouded in mystery. Once thought to have originated from St. Paul's Church in Baltimore, Maryland in the seventeenth century it was later discovered that American poet Max Ehrmann had written it in 1927. Presented in a refreshingly modern design, Desiderata will appeal to a younger generation looking to find the meaning of life, and to baby-boomers who'll recall Desiderata from their youth.

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turn for truth and reality to the essence of beauty and goodness that lies all around us, if we can but open our eyes to see.

analysis of the poem desiderata: *The Cat at the Wall* Deborah Ellis, 2014-08-25 A remarkable and thought-provoking new novel set on Israel's West Bank, by the author of *The Breadwinner*. On Israel's West Bank, a cat sneaks into a small Palestinian house that has just been commandeered by two Israeli soldiers. The house seems empty, until the cat realizes that a little boy is hiding beneath the floorboards. Should she help him? After all, she's just a cat. Or is she? It turns out that this particular cat is not used to thinking about anyone but herself. She was once a regular North American girl who only had to deal with normal middle-school problems — staying under the teachers' radar, bullying her sister and the uncool kids at school, outsmarting her clueless parents. But that was before she died and came back to life as a cat, in a place with a whole different set of rules for survival. When the little boy is discovered, the soldiers don't know what to do with him. Where are the child's parents? Why has he been left alone in the house? It is not long before his teacher and classmates come looking for him, and the house is suddenly surrounded by Palestinian villagers throwing rocks, and the sound of Israeli tanks approaching. Not my business, thinks the cat. And then she sees a photograph, and suddenly she understands what happened to the boy's parents, and why they have not returned. And as the soldiers begin to panic, and disaster seems certain, she knows that it is up to her to diffuse the situation. But what can a cat do? What can any one creature do? Correlates to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

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analysis of the poem desiderata: If - Rudyard Kipling, 1918

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analysis of the poem desiderata: A Choosing Liz Lochhead, 2017-05-14 During her career Liz Lochhead has been described variously as a poet, feminist playwright, translator and broadcaster but has said that 'when somebody asks me what I do I usually say writer. The most precious thing to me is to be a poet. If I were a playwright, I'd like to be a poet in the theatre.' Liz Lochhead has a large and devoted audience and delights audiences where she goes.

analysis of the poem desiderata: Silver Walter de la Mare, 2017-04-04 Slowly, silently, now the moon walks the night in her silver shoon; This way, and that, she peers, and sees Silver fruit upon silver trees; One spring evening, the fairies gather in the woods. Two sleepy children join in the parade to a wonderful, dream-like fairy party. Illustrated by bright new talent, Carolina Rabei, this Walter de la Mare poem is brought to life with shimmery, ethereal illustrations, making it the perfect book for bedtime. One of four seasonal Walter de la Mare picture books that form a set, each with

complementing colour palates and illustrations by rising young star Carolina.

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analysis of the poem desiderata: Annabel Lee Edgar Allan Poe, 1927

analysis of the poem desiderata: Desiderata Max Ehrmann, 1995 With new illustrations on virtually every page and a striking new jacket, this is a *Desiderata* for the '90s. This classic book of inspiration has sold more than 190,000 copies and continues to give comfort and cheer to new readers year after year. Line drawings.

analysis of the poem desiderata: A Psalm of Life Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1891

analysis of the poem desiderata: The Peace of Wild Things Wendell Berry, 2018-02-22 If you stop and look around you, you'll start to see. Tall marigolds darkening. A spring wind blowing. The woods awake with sound. On the wooden porch, your love smiling. Dew-wet red berries in a cup. On the hills, the beginnings of green, clover and grass to be pasture. The fowls singing and then settling for the night. Bright, silent, thousands of stars. You come into the peace of simple things. From the author of the 'compelling' and 'luminous' essays of *The World-Ending Fire* comes a slim volume of poems. Tender and intimate, these are consoling songs of hope and of healing; short, simple meditations on love, death, friendship, memory and belonging. They celebrate and elevate what is sensuous about life, and invite us to pause and appreciate what is good in life, to stop and savour our fleeting moments of earthly enjoyment. And, when fear for the future keeps us awake at night, to come into the peace of wild things.

analysis of the poem desiderata: From Blossoms Li-Young Lee, 2007 Li-Young Lee is a leading American poet, born in Indonesia, whose poetry fuses memory, family, culture and history to explore love, exile, family and mortality. This selection, drawn from three collections and a memoir, shows Lee searching for understanding and for the right language to give form to what is invisible and evanescent.

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of Italian religious devotion. Prodan combines a literary, historical, and biographical approach to analyze the mystical constructs and conceits in Michelangelo's poems, thereby deepening our understanding of the artist's spiritual life in the context of Catholic Reform in the mid-sixteenth century. Prodan also demonstrates how Michelangelo's poetry is part of an Augustinian tradition that emphasizes mystical and moral evolution of the self. Examining such elements of early modern devotion as prayer, lauda singing, and the contemplation of religious images, Prodan provides a unique perspective on the subtleties of Michelangelo's approach to life and to art. Throughout, Prodan argues that Michelangelo's art can be more deeply understood when considered together with his poetry, which points to a spirituality that deeply informed all of his production.

analysis of the poem desiderata: *Things I Learned at Art School* Megan Dunn, 2021-08-17 Part memoir, part essay collection, Megan Dunn's ingenious, moving, hilariously personal *Things I Learned at Art School* tells the story of her early life and coming-of-age in New Zealand in the '70s, '80s and '90s. From her parents' divorce to her Smurf collection, from the mean girls at school to the mermaid movie *Splash!*, from her work in strip clubs and massage parlours (and one steak restaurant) to the art school of the title, this is a dazzling, killer read from a contemporary voice of comic brilliance. Chapters include: The Ballad of Western Barbie; A Comprehensive List of All the Girls Who Teased Me at Western Heights High School, What They Looked Like and Why They Did It; On Being a Redhead; Life Begins at Forty: That Time My Uncle Killed Himself; Good Girls Write Memoirs, Bad Girls Don't Have Time; Videos I Watched with My Father; Things I Learned at Art School; CV of a Fat Waitress; Nine Months in a Massage Parlour Called Belle de Jour; Various Uses for a Low Self-esteem; Art in the Waiting Room and Submerging Artist. Praise for *Tinderbox*: "Tinderbox is deadpan hilarious and Megan Dunn is a comic genius." - Susanna Andrew, *Metro* "Megan Dunn's wry, whip-smart memoir about Fahrenheit 451, literary ambition & the last days of Borders Bookstores is funny & insightful as hell. Like Kathy Acker meets Sue Townsend. The read of the summer! ... already one of my favourite New Zealand books." - Hera Lindsay Bird "Witty, highly entertaining." - Philip Matthews, *Stuff* *Tinderbox* is such a shape-shifter, such a sui generis work, that to call it a memoir does it a disservice ... [Dunn's] voice is hard to resist - sardonic, brazen, sagacious - recalling, in places, Nora Ephron, John Jeremiah Sullivan, and Maggie Nelson." - James Cook, *Review 31*

analysis of the poem desiderata: *Brain Fever: Poems* Kimiko Hahn, 2014-10-06 Rooted in traditional Japanese aesthetics and meditations on contemporary neuroscience, a stunning new volume from an essential American poet. Acclaimed as one of the most fascinating female poets of our time (BOMB), Kimiko Hahn is a shape-shifter, a poet who seeks novel forms for her utterly original subject matter and stands as a welcome voice of experimentation and passion (Bloomsbury Review). In *Brain Fever*, Hahn integrates the recent findings of science, ancient Japanese aesthetics, and observations from her life as a woman, wife, mother, daughter, and artist. Rooted in meditations on contemporary neuroscience, *Brain Fever* takes as its subject the mysteries of the human mind—the nature of dreams and memories, the possibly illusory nature of linear time, the complexity of conveying love to a child. In one poem, *A Bowl of Spaghetti*, she cites a comparison that researchers draw between unraveling the millions of miles of wires in the [human] brain and untangling a bowl of spaghetti, and thus she untangles a memory of her own: I have an old photo: Rei in her high chair intently / picking out each strand to mash in her mouth. // Was she two? Was that sailor dress from mother? / Did I cook that sauce from scratch? If so, there was a carrot in the pot. Equally inspired by Sei Shonagon's tenth-century *Pillow Book* and the latest findings of cognitive research, *Brain Fever* is a thrilling blend of the timely and the timeless.

analysis of the poem desiderata: *Tuesdays with Morrie* Mitch Albom, 2007-06-29 #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A special 25th anniversary edition of the beloved book that has changed millions of lives with the story of an unforgettable friendship, the timeless wisdom of older generations, and healing lessons on loss and grief—featuring a new afterword by the author "A wonderful book, a story of the heart told by a writer with soul."—Los Angeles Times "The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in." Maybe it was a

grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it. For Mitch Albom, that person was his college professor Morrie Schwartz. Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn't you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger? Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live. "The truth is, Mitch," he said, "once you learn how to die, you learn how to live." Tuesdays with Morrie is a magical chronicle of their time together, through which Mitch shares Morrie's lasting gift with the world.

analysis of the poem desiderata: *Citizenship in a Republic* Theodore Roosevelt, 2022-05-29
Citizenship in a Republic is the title of a speech given by Theodore Roosevelt, former President of the United States, at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, on April 23, 1910. One notable passage from the speech is referred to as The Man in the Arena: It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

analysis of the poem desiderata: The Spider and the Fly Tony DiTerlizzi, 2012 'A gleefully sinister fable'--Lane Smith--Back cover.

analysis of the poem desiderata: *Witches Abroad* Terry Pratchett, 2009-10-13 Be careful what you wish for... Once upon a time there was a fairy godmother named Desiderata who had a good heart, a wise head, and poor planning skills—which unfortunately left the Princess Emberella in the care of her other (not quite so good and wise) godmother when DEATH came for Desiderata. So now it's up to Magrat Garlick, Granny Weatherwax, and Nanny Ogg to hop on broomsticks and make for far-distant Genua to ensure the servant girl doesn't marry the Prince. But the road to Genua is bumpy, and along the way the trio of witches encounters the occasional vampire, werewolf, and falling house (well this is a fairy tale, after all). The trouble really begins once these reluctant foster-godmothers arrive in Genua and must outwit their power-hungry counterpart who'll stop at nothing to achieve a proper happy ending—even if it means destroying a kingdom.

analysis of the poem desiderata: The Poem Don Paterson, 2018-05-22 Don Paterson is not only one of our great poets, but also an esteemed authority on the art of poetry. In illuminating and engaging prose, he offers his treatise on the making and the philosophy of 'the poem'. Paterson unpicks the process of verse composition with ambition, scholarly flair, and occasional scurrilities, exploring the mechanics of how a poem works and, essentially, what a poem is. His findings take the form of three essays that make up the three sections of the book: 'Lyric' attends to the sound of the poem; 'Sign' envisages ideas of poetic meaning; while 'Metre' studies its underlying rhythms. Through his various professional guises - as poetry editor at Picador Macmillan, professor of poetry at the University of St Andrews, and major prize-winning poet - no one is better placed to grant this 'insider's perspective'. For all those intrigued by the inner workings of the art form and its fundamental secrets, *The Poem* will surprise and delight.

analysis of the poem desiderata: Love for Imperfect Things Haemin Sunim, 2018-12-24
Susan Cain, New York Times bestselling author of *Quiet*: The world could surely use a little more love, a little more compassion, and a little more wisdom. In *Love for Imperfect Things*, Haemin Sunim shows us how to cultivate all three, and to find beauty in the most imperfect of things—including your very own self. A #1 internationally bestselling book of spiritual wisdom about learning to love ourselves, with all our imperfections, by the Buddhist author of *The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down* Hearing the words be good to yourself first, then to others was like being struck by lightning. Many of us respond to the pressures of life by turning inward and ignoring problems, sometimes resulting in anxiety or depression. Others react by working harder at the office, at school, or at home, hoping that this will make ourselves and the people we love happier. But what if being yourself is enough? Just as we are advised on airplanes to take our own oxygen

first before helping others, we must first be at peace with ourselves before we can be at peace with the world around us. In this beautiful follow-up to his international bestseller *The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down*, Zen Buddhist monk Haemin Sunim turns his trademark wisdom to the art of self-care, arguing that only by accepting yourself--and the flaws that make you who you are--can you have compassionate and fulfilling relationships with your partner, your family, and your friends. With more than thirty-five full-color illustrations, *Love for Imperfect Things* will appeal to both your eyes and your heart, and help you learn to love yourself, your life, and everyone in it. When you care for yourself first, the world begins to find you worthy of care.

analysis of the poem desiderata: Poems William Blake, 2016-12-13 William Blake is one of England's most fascinating writers; he was not only a groundbreaking poet, but also a painter, engraver, radical, and mystic. Although Blake was dismissed as an eccentric by his contemporaries, his powerful and richly symbolic poetry has been a fertile source of inspiration to the many writers and artists who have followed in his footsteps. In this collection Patti Smith brings together her personal favorites of Blake's poems, including the complete *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, to give a singular picture of this unique genius, whom she calls in her moving introduction "the spiritual ancestor" of generations of poets.

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