

## Puzzle of Life

A few years ago I received a beautiful puzzle as a gift from one of my friends. I loved the picture on the cover of the box, but when I took the cover off and saw the hundreds of tiny pieces with their similar colors and shapes, I was overwhelmed. I thought, "It looks like fun, but I'll never be able to put it together, there are too many pieces and it'll be too hard to figure out where each piece goes. I just don't have the time."

As life would have it, one hot and humid Sunday I thought of the puzzle and decided to start piecing it together to take my mind off the heat. I brought it down to the basement where it was cool and placed it on a big piece of plywood. I decided to start working on the outside edges because the four borders were straight and I figured it would be easier to start picking out the pieces that had straight edges. Ever so slowly the frame started coming together, but I was still overwhelmed as I looked at the rest of the pieces lying in the box and on the plywood board. I tried sorting them according to color, but there were so many similar colors that I wasn't as successful as I hoped I would be. Finally I gave up.

Several days later I needed to take a breather from my activities and decided that working on the puzzle would be a great escape. Once more, ever so slowly, more pieces started coming together. Later that week relatives arrived for vacation and I was busy visiting, along with working and keeping up with the regular chores and duties that come with running a household. I decided to take some time out and once again went downstairs to work on the puzzle.

I became immersed in fitting more pieces together and suddenly, instead of feeling frustrated trying to figure out where the next piece went, I began to understand that the picture itself was showing me what piece went where. I realized that I didn't need to worry about how I was going to put the entire puzzle together because one part of the puzzle automatically led to the next. All I needed to do was follow the pattern one piece at a time and it would become clear.

As I looked at the parts already assembled, I realized I had put together nearly 1/3 of the puzzle! It was then the thought occurred to me that life was like that puzzle – we worry about what we need to do next or what is to come, yet one part of life always leads to the next, and all we need to do is be present and aware and allow it to show us the way. I learned my lesson.

When we look at our lives and see all the "pieces" we have to put together; family, career, health, finances, relationships, etc., we can become so overwhelmed that we block ourselves from doing what we need to do *now* so it can all flow together. Instead, we tend to project ourselves into the future and

create all sorts of fears and blockages that can actually hold us back.

Next time you find yourself worried about tomorrow, try to think about your own personal puzzle of life and know that with each piece you lay down you are being led to the next. When you know in your heart that trusting in the process of life will allow you to flow through it, your life's puzzle will come together easier, and with less stress and more joy.