

DESIDERATA

What is Desiderata all about?

Desiderata is, fundamentally, a gamut of advice about how to live a happy and contented life.

What is the structure of the poem Desiderata?

The structure of the poem is that it is written in 6 stanzas, consisting a total of twenty-eight lines, written in a structured way almost prose-like. The poem consists of enjambment, line breaks and other poetic devices.

How does Ehrmann emphasize the importance of being kind to yourself in "Desiderata?"

In "Desiderata," Ehrmann emphasizes the importance of being kind to yourself, particularly in the following passage:

*"Be gentle with yourself
You are a child of the universe
no less than the trees and the stars;
you have a right to be here."*

In this passage, Ehrmann suggests that people should go easy on themselves, and see themselves as being part of a bigger picture. As he states here, each and every person is valuable in their own right and deserves kindness.

What messages does the poem Desiderata convey to its readers?

The poem, "Desiderata" conveys the message that one should look at life through a positive aspect. God has created each and every human being for a certain purpose. They all have a right to be born and fulfill their purpose. They are all children of God's and hence, a child of the universe, where they belong. One should believe in oneself but remain in good terms with everyone. It is important to listen to others, even if their story is dull, as they have a right to be heard. World is still a beautiful place to live in, and one should live life to the fullest by being honest and cheerful.

Comment on the couplets, tercet, quatrains, and enjambment in the poem Desiderata?

The short answer to this question is 'No'. Poetry is most often thought of as a structured literary form. The patterns of couplets, tercets (a set or group of three lines of verse rhyming together or connected by rhyme with an adjacent triplet.) and quatrains and device of enjambment that are referred to in this question are structural poetic devices.

However, Desiderata is a prose poem. The form of this type of poem when first seen on a page, may at first glance lead to an impression that the text is prose, as it does not have the rhymes and metrical rhythms usually associated with poetry. The defining feature however, of a prose poem is that the text includes one or more poetic techniques and so, essentially, sounds like poetry.

Couplets, tercets and quatrains are unlikely occurrences in prose poems, which are usually written in sentences and paragraphs - as is Desiderata.. Enjambment is a technique in which the idea in a line is carried through to the following line, or lines, without punctuation at the end of lines. This technique might sometimes be used in prose poems but you will notice that each line in Desiderata ends with a punctuation mark - each line makes complete sense and is a self-contained thought.

What is the theme of the poem "Desiderata"?

Answer: The theme of the poem Desiderata is the authentic lifestyle, which involves - loving oneself, being true to oneself, valuing one's employment, being dignified and self-assertive, without being disrespectful to others.

Discuss the symbols of Silent Hills, God, Peace, Kindness, A beautiful world.

The Silent Hills

In "A Prayer," the speaker reminisces about "the bright hours that found me walking over the silent hills of my childhood." Here, the silent hills symbolize the time he spent in nature during his childhood and his relationship with the natural world. This image also suggests the carefree quality of his childhood.

Kindness

Kindness is a key motif of Ehrmann's poetry. It is a trait he encourages a person to have both for others and for themselves. For example, in "Desiderata" he reassures the reader that they are a "child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars."

God

At first glance, Ehrmann's poetry seems to contain religious themes and motifs. He often writes about God and the consolation that religious devotion can offer in our lives.

However, in "Desiderata", Ehrmann actually explains that "God" is "whatever you conceive Him to be," meaning that he has a pretty flexible definition of what God means.

Peace

The ideas of peace and serenity are key motifs in Ehrmann's poetry. He suggests that a sense of inner peace leads to true contentment and that people should strive to avoid stress, chaos, and unnecessary "noise" in their lives. For example, consider this passage from "Desiderata":

"Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence."

A Beautiful World

In "Desiderata," Ehrmann states that although the world is full of "sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world." This idea of accepting the world's problems but still retaining an optimistic view is a motif in Ehrmann's poetry. For example, in "Whatever Else You Do," he writes that "however much you condemn the evil in the world, remember that the world is not all evil; that somewhere children are at play, as you yourself in the old days."

How does the poem Desiderata influence your life and thoughts as a student?

"Desiderata" teaches us, the students, to remain humble and true to ourselves. In this world where trickery still exists, it is important to remain original and honest. No matter what our career choice is, it is important to remain humble and never to compare ourselves with anyone as there will always be "greater or lesser" person than us. We should speak the truth and give an opportunity to everyone to explain their story. The poem teaches us to lead a life filled with optimism and honesty.

What is the message of Desiderata?

Answer: Max Ehrman wrote Desiderata with his daughter at the forefront of his mind but the poem contains advice that can be used to advantage by everyone. Fundamentally, the message is about how to get through life happily, in a contented manner, and with a clear conscience. The poem is about how to conduct oneself in the best possible way in order to achieve these goals, It speaks of remaining calm, being polite, listening to the point of view of others, avoiding quarrels and those people who like to create them, and how to stand by one's principles in an assertive but non-aggressive manner. We should be mindful of not comparing ourselves to other people because if we do so the outcome will either be vanity or dissatisfaction with our own lives. We should make time to enjoy our achievements as opposed to constantly looking ahead to the next goal - in the words of John Lennon ' Life is what happens while you are busy making plans'.

What are the poetic devices used in the poem Desiderata?

Enjambment:- it is the continuation of a sentence with a pause beyond the end of a line, couplet or a stanza. It is seen in the poem when the speaker says "for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment/ it is as perennial as the grass."

Alliteration:- it is the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words. For example, "however humble" or "strength of spirit."

What peace there is in silence?

Silence gives rise to many thoughts which might not have been capable in a noisy ambience. Silence is needed for retrospection. Hence, the speaker says “what peace there may be in silence.”

Discuss Desiderata as a didactic poem.

A didactic poem is a poem which is designed to teach people something .

Max Ehrmann’s “ Desiderata “ offers ‘ a code for life’ emphasising tolerance and optimism. The poem is full of wise sayings and gentle guidance. The poem preaches a moral lesson on how to live a happy and peaceful life.

What adds to the didactic element in the poem is the use of imperative sentences. Imperative sentences are requests, suggestions, advice or commands and they often begin with a verb. By the use of imperative sentences the poet suggests to the readers to be themselves, to be interested in their own career, to avoid loud persons, to be cheerful and to make peace with God.

“ speak your truth quietly and clearly “.

“Avoid loud and aggressive persons”.

“Be yourself”.

“Take kindly the counsel of years.”

The poem is didactic in the sense as it not only tells us ‘what to do’ but also tells us ‘how to do it’ .

Some of the suggestions given in Desiderata to live peaceful and happy life are as follows -

Remain calm and silent amidst all the noises of the world.

Learn to get along with others.

Voice your opinion clearly and listen to the opinion of the others.

Be yourself and not imitate others .

Be disciplined but at the same time be gentle to yourself.

Give up negative thoughts.

Be at peace with God and within your soul.

In spite of all fakeness, darkness and drudgery the world is still beautiful and worth living here.

Try to be cheerful and happy.

Why is Desiderata a didactic poem?

Max Ehrmann's poem, "Desiderata", is a didactic poem as it teaches a moral lesson in life. The poem, through a set of values and principles, guides everyone how to lead a successful life and be humble. The poem is full of optimism and cheerfulness. It teaches the reader to look at life through a positive aspect.

Give paragraphwise explanation of the poem.

Paragraph 1

Advice to remain calm amongst the bustle of everyday life and to practice silence. Be on good terms with people without giving up personal values and assertiveness. Do not be argumentative but remain calm in interactions with others, to whom you should be respectful and attentive, even if you consider a person to be dull or ignorant. Everyone has a right to be heard.

Paragraph 2

Avoid people who are loud and aggressive, as they may upset your equilibrium. It is unproductive to compare yourself to other people as there will always be those higher and lower in the pecking order/moral stakes. Any such comparisons are therefore likely to lead to vanity or bitterness. Simply enjoy your own achievements in life and any plans that you may have for furthering your own personal development.

Paragraph 3

Whatever your occupation, treasure it and do your best, as it is better to be employed, however humble the work might be, than to be unemployed. Be grateful that you have employment. Be cautious when conducting financial transactions because many people will attempt to dupe you. But despite the fact that there are many fraudsters and con-men don't become blind to the fact that there are also many good people, who have high moral standards. There are heroes in every walk of life.

Paragraph 4

Don't pretend to be the type of person that you are not, or to have feelings that you do not have. Most of all do not pretend to love a person when there is no love in your heart. But do not underestimate the power of love, which survives in the most terrible of circumstances. Defer to the wisdom of the older generation. Develop a strong character that will help you to survive misfortune, but don't imagine bad things that may never happen - you may be thinking of such things because you are tired or lonely.

Paragraph 5

Don't be overly self-critical. You are part of an all-encompassing universe and no less important than any other component within it. You may not realise this, but there is a pre-determined and right path that the universe is following.

Paragraph 6

Accept of the reality of God, or a greater power than human, whatever you imagine 'Him' to be. Maintain a clear conscience. Despite all of the dreadful things that happen, the world is still beautiful. Remain cheerful and, most of all, put your best efforts into being happy.

What is the The Tone of "Desiderata"?

"Desiderata" is a didactic, that is, morally instructional prose-like poem. Max Ehrmann wrote it for his daughter but since it was published, it has been taken to heart by very many people who wish to live authentic lives. The pace of the poem is *measured and calm*, emphasizing the advice contained within the lines to be *calmly assertive, respectful of others, non-confrontational, diligent, emotionally strong, principled and to cultivate a clear conscience*.

Is the word "desiderata" Latin or Spanish?

Answer: The word "desiderata" is Latin. It is the plural of the word "desideratum," as shown in the callout box in the article.

Of what significance is the perennial grass mentioned in the fourth stanza of the poem "Desiderata"?

The reference to grass uses the literary device of simile (drawing comparisons to show similarities between different things). Ehrmann is suggesting that just as grass is green throughout the year in a temperate climate, love is perpetual, undying and fresh.

What does Desiderata trying to imply?

The word "desiderata" stands for things that are desired or needed in life. In the poem, the speaker urges us to forgo all evils and live a life through positivity and happiness. This is what desiderata is trying to imply- to live a successful life by being humble and original and being on good terms with others.

How does Ehrmann retain a realistic view of the world in his poetry, despite his positive outlook?

Despite the positive and uplifting nature of his poetry, Ehrmann nonetheless acknowledges that life can be difficult and frustrating. Perhaps this is what makes his poetry so appealing, because he doesn't try to negate the negative aspects of the world or exclude them entirely.

For example, in his poem "Reforming Oneself," he admits that there aren't enough "kindly persons" in the world and that "our competitive life develops selfishness and unkindness." In his well-known poem "Desiderata," he tells us that "the world is full of trickery."

However, despite this apparent negativity in the world, Ehrmann maintains that we must not let ourselves lose sight of the goodness in the world:

"But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism."

What is the main idea of the poem Desiderata?

The main idea of the poem is leading an authentic lifestyle. The poem discusses the morals and values one should follow to lead a balanced and successful life.

In the poem "Desiderata", does the phrase "perennial as the grass" simply mean that it comes and goes?

No. Something that is perennial lasts for a very long time. A perennial plant, such as grass, does not die for many years. It is a hardy plant that may hibernate during the winter but it starts to grow again when Spring arrives. In the context of "Desiderata", the word perennial means everlasting.

Is "Desiderata" an acronym?

No. The word desiderata is not an acronym. You will find the translation of the word from the Latin in the article. (An acronym is formed from the first letter of other words).

What does the speaker of "A Prayer" suggest is the "strength" that comforted him "in the desolation of other times?"

In "A Prayer," the speaker tells us about a feeling of inner strength that has carried him through difficult times. Through the rest of the poem, he subtly expands on the nature of this strength and what its sources might be.

One possible source of strength is his happy memories, which he suggests when he writes:

"May I still remember the bright hours that found me walking over the silent hills of my childhood."

Later in the poem, the speaker similarly states that in his old age he will remain strong by being thankful for "time's olden memories."

Another source of strength for the speaker is his devotion, spirituality and faith in God. For example, he states that he "promised" is "early God" to have courage, and that his faith has helped him find strength within himself.

What does "child of the universe" mean?

"Child of the universe" in the poem means a part of God's creation. Just as how God has created trees, stars, the Sun and so on, similarly God has created each and every human being for a certain purpose. They all have a right to be born and fulfil their purpose. They are all children of God's and hence, a child of the universe, where they belong.

What is the mood of the poem "Desiderata"?

Answer: Mood and tone in poetry are closely connected and sometimes cause confusion because they both deal with the emotions centered around the poem.

The tone of a poem relates to the intentions of the poet/voice in the poem. Desiderata was written by Ehrmann specifically for his daughter and the tone is clearly didactic - intended to provide good objective advice - but is gentle rather than firm.

The mood of a poem relates to the atmosphere of a poem, and to some extent, the feelings that it arouses in a reader. Some of the adjectives that I might choose to describe the mood of Desiderata are - calm, contemplative, peaceful, thoughtful, enlightened. A different reader might interpret it differently -perhaps dependent upon the extent to which s/he is willing to accept advice.

What is the tone and mood of the poem Desiderata?

The mood and tone of the poem is optimistic and cheerful. It uplifts the spirit of readers by depicting positive morals in order to lead a peaceful and successful life.

Discuss the figures of speech used in the poem.

Metaphors and Similes

In "Desiderata," Ehrmann uses a **simile**:

*"Neither be cynical about love;
for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment
it is as perennial as the grass."*

Alliteration and Assonance

Ehrmann uses alliteration in "Desiderata": "*Darkened hours of despair*"

Irony

Ehrmann acknowledges that there are terrible things in the world, but still ironically keeps a positive and optimistic attitude throughout his poems.

Genre

Poetry

Tone

The tone of his poetry is uplifting and inspirational

In what ways did Ehrmann take a formalistic approach to Desiderata?

Desiderata is written as a prose poem. The principal approach that Ehrmann has taken to form is the use of parataxis, an explanation of which in this article. He has given equal importance to each point of advice that he has given by using the coordinating conjunction 'and' to link clauses in the poem.

What is the mood of the poem "Desiderata" by Max Ehrmann?

Max Ehrmann wrote this poem to his daughter. It is didactic. It intended to teach. I would say that it is both practical and moral in mood.

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