



# Bumpin Bakery

Bump Out Hunger

Non-Profit Organization  
3883 West 11th Ave, Vancouver BC, V6R 2K8

Tel. (778) 899-8989

Website: [www.bumpinbakery.ca](http://www.bumpinbakery.ca)  
Email: [bumpin.bakery.corp@gmail.com](mailto:bumpin.bakery.corp@gmail.com)

## A Conversation with Greg: The World through his Eyes

Talking with Greg, I learned various outlooks concerning matters within the contemporary world we live in, as well as insightful revelations regarding issues we face as Vancouver dwellers. He covered a wide range of topics, generously delving into personal anecdotes and mindsets he has come to appreciate over the years, sharing valuable lessons that have shaped his outlook on the material and spiritual world. Our mishmash conversation left much to consider and contemplate, every word carrying weight heavier than the word itself, a meaning you'll have to urge out of hiding as I relay Greg's story.

Greg has been living in Vancouver since '96. His family perished in a car crash around the same time, but through miraculous strength and perseverance, he found acceptance through the realization that their souls still lives on, in peace and comfort, in the realm of God, having merely abandoned their physical shells. Just knowing he'll be reunited with them in the future makes everything he faces without them worth it. As he said, God's love, power and influence is within all of us, guiding us every step of the way; even if our visits to the church are few and far between, or none at all. He loosely quoted the Bible at this point, saying that "God does not dwell in houses made by man", which tells us that no church can give us a closer connection with God than what we are born with, since the fate we walk is forever crafted by his hand.

This is precisely why, Greg continued, that it is dangerous to live stuck in the past without ever moving on. Never-ending lamentation results in living without ever having lived, since you brood on something impossible to change while the present festers in neglect. We often, almost always, do this with childhood experiences. As adults, the majority of our actions and accomplishments are compared to our younger selves as a form of validation, an ideal that is usually unreachable, since the knowledge, experiences, and outlooks we gained as we grew up have hatched a completely new person, often not even remotely relatable to the child we admire with the blurred fondness of time. External and internal factors mold us almost daily, after all. Thus, without acceptance of the past, we can't harness the future.

And harnessing the future, Greg said, is best done by doing what you love. Listening to outside influences, like other people or well-known societal norms, is not living the life you want to live. You will never feel truly happy until you listen to your heart, and, no matter how cheesy it sounds, doing what you love is the most important thing you can ever do. As the old saying goes, "if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life". You need to disregard better financial opportunities outside of what you really want to do, or expectations imposed on you by your parents or societal standards, in order to escape the dread of waking up everyday to face obligations that feel like chores; happiness is loving what you do. Greg clarified that this does not necessarily mean living moment by moment, for considering the future and the implications of your actions is crucial for a

well-balanced life, but you do need to follow your heart and not the voice of others, especially if they tell you you need to be a doctor with a big house and a pretty family if you



“Micah and Oscar serving Greg a coffee”

ever want to succeed. Chasing money and reputation will ultimately get you nowhere, since material objects and fake facades can crumble at any moment misfortune crosses your path. Life can change irreversibly in an instant considering the array of tragedies that can befall us, and you might lose everything you’ve worked hard to buy, which caused you to neglect yourself and everybody close to you. That’s why you need to sincerely enjoy life and the memories you forge, since those are priceless.

Enjoying life comes hand in hand with learning virtues. Virtues bring us insight into our own life and the lives of others, teaching us to appreciate everything brought before us through a larger and more expansive understanding. Greg’s mother used to make him volunteer and wash windows at a senior’s home while he was growing up, and he could never comprehend the purpose of that task until he reflected on the

things it taught him. Along with giving food to the poor at a mission for some time, he learned through volunteer work and giving back to the community, many of the virtues necessary for a holistic life, gaining more forgiveness, patience and empathy with every soul he helped. That is why, he said, it is now more important than ever, since selfish, inward mindsets are growing in number as the world becomes increasingly material and appearance focused, that the younger generations participate in volunteer work that improves their community. In many cases, school teaches us to conform to a system, whereas involvement in the community shows us how to manipulate and break through that system, teaching us the impact one person can have on a whole community instead of the basics for individual success that the school curriculum outlines. School gives us a foundation of knowledge, which assists the students individually, while volunteering is the other piece of the puzzle that gives us the values that can direct our knowledge for the

benefit of a wider population. Greg somberly acknowledged that the poor will always exist within society, which means volunteers will always be needed.

Volunteering is also crucial for breaking stigmas and learning acceptance, since it takes people into reality, showing them what the world is really like outside the comfort of their own four walls. Greg talked about a group of people whose conversation he overheard the other day, the group consisting of four or five men, who were quite muscular and tall. One of the men was telling the others in the group never to go down East Hastings, since it is a highly dangerous area, even though the men, especially in a group that size, were very capable of defending themselves in most situations. Greg said this instance especially exemplified the stereotypes of the Downtown Eastside that are ingrained in society and blown out of proportion from years of maintaining such a stigma. In reality, the Downtown Eastside is mostly safe, particularly in the day, and especially in a group of people. Volunteering is a fantastic way to gain exposure to that part of the city so shadowed in harmful misconceptions, and as more people realize that the Downtown Eastside is not as threatening as society has led us to believe, the more efficiently we, as a city, can start to construct a healthy, more realistic and closer relationship with the residents of the Downtown Eastside.

The dark side of living in the Downtown Eastside can also be revealed to the general population through volunteering, recognition being an important step in helping with the struggles residents face. Greg outlined one of the misfortunes that is commonly imposed on people who take up residence in the Downtown Eastside, and that is obscurity. People living in this part of the city are often forgotten; they are there one moment before disappearing, and nobody will bat an eyelash. Individuals often move to the Downtown Eastside purposely so they can hideaway, since that area allows them to escape the public eye, which lets their obligations and wrongdoings disappear as they simultaneously drift from everyone's thoughts. It's frightening when you realize people living there become nameless, that they are able to die without anyone mourning their death or even thinking of a memorial. This is where volunteering comes in; we have the job to give these people a voice, to forge connections with residents, and between residents, and to let them know that somebody truly does care about their well being.

There was no single, profound message that emerged from my talk with Greg. We talked about so many different perspectives on so many different subjects, it was quite hard to keep track of the conversation, but that's what made our chat so insightful. Life isn't about focusing on one thing; you have to consider and balance the varying aspects of your life and those affected by you everyday, and our values should reflect that. Thank you for sharing your story with us, Greg. Your perspective was inspiring.

By: Keeley Aliya