

## ASCHP October 2020 circular

### Lessons from a weaver finch

It is the month October, the most delightful month of the year, or, in the words of the Afrikaans poet, C Louis Leipoldt.



Viooljies in die voorhuis – Viooljies blou en rooi!  
 Viooljies oral op die veld, en oral, ai, so mooi!  
 Dis is die maand Oktober, die mooiste, mooiste maand!  
 Dan is die dag so helder, so groen in elke aand,  
 So blou en sonder wolke, die hemel heerlik bo,  
 So blomtuin vol van kleure die asvaal ou Karoo.



October inspires migration and by some amazing feat of skilful navigation the weavers have found their way once again back to our farm here in Dinokeng. Hence, as I gaze through my office window, I can see the yellow masked weaver finches arduously engaged in the construction of their summer nests in the old Acacia tree.

These little rascals are polygynous and the male attracts females by hanging upside down from the nest while calling and fluttering his wings. The nests are masterpieces of intricately woven vegetation, mostly reaped from our local palm trees that accordingly never attain a decent shape due to the seasonal plundering. Yet, despite the collateral damage, I have learned to tolerate them as I must admit that the merry chirping and bright yellow plumage instil occasional joy in my heart. The scenario instinctively reminds me of an anonymous poem from my school years:

*In May I go a-walking to hear the linnet sing,  
 The blackbird and the throstle, a-praising God the King;  
 It cheers the heart to hear them, to see the leaves unfold,  
 And the meadows scattered over with buttercups of gold.*

You might ask: What do they teach us? Well, I suppose many lessons if we care to listen. They sing, to begin with and that tells me that they are happy and content. They do not fret or falter over all the corruption that besets humans, they are oblivious of corona threats; they spontaneously flow with the cycle of nature to reproduce and prosper. It is a simple life, yet joyful and active. My fences could not deter them and they inhabited the trees as if grown for them. When the female harshly destroys a nest that was meticulously build, the male does not retaliate but patiently starts from scratch to improve. I do think that there is something that we as counsellors may learn from our observations of the small little finch:

- Do daily what you have to do, not because it is easy,

but because it is the right thing to do

- Make the entire world your home
- Don't feel intimidated because you are small and frail
- Don't fear to soar to higher places
- Let your colours shine and your voice be heard
- Don't sing because you are merry, but sing to be merry because you sing;
- Remember, tomorrow the birds will sing again.
- Show up early and often
- Flow with the seasons that may life deal you
- Don't let artificial boundaries limit you
- Building your nest and keep on making something out of nothing
- There is always something to be thankful for
- Never forget that you too can fly.

JM Barrie reminds us that *"The reason birds can fly and we can't is simply because they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings."*

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also participated in discussions on various wellbeing topics that you might enjoy. Please visit the Videolearn platform for more information. Link

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liezl". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Liezl Herholdt (PhD, Counselling)

CEO ASCHP/CCSA/NHA