

A Child's View of Thunderstorms

A little girl walked to and from school daily. Though the weather that morning was questionable and clouds were forming, she made her daily trek to school. As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up, along with lightning.

The mother of the little girl felt concerned that her daughter would be frightened as she walked home from school. She also feared the electrical storm might harm her child. Full of concern, the mother got into her car and quickly drove along the route to her child's school. As she did, she saw her little girl walking along.

At each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look up, and smile. More lightning followed quickly and with each, the little girl would look at the streak of light and smile

When the mother drew up beside the child, she lowered the window and called, "What are you doing?"

The child answered, "I am trying to look pretty because God keeps taking my picture."

May God bless you today and every day as you face the storms that come your way

"Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so "Love the people who treat you right. Pray for those who don't."

FRIENDSHIP

Are you tired of those sissy 'friendship' poems that always sound good, but never actually come close to reality?

Well, here is a series of promises that actually speak of True Friendship. You WON'T see cutesy little smiley faces on this paper- Just the stone cold truth of our great friendship.

1. When you are sad, I will jump on the person who made you sad like a spider monkey jacked up on Mountain Dew!

2. When you are blue, I will try to dislodge whatever is choking you.

3. When you smile, I will know you are plotting something that I must be involved in.

4. When you're scared, we will high tail it out of here.

5. When you are worried, I will tell you horrible stories about how much worse it could be until you quit whining, ya big baby!

6. When you are confused, I will use little words.

7. When you are sick, stay away from me until you are well again. I don't want whatever you have.

8. When you fall, I'll pick you up and dust you off-- after I laugh my rear off!

9. This is my oath. I pledge it to the end. 'Why?' you may ask. Because you are my FRIEND!

Friendship is like peeing your pants: everyone can see it, but only YOU can feel the true warmth.

The Charles Schulz Philosophy

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schulz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip.

You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just ponder on them. Just read straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do? The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier? The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They simply are the ones who care the most.

"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia! Be Yourself. Everyone Else Is Taken!"

Law of the Garbage Truck

One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean, he was really friendly.

So I asked, 'Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!' This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call 'The Law of the Garbage Truck.

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.

The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day. Life's too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so...

Love the people who treat you right.

Forgive the ones who don't.

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!

Random Thoughts for the Day

1. I think part of a best friend's job should be to immediately clear your computer history if you die.
2. Nothing sucks more than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong.
3. I totally take back all those times I didn't want to nap when I was younger.
4. There really is great need for a sarcasm font.
5. How the heck are you supposed to fold a fitted sheet?
6. Why was learning cursive really necessary?
7. Map Quest really needs to start their directions on #5. I'm pretty sure I know how to get out of my neighborhood.
8. Obituaries would be a lot more interesting if they told you how the person died.
9. I can't remember the last time I wasn't at least kind of forgetful.
10. Bad decisions will make good stories.
11. You never know exactly when, but there comes a moment when you know that you just aren't going to do anything productive for the rest of the day.
12. Can we all just agree to ignore whatever comes after Blue Ray? I don't want to have to restart my collection...again.
13. I'm always slightly terrified when I exit out of Word and it asks me if I want to save any changes to document that I swear I did not make any changes to.
14. "Do not machine wash or tumble dry" means NEVER wash this -- ever.
15. I hate when I just miss a call by the last ring (Hello? Hello? Darn it!), but when I immediately call back, it rings nine times and goes to voice mail. What'd you do, drop the phone and run away?
16. I hate leaving my house confident and looking good and then not seeing anyone I know the entire day. What a waste.
17. I keep some people's phone numbers in my phone just so I know not to answer when they call.
18. I heard a child asked her mother the other day "Hey, what would happen if you ran over a ninja?" How the heck do you respond to that?
19. I think the freezer deserves a light as well.
20. I disagree with Kay Jewelers. I would bet on any given Friday or Saturday night more kisses begin with Miller Lite than Kay.

You might be a redneck if: It never occurred to you to be offended by the phrase, 'One nation, under God..'

You might be a redneck if: You've never protested about seeing The Ten Commandments posted in public places.

You might be a redneck if: You still say ' Christmas' instead of 'Winter Festival.'

You might be a redneck if: You bow your head when someone prays.

You might be a redneck if: You stand and place your hand over your heart when they play the National Anthem

You might be a redneck if: You treat our armed forces veterans with great respect, and always have.

You might be a redneck if: You've never burned an American flag, nor intend to.

You might be a redneck if: You know what you believe and you aren't afraid to say so, no matter who is listening.

You might be a redneck if: You respect your elders and raised your kids to do the same. Some of you are so old you don't have elders to respect.

You might be a redneck if: You'd give your last dollar to a friend.

You might be a redneck if: You believe in God and Jesus and believe that others have the right to believe in whichever God they believe in as long as their God does not tell them to kill anyone who does not believe the same as they do.

God Bless the USA !

The following stories have wonderful shades of emotions. These are based on true incidences both wonderful and inspirational. These stories will remove some wrong misconceptions that we have about the people and life in general.

1. Today, when I slipped on the wet tile floor, a boy in a wheelchair caught me before I slammed my head on the ground. He said, "Believe it or not, that's almost exactly how I injured my back three years ago."

2. Today, my father told me, "Just go for it and give it a try! You don't have to be a professional to build a successful product. Amateurs started Google and Apple. Professionals built the Titanic."

3. Today, I asked my mentor – a very successful business man in his 70's– what his top three tips are for success. He smiled and said, "Read something no one else is reading, think something no one else is thinking, and do something no one else is doing."

4. Today, I interviewed my grandmother for part of a research paper I'm working on for my psychology class. When I asked her to define success in her own words, she said, "Success is when you look back at your life and the memories make you smile."

5. I am blind by birth. When I was eight years old, I wanted to play baseball. I asked my father- "Dad, can I play baseball?" He said "You'll never know until you try." When I was a teenager, I asked him, - "Dad can I become a surgeon?" He replied "Son, you'll never know until you try." Today after my own successful sight restoration surgery, I am a surgeon, just because I tried!

6. Today, after a 72-hour shift at the fire station, a woman ran up to me at the grocery store and gave me a hug. When I tensed up, she realized I didn't recognize her. She let go with tears of joy in her eyes and the most sincere smile and said, "On 9-11-2001, you carried me out of the World Trade Center."

7. Today, after I watched my dog get run over by a car, I sat on the side of the road holding him and crying. And just before he died, he licked the tears off my face.

8. Today at 7AM, I woke up feeling ill, but decided I needed the money, so I went into work. At 3PM I got laid off. On my drive home I got a flat tire. When I went into the trunk for the spare, it was flat too. A man in a BMW pulled over, gave me a ride, we chatted, and then he offered me a job. I start tomorrow.

9. Today, as my father, three brothers, and two sisters stood around my mother's hospital bed, my mother uttered her last coherent words before she died. She simply said, "I feel so loved right now. We should have gotten together like this more often."

10. Today, I kissed my dad on the forehead as he passed away in a small hospital bed. About five seconds after he passed, I realized it was the first time I had given him a kiss since I was a little boy.

11. Today, in the cutest voice, my 8-year-old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" "Because that's where I keep all my stuff," she said.

12. Today, when I witnessed a 27-year-old breast cancer patient laughing hysterically at her 2-year-old daughter's antics, I suddenly realized that I need to stop complaining about my life and start celebrating it again.

12. Today, a boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."

13. Today, I was traveling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over three days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."

Best sermons are lived; not preached

GEORGE CARLIN

(His wife recently died....and George followed her, dying July 2008)

Isn't it amazing that George Carlin - comedian of the 70's and 80's - could write something so very eloquent...and so very appropriate.

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints.

We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less.

We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time.

We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.

We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life.

We've added years to life not life to years. '

We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor.

We conquered outer space but not inner space.

We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul.

We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice.

We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less.

We've learned to rush, but not to wait.

We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes.

These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill.

It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom.

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say, 'I love you' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

George Carlin

The Mayonnaise Jar

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day is not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly, he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and start to fill it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured it into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with an unanimous 'yes.'

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

'Now,' said the professor, as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life..

The golf balls are the important things - God, family, children, health, friends, and favorite passions. Things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

The pebbles are the things that matter like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else -- the small stuff.

'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. So...

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.

Play with your children.

Take time to get medical checkups.

Take your partner out to dinner.

Connect with friends.

There will always be time to clean the house and fix the dripping tap.

'Take care of the golf balls first -- the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.'

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled. I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.'

Five (5) lessons about the way we treat people

First Important Lesson - Cleaning Lady.

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one: "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's, but how would I know her name? I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade.

"Absolutely," said the professor. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say "hello.."

I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

Second Important Lesson - Pickup in the Rain

One night, at 11:30 p.m., an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rain storm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car.

A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960's. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab.

She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached. It read:

"Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's' bedside just before he passed away. God Bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely,
Mrs. Nat King Cole

Third Important Lesson - Always remember those who serve.

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked.

"Fifty cents," replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it.

"Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient.

"Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied.

The little boy again counted his coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left.

When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies.

You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

Fourth Important Lesson - The obstacle in our path

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if ne would remove the huge rock. Some of the King's' wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded.

After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.

The peasant learned what many of us never understand! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

Fifth Important Lesson - Giving When it Counts

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.

The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes I'll do it if it will save her."

As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away".

Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her.

Most importantly....

Live with no regrets,
Treat people the way you want to be treated,
Work like you don't need the money,
Love like you've never been hurt,
and dance like you do when nobody's watching.

RED MARBLES

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

'Hello Barry, how are you today?'

'H'lo , Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas. They sure look good.'

'They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?'

'Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time.'

'Good. Anything I can help you with?'

'No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas.'

'Would you like to take some home?' asked Mr. Miller.

'No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with.'

'Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?'

'All I got's my prize marble here.'

'Is that right? Let me see it' said Miller.

'Here 'tis. She's a dandy.'

'I can see that. HmMMM, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?' the store owner asked.

'Not zackley but almost..'

'Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble'. Mr. Miller told the boy.

'Sure will. Thanks Mr. Miller.'

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, 'There are two other boys like him in our community. All three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store.'

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles. Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died.

They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.

Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts, all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her, and moved on to the casket.

Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one; each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket.

'Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size.....they came to pay their debt.'

'We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world,' she confided, 'but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho.'

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

The Moral: We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath.

As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 AM or sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60 & 70's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love .. I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set.

They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face.

So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day (if I feel like it).

At the prodding of my friends I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Honor and I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa. I have always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons - something I have done for over 30 years.

During those years I found that children have many levels of musical ability, and even though I have never had the pleasure of having a prodigy, I have taught some very talented students.

However, I have also had my share of what I call 'musically challenged' pupils - one such pupil being Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. I prefer that students (especially boys) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby. But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano, so I took him as a student.

At the end of each weekly lesson he would always say 'My mom's going to hear me play someday'. But to me, it seemed hopeless, he just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled, but never dropped in.

Then one day Robby stopped coming for his lessons. I thought about calling him, but assumed that because of his lack of ability he had decided to pursue something else. I was also glad that he had stopped coming - he was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later I mailed a flyer recital to the students' homes. To my surprise, Robby (who had received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and that because he had dropped out, he really did not qualify. He told me that his mother had been sick and unable to take him to his piano lessons, but that he had been practicing.

'Please Miss Honor, I've just got to play' he insisted. I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital - perhaps it was his insistence or maybe something inside of me saying that it would be all right.

The night of the recital came and the high school gymnasium was packed with parents, relatives and friends. I put Robby last in the program, just before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece. I thought that any damage he might do would come at the end of the program and I could always salvage his poor performance through my 'curtain closer'.

Well, the recital went off without a hitch, the students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on the stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked as though he had run an egg beater through it. 'Why wasn't he dressed up like the other students?' I thought. 'Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?'

Robby pulled out the piano bench, and I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen to play Mozart's Concerto No. 21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories. He went from pianissimo to fortissimo, from allegro to virtuoso; his suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by anyone his age. After six and a half minutes he ended in a grand crescendo, and everyone was on their feet in wild applause!

Overcome and in tears, I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. 'I have never heard you play like that Robby, how did you do it?' Through the microphone Robby explained: 'Well, Miss Honor, remember I told you that my mom was sick? Well, she actually had cancer and passed away this morning. And well she was born deaf, so tonight was the first time she had ever heard me play, and I wanted to make it special.'

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening. As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed in to foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy. I thought to myself then how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil.

No, I have never had a prodigy, but that night I became a prodigy of Robby. He was the teacher and I was the pupil, for he had taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in yourself, and maybe even taking a chance on someone and you didn't know why.

Robby was killed years later in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April, 1995.

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair;
- And maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death,

- by his parents, Truth and Trust,
- by his wife, Discretion,
- by his daughter, Responsibility,
- and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 5 stepchildren;

- I Know My Rights
- I Want It Now
- Someone Else Is To Blame
- I'm A Victim
- Pay me for Doing Nothing

THE GIRAFFE TEST

This test is to ascertain your mental state now. If you get one right you are doing ok if you get none right you better go for counseling. There are 4 questions:

1. How do you put a giraffe into a refrigerator? Stop and think about it and decide on your answer.

The correct answer is: Open the refrigerator, put in the giraffe, and close the door. This question tests whether you tend to do simple things in an overly complicated way.

2. How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator? Did you say, Open the refrigerator, put in the elephant, and close the refrigerator?

Wrong Answer. Correct Answer: Open the refrigerator, take out the giraffe, put in the elephant and close the door. This tests your ability to think through the repercussions of your previous actions.

3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference. All the animals attend except one. Which animal does not attend?

Correct Answer : The Elephant. The elephant is in the refrigerator. You just put him in there. This tests your memory. Okay, even if you did not answer the first three questions correctly, you still have one more chance to show your true abilities.

4. There is a river you must cross but it is used by crocodiles, and you do not have a boat. How do you manage it?

Correct Answer: You jump into the river and swim across. Have you not been listening? All the crocodiles are attending the Animal Meeting. This tests whether you learn quickly from your mistakes.

According to Anderson Consulting Worldwide, around 90% of the professionals they tested got all questions wrong, but many preschoolers got several correct answers. Anderson Consulting says this conclusively proves the theory that most professionals do not have the brains of a four-year-old.

DEMENTIA QUIZ

FIRST QUESTION: YOU ARE A PARTICIPANT IN A RACE. YOU OVERTAKE THE SECOND PERSON. WHAT POSITION ARE YOU IN?

ANSWER : IF YOU ANSWERED THAT YOU ARE FIRST, THEN YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY WRONG! IF YOU OVERTAKE THE SECOND PERSON AND YOU TAKE HIS PLACE, YOU ARE IN SECOND PLACE!

TRY TO DO BETTER NEXT TIME. NOW ANSWER THE SECOND QUESTION, BUT DON'T TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU TOOK FOR THE FIRST QUESTION, OK?

SECOND QUESTION: IF YOU OVERTAKE THE LAST PERSON, THEN YOU ARE....?

ANSWER: IF YOU ANSWERED THAT YOU ARE SECOND TO LAST, THEN YOU ARE.....WRONG AGAIN. TELL ME SUNSHINE, HOW CAN YOU OVERTAKE THE LAST PERSON??

YOU'RE NOT VERY GOOD AT THIS, ARE YOU?

THIRD QUESTION: VERY TRICKY ARITHMETIC! NOTE: THIS MUST BE DONE IN YOUR HEAD ONLY. DO NOT USE PAPER AND PENCIL OR A CALCULATOR. TRY IT.

TAKE 1000 AND ADD 40 TO IT. NOW ADD ANOTHER 1000. NOW ADD 30. ADD ANOTHER 1000. NOW ADD 20. NOW ADD ANOTHER 1000. NOW ADD 10. WHAT IS THE TOTAL?

DID YOU GET 5000? THE CORRECT ANSWER IS ACTUALLY 4100. IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE IT, CHECK IT WITH A CALCULATOR! TODAY IS DEFINITELY NOT YOUR DAY, IS IT? MAYBE YOU'LL GET THE LAST QUESTION RIGHT.... MAYBE...

FOURTH QUESTION: MARY'S FATHER HAS FIVE DAUGHTERS: 1. NANA, 2. NENE, 3. NINI, 4. NONO, AND ??? WHAT IS THE NAME OF THE FIFTH DAUGHTER?

DID YOU ANSWER NUNU? NO! OF COURSE IT ISN'T. HER NAME IS MARY! READ THE QUESTION AGAIN!

OKAY, NOW THE BONUS ROUND, I.E., A FINAL CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF:

A MUTE PERSON GOES INTO A SHOP AND WANTS TO BUY A TOOTHBRUSH. BY IMITATING THE ACTION OF BRUSHING HIS TEETH, HE SUCCESSFULLY EXPRESSES HIMSELF TO THE SHOPKEEPER AND THE PURCHASE IS DONE. NEXT, A BLIND MAN COMES INTO THE SHOP WHO WANTS TO BUY A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES. HOW DOES HE INDICATE WHAT HE WANTS?

IT'S REALLY VERY SIMPLE HE OPENS HIS MOUTH AND ASKS FOR IT.

DOES YOUR EMPLOYER ACTUALLY PAY YOU TO THINK?? IF SO DO NOT LET THEM SEE YOUR ANSWERS FOR THIS TEST!

The Things I Owe My Parents

1. My Parents taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE ..
"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside... I just finished cleaning."
2. My Parents taught me RELIGION .
"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."
3. My Parents taught me about TIME TRAVEL .
"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
4. My Parents taught me LOGIC .
"Because I said so, that's why."
5. My Parents taught me MORE LOGIC .
"If you fall out of that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."
6. My Parents taught me FORESIGHT .
"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."
7. My Parents taught me IRONY .
"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."
8. My Parents taught me about the science of OSMOSIS .
"Shut your mouth and eat your supper"
9. My Parents taught me about CONTORTIONISM .
"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"
10. My Parents taught me about STAMINA .
"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."
11. My Parents taught me about WEATHER .
"This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."
12. My Parents taught me about HYPOCRISY .
"If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"
13. My Parents taught me the CIRCLE OF LIFE .
"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."
14. My Parents taught me about BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION .
"Stop acting like your father!"
15. My Parents taught me about ENVY .
"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have wonderful parents like you do."
16. My Parents taught me about ANTICIPATION .
"Just wait until we get home."
17. My Parents taught me about RECEIVING .
"You are going to get it when you get home!"
18. My Parents taught me MEDICAL SCIENCE .
"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."
19. My Parents taught me ESP .
"Put your sweater on; don't you think I know when you are cold?"
20. My Parents taught me HUMOR .
"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."
21. My Parents taught me HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT .
"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."
22. My Parents taught me GENETICS .
"You're just like your father."
23. My Parents taught me about my ROOTS .
"Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"
24. My Parents taught me WISDOM .
"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."
25. My Parents taught me about JUSTICE .
"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you!"

WHY I LOVE MOM

Mom and Dad were watching TV when Mom said, 'I'm tired, and it's getting late. I think I'll go to bed'

She went to the kitchen to make sandwiches for the next day's lunches. Rinsed out the popcorn bowls, took meat out of the freezer for supper the following evening, checked the cereal box levels, filled the sugar container, put spoons and bowls on the table and started the coffee pot for brewing the next morning.

She then put some wet clothes in the dryer, put a load of clothes into the washer, ironed a shirt and secured a loose button. She picked up the game pieces left on the table, put the phone back on the charger and put the telephone book into the drawer. She watered the plants, emptied a wastebasket and hung up a towel to dry.

She yawned and stretched and headed for the bedroom. She stopped by the desk and wrote a note to the teacher, counted out some cash for the field trip, and pulled a text book out from hiding under the chair. She signed a birthday card for a friend, addressed and stamped the envelope and wrote a quick note for the grocery store. She put both near her purse.

Mom then washed her face with 3 in 1 cleanser, put on her night solution and age fighting moisturizer, brushed and flossed her teeth and filed her nails.

Dad called out, 'I thought you were going to bed.'

'I'm on my way,' she said.

She put some water into the dog's dish and brought the cat inside, then made sure the doors were locked and the patio light was on. She looked in on each of the kids and turned out their bedside lamps and TV's , hung up a shirt, threw some dirty socks into the hamper, and had a brief conversation with the one up still doing homework.

In her own room, she set the alarm; laid out clothing for the next day, straightened up the shoe rack. She added three things to her six most important things to do list. She said her prayers, and visualized the accomplishment of her goals.

About that time, Dad turned off the TV and announced to no one in particular. 'I'm going to bed.' He scratched his crotch and farted, and...without another thought, went to bed.

Anything extraordinary here? Wonder why women live longer...?

CAUSE WE ARE MADE FOR THE LONG HAUL..... (and we can't die sooner, we still have things to do!!!!)

FAMILY

I ran into a stranger as he passed by,
"Oh excuse me please" was my reply.
 He said, "Please excuse me too;
 I wasn't watching for you."
We were very polite, this stranger and I.
We went on our way and we said goodbye.
 But at home a different story is told,
 How we treat our loved ones, young and old..
Later that day, cooking the evening meal,
My son stood beside me very still.
 When I turned, I nearly knocked him down.
 "Move out of the way," I said with a frown.
He walked away, his little heart broken.
I didn't realize how harshly I'd spoken.
 While I lay awake in bed,
 God's still small voice came to me and said,
"While dealing with a stranger, common courtesy you use,
but the family you love, you seem to abuse.
 Go and look on the kitchen floor,
 You'll find some flowers there by the door.
Those are the flowers he brought for you.
He picked them himself: pink, yellow and blue.
 He stood very quietly not to spoil the surprise,
 you never saw the tears that filled his little eyes."
By this time, I felt very small,
And now my tears began to fall.
 I quietly went and knelt by his bed;
 "Wake up, little one, wake up," I said.
"Are these the flowers you picked for me?"
He smiled, "I found 'em, out by the tree.
 I picked 'em because they're pretty like you.
 I knew you'd like 'em, especially the blue."
I said, "Son, I'm very sorry for the way I acted today; I shouldn't have yelled at you that way."
He said, "Oh, Mom, that's okay. I love you anyway."
 I said, "Son, I love you too,
 and I do like the flowers, especially the blue."

FAMILY

Are you aware that if we died tomorrow, the company that we are working for could easily replace us in a matter of days. But the family we left behind will feel the loss for the rest of their lives.

And come to think of it, we pour ourselves more into work than into our own family, an unwise investment indeed, don't you think? So what is behind the story?

Do you know what the word FAMILY means?
FAMILY = (F)ATHER (A)ND (M)OTHER (I) (L)OVE (Y)OU

HEADLINES FROM THE YEAR: 2029

Ozone created by electric cars now killing millions in the seventh largest country in the world, Mexifornia, formerly known as California .

White minorities still trying to have English recognized as Mexifornia's third language.

Spotted Owl plague threatens northwestern United States crops and livestock.

Baby conceived naturally! Scientists stumped.

Couple petitions court to reinstate heterosexual marriage.

Iran still closed off; physicists estimate it will take at least 10 more years before radioactivity decreases to safe levels.

France pleads for global help after being taken over by Lichtenstein. No other country comes forward to help the beleaguered nation!

Castro finally dies at age 112; Cuban cigars can now be imported legally, but President Chelsea Clinton has banned all smoking.

Postal Service raises price of first class stamp to \$17.89 and reduces mail delivery to Wednesdays only.

85-year \$75.8 billion study: Diet and exercise is the key to weight loss.

Global cooling blamed for citrus crop failure for third consecutive year in Mexifornia and Floruba.

Japanese scientists have created a camera with such a fast shutter speed they now can photograph a woman with her mouth shut.

Abortion clinics now available in every High School in United States

Senate still blocking drilling in ANWAR even though gas is selling for 4532 Pesos per liter and gas stations are only open on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Massachusetts executes last remaining conservative.

Supreme Court rules punishment of criminals violates their civil rights.

Average height of NBA players is now nine feet, seven inches.

New federal law requires that all nail clippers, screwdrivers, fly swatters and rolled-up newspapers must be registered by January 2030.

IRS sets lowest tax rate at 75 percent.

Floruba voters still having trouble with voting machines.

I Love This Country!

It's The Government That Scares Me!

Two Stories BOTH TRUE - and worth reading STORY NUMBER ONE

Many years ago, Al Capone virtually owned Chicago. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. He was notorious for enmeshing the windy city in everything from bootlegged booze and prostitution to murder. Capone had a lawyer nicknamed "Easy Eddie." He was Capone's lawyer for a good reason. Eddie was very good! In fact, Eddie's skill at legal maneuvering kept Big Al out of jail for a long time.

To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie got special dividends, as well. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire Chicago City block. Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocity that went on around him.

Eddie did have one soft spot, however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had clothes, cars, and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object. And, despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach him right from wrong. Eddie wanted his son to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things he couldn't give his son; he couldn't pass on a good name or a good example.

One day, Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Easy Eddie wanted to rectify wrongs he had done. He decided he would go to the authorities and tell the truth about Al "Scarface" Capone, clean up his tarnished name, and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this, he would have to testify against The Mob, and he knew that the cost would be great. So, he testified.

Within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago Street. But in his eyes, he had given his son the greatest gift he had to offer, at the greatest price he would ever pay. Police removed from his pockets a rosary, a crucifix, a religious medallion, and a poem clipped from a magazine.

The poem read:

"The clock of life is wound but once,
and no man has the power to tell just when the hands will stop, at late or early hour.
Now is the only time you own. Live, love, toil with a will.
Place no faith in time. For the clock may soon be still."

STORY NUMBER TWO

World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Lieutenant Commander Butch O'Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to the aircraft carrier Lexington in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship.

His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold; a squadron of Japanese aircraft was speeding its way toward the American Fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie, and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet.

Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber's blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another. Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until all his ammunition was finally spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to clip a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible, rendering them unfit to fly. Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction.

Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon arrival, he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the gun-camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He had, in fact, destroyed five enemy aircraft. This took place on February 20, 1942, and for that action Butch became the Navy's first Ace of W.W.II, and the first Naval Aviator to win the Medal of honor.

A year later Butch was killed in aerial combat at the age of 29. His home town would not allow the memory of this WW II hero to fade, and today, O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man. So, the next time you find yourself at O'Hare International, give some thought to visiting Butch's memorial displaying his statue and his medal of Honor. It's located between Terminals 1 and 2.

SO WHAT DO THESE TWO STORIES HAVE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER?

Butch O'Hare was "Easy Eddie's" son.

Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846.
John F. Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.

Abraham Lincoln was elected President in 1860.
John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960.

Both were particularly concerned with civil rights.
Both wives lost their children while living in the White House.

Both Presidents were shot on a Friday.
Both Presidents were shot in the head

Now it gets really weird.

Lincoln's secretary was named Kennedy.
Kennedy's Secretary was named Lincoln.

Both were assassinated by Southerners.
Both were succeeded by Southerners named Johnson.
Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Lincoln, was born in 1808.
Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy, was born in 1908.

John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Lincoln, was born in 1839.
Lee Harvey Oswald, who assassinated Kennedy, was born in 1939.

Both assassins were known by their three names.
Both names are composed of fifteen letters.

Now hang on to your seat.

Lincoln was shot at the theatre named 'Ford'.
Kennedy was shot in a car called 'Lincoln' made by 'Ford'.

Lincoln was shot in a theatre and his assassin ran and hid in a warehouse.
Kennedy was shot from a warehouse and his assassin ran and hid in a theatre.

Booth and Oswald were assassinated before their trials.

KEEP YOUR GRAY MATTER ACTIVE

1. Johnny's mother had three children. The first child was named April. The second child was named May. What was the third child's name?
2. There is a clerk at the butcher shop, he is five feet ten inches tall and he wears size 13 sneakers. What does he weigh?
3. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
4. How much dirt is there in a hole that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?
5. What word in the English Language is always spelled incorrectly?
6. Billy was born on December 28th, yet his birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible?
7. In California , you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?
8. What was the President's Name in 1975?
9. If you were running a race, and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?
10. Which is correct to say, "The yolk of the egg are white" or "The yolk of the egg is white"?
11. If a farmer has 5 haystacks in one field and 4 haystacks in the other field, how many haystacks would he have if he combined them all in another field?

Here are the Answers

1. Johnny, of course
2. Meat.
3. Mt. Everest ; it just wasn't discovered yet. [You're not very good at this are you?]
4. There is no dirt in a hole.
5. Incorrectly
6. Billy lives in the Southern Hemisphere
7. You can't take pictures with a wooden leg. You need a camera to take pictures.
8. Same as is it now - Barack Obama [Oh, come on]
9. **You would be in 2nd. Well, you passed the person in second place, not first.**
10. **Neither, the yolk of the egg is yellow [Duh]**
11. **One. If he combines all of his haystacks, they all become one big stack.**

Check for Alzheimer's - Pretty Amazing

The following was developed as a mental age assessment by the School of Psychiatry at Harvard University. Take your time and see if you can read each line aloud without a mistake. The average person over 50 years of age cannot do it!

1. This is this cat.
2. This is is cat.
3. This is how cat.
4. This is to cat.
5. This is keep cat.
6. This is an cat.
7. This is old cat.
8. This is fart cat.
9. This is busy cat.
10. This is for cat.
11. This is forty cat.
12. This is seconds cat..

Now go back and read the third word in each line from the top down.

Let me see if I've got this right.

After being interviewed by the school administration, the prospective teacher said: " Let me see if I've got this right.

You want me to go into that room with all those kids, correct their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse, monitor their dress habits, censor their T-shirt messages and instill in them a love for learning

You want me to check their backpacks for weapons, wage war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, and raise their sense of self-esteem and personal pride

You want me to teach them patriotism and good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, and how to register to vote, balance a check book, and apply for a job.

You want me to check their heads for lice, recognize signs of antisocial behavior, and ensure that they all pass their final exams.

You also want me to provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicap and communicate regularly with their parents in English, Arabic or any other language, by letter, telephone, newsletter, and report card

You want me to do all this with a piece of chalk, a blackboard, a bulletin board, a few books, a big smile, and a starting salary that qualifies me for "New Start."

You want me to do all this, and then you tell me.....

I CAN'T wear a necklace with a little cross, mention God, or say "Merry Christmas" because someone might take offense? "

Well, you know what you can do with your job.....

We all should have the same rights, whatever your religion.

This should be posted in every school in America and all countries.

Think about it!

If Muslims can pray anywhere, why are Christians banned from praying in public and from erecting religious displays on their holy days?

What happened to our National Day of Prayer?

Muslims are allowed to block off major streets, in all American States and pray in the middle of the street! And it's a monthly ritual!

Tell me, again, whose country is this? Ours or the Muslims?

It is said that 86% of Americans believe in God. Therefore, I have a very hard time understanding why there is such a problem in having 'God' in our education system or the Lord's Prayer said in our government, schools or public meetings I believe it's time we stand up for what we believe!

I WISH YOU ALL ENOUGH

Recently I overheard a father and daughter in their last moments together at the airport. They had announced the departure. Standing near the security gate, they hugged and the father said, 'I love you, and I wish you enough.'

The daughter replied, 'Dad, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough, too, Dad.'

They kissed and the daughter left. The father walked over to the window where I was seated. Standing there I could see he wanted and needed to cry. I tried not to intrude on his privacy, but he welcomed me in by asking, 'Did you ever say good-bye to someone knowing it would be forever?'

'Yes, I have,' I replied. 'Forgive me for asking, but why is this a forever good-bye?'

'I am old, and she lives so far away. I have challenges ahead and the reality is - the next trip back will be for my funeral,' he said.

'When you were saying good-bye, I heard you say, 'I wish you enough.' May I ask what that means?'

He began to smile. 'That's a wish that has been handed down from other generations. My parents used to say it to everyone.' He paused a moment and looked up as if trying to remember it in detail, and he smiled even more. 'When we said, 'I wish you enough', we were wanting the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them.' Then turning toward me, he shared the following as if he were reciting it from memory.

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright no matter how gray the day may appear.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger...

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

He then began to cry and walked away. They say it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them; but then an entire life to forget them.

To all my friends and loved ones,

I WISH YOU ENOUGH.

I Believe...
That just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't love each other. And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do love each other.

I Believe...
That we don't have to change friends if we understand that friends change.

I Believe....
That no matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

I Believe...
That true friendship continues to grow, even over the longest distance. Same goes for true love.

I Believe...
That you can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.

I Believe....
That it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.

I Believe...
That you should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

I Believe....
That you can keep going long after you think you can't.

I Believe...
That we are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

I Believe...
That either you control your attitude or it controls you.

I Believe...
That heroes are the people who do what has to be done when it needs to be done, regardless of the consequences.

I Believe....
That my best friend and I can do anything or nothing and have the best time.

I Believe....
That sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down will be the ones to help you get back up.

I Believe...
That sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.

I Believe....
That maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

I Believe....
That it isn't always enough, to be forgiven by others. Sometimes, you have to learn to forgive yourself.

I Believe...
That no matter how bad your heart is broken the world doesn't stop for your grief.

I Believe....
That our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but, we are responsible for who we become.

I Believe...
That you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret. It could change your life forever.

I Believe....
Two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.

I Believe....
That your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.

I Believe...
That even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you - you will find the strength to help.

I Believe...
That credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.

I Believe...
That the people you care about most in life are taken from you too soon.

I Believe...
That you should send this to all of the people that you believe in, I just did.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything;
They just make the most of everything they have.

Message of the Day

I don't care if you lick windows,
take the special bus
or occasionally pee on yourself.

You hang in there, sunshine –you're special.

Every sixty seconds you spend angry, upset or mad, is a full minute of happiness you'll never get back.

Today's Message of the Day is:

Life is short,
Break the rules,
Forgive quickly,
Kiss slowly,
Love truly,

Laugh uncontrollably, and never regret anything that made you smile.

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we're here, we should dance.

The last wishes of Alexander the Great.....

On his death bed, Alexander summoned his army generals and told them his three ultimate wishes:

1. The best doctors should carry his coffin.
2. The wealth he has accumulated (money, gold, precious stones) be scattered along the procession to the cemetery.
3. His hands should be let loose, so they hang outside the coffin for all to see.

One of his generals who was surprised by these unusual requests asked Alexander to explain.

Here is what Alexander the Great had to say :

1. "I want the best doctors to carry my coffin to demonstrate that in the face of death, even the best doctors in the world have no power to heal."
2. "I want the road to be covered with my treasure so that everybody sees that material wealth acquired on earth, will stay on earth."
3. "I want my hands to swing in the wind, so that people understand that we come to this world empty handed and we leave this world empty handed after the most precious treasure of all is exhausted, and that is :
TIME.

We do not take to our grave any material wealth. TIME is our most precious treasure because it is LIMITED. We can produce more wealth, but we cannot produce more time.

When we give someone our time, we actually give a portion of our life that we will never take back. Our time is our life!

The best present that you can give to your family and friends is your TIME.

May God grant you plenty of TIME, to share with all.

BUZZARDS, BATS, BUMBLEBEES, AND US

THE BUZZARD

If you put a buzzard in a pen that is 6 feet by 8 feet and is entirely open at the top, the bird, in spite of its ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of 10 to 12 feet. Without space to run, as is its habit, it will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

THE BAT

The ordinary bat that flies around at night, a remarkable nimble creature in the air, cannot take off from a level place. If it is placed on the floor or flat ground, all it can do is shuffle about helplessly and, no doubt, painfully, until it reaches some slight elevation from which it can throw itself into the air. Then, at once, it takes off like a flash.

THE BUMBLEBEE

A bumblebee, if dropped into an open tumbler, will be there until it dies, unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top, but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

PEOPLE

In many ways, we are like the buzzard, the bat, and the bumblebee. We struggle about with all our problems and frustrations, never realizing that all we have to do is look up! That's the answer, the escape route and the solution to any problem. Just look up!

Sorrow looks back,
Worry looks around,
But faith looks up!
Live simply,
Love generously,
Care deeply,
Speak kindly.

The Magic Bank Account

Imagine that you had won the following prize in a contest: Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules. The set of rules:

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "Game Over!" It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do? You would buy anything and everything you wanted right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself right? You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you knew it would be replenished in the morning, right?

ACTUALLY, This GAME is REAL. Shocked??? YES! Each of us is already a winner of this prize. We just can't seem to see it. The prize is TIME.

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining is NOT credited to us.
3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
4. Yesterday is forever gone.
5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time WITHOUT WARNING... SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars. Think about it and remember to enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.

So...take care of yourself, be happy, love deeply, and enjoy life. It does have a time limit.

Live simply,

Love generously,

Care deeply,

Laugh often,

And leave the rest to GOD!

The Wooden Bowl

I guarantee you will remember the tale of the Wooden Bowl tomorrow, a week from now, a month from now, a year from now.

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess.

'We must do something about father,' said the son. 'I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor.'

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, 'What are you making?'

Just as sweetly, the boy responded, 'Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up.' The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

On a positive note, I've learned that, no matter what happens, how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles four things: a rainy day, the elderly, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I've learned that making a 'living' is not the same thing as making a 'life.'

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back sometimes.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But, if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch -- holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.

I've learned that you should share this with everyone you care about. I just did!

Why teachers drink

The following questions were set in last year's examination. These are genuine answers from 16 year olds.....and they WILL breed.

- Q. Name the four seasons
 - A. Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar
- Q. Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.
 - A. Flirtation makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists
- Q. How is dew formed
 - A. The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire
- Q. What causes the tides in the oceans
 - A. The tides are a fight between the earth and the moon. All water tends to flow toward the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins the fight
- Q. What guarantees may a mortgage company insist on
 - A. If you are buying a house they will insist that you are well endowed
- Q. In a democratic society, how important are elections
 - A. Very important. Sex can only happen when a male gets an election
- Q. What are steroids
 - A. Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs
- Q. What happens to your body as you age
 - A. When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental
- Q. What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty
 - A. He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery
- Q. Name a major disease associated with cigarettes
 - A. Premature death
- Q. What is artificial insemination
 - A. When the farmer does it to the bull instead of the cow
- Q. How can you delay milk turning sour
 - A. Keep it in the cow
- Q. How are the main 20 parts of the body categorised (e.g. The abdomen)
 - A. The body is consisted into 3 parts - the brainium, the borax and the abdominal cavity. The brainium contains the brain, the borax contains the heart and lungs and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels: A, E, I,O,U.
- Q. What is the fibula?
 - A. A small lie
- Q. What does 'varicose' mean?
 - A. Nearby
- Q. What is the most common form of birth control
 - A. Most people prevent contraception by wearing a condominium
- Q. Give the meaning of the term 'Caesarean section'
 - A. The caesarean section is a district in Rome
- Q. What is a seizure?
 - A. A Roman Emperor.
- Q. What is a terminal illness
 - A. When you are sick at the airport.
- Q. What does the word 'benign' mean?
 - A. Benign is what you will be after you be eight

The following is an actual question given on a University of Arizona chemistry mid term, and an actual answer turned in by a student. The answer by one student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via the Internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well.

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed) or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving, which is unlikely. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave. Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today.

Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell. With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially. Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.
2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over. So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Teresa during my freshman year that, 'It will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you,' and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number two must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over.

The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls and is therefore, extinct..... leaving only Heaven, thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Teresa kept shouting 'Oh my God.'

THIS STUDENT RECEIVED AN A+

I've learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night." Age 5

I've learned that our dog doesn't want to eat my broccoli either. Age 7

I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back. Age 9

I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up again. Age 12

I've learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up. Age 14

I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me. Age 15

I've learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice. Age 24

I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures. Age 26

I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there. Age 29

I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it. Age 30

I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it. Age 42

I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little note. Age 44

I've learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his or her need to cast blame on others. Age 46

I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies. Age 47

I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on and it will be better tomorrow. Age 48

I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours. Age 49

I've learned that motel mattresses are better on the side away from the phone. Age 50

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. Age 51

I've learned that keeping a vegetable garden is worth a medicine cabinet full of pills. Age 52

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die. Age 53

I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. Age 58

I've learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, work to improve your marriage. Age 61

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. Age 62

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back. Age 64

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you. Age 65

I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision. Age 66

I've learned that everyone can use a prayer. Age 72

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. Age 82

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. Age 90

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. Age 92

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Try everything twice. On one woman's tombstone she said she wanted this epitaph: "Tried everything twice. Loved it both times!"

2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

3. Keep learning: Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever... Never let the brain get idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's!

4. Enjoy the simple things.

5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with him/her.

6. The tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. LIVE while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love: whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever.. Your home is your refuge.

8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next city, county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.

10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

11. Forgive now those who made you cry. You might not get a second chance.

Remember: Lost time is gone for ever and can never be found.

Be kinder than is necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

And remember ... Wine does not make you FATit makes you LEAN
(Against tables, chairs, floors, walls, etc)

Her Name is Rose

The first day of school our professor introduced himself and challenged us to get to know someone we didn't already know. I stood up to look around when a gentle hand touched my shoulder. I turned around to find a wrinkled, little old lady beaming up at me with a smile that lit up her entire being. She said, 'Hi handsome. My name is Rose. I'm eighty-seven years old. Can I give you a hug?'

I laughed and enthusiastically responded, 'Of course you may!' and she gave me a giant squeeze. 'Why are you in college at such a young, innocent age?' I asked.

She jokingly replied, 'I'm here to meet a rich husband, get married, and have a couple of kids...'

'No seriously,' I asked. I was curious what may have motivated her to be taking on this challenge at her age.

'I always dreamed of having a college education and now I'm getting one!' she told me. After class we walked to the student union building and shared a chocolate milkshake. We became instant friends. Every day for the next three months we would leave class together and talk nonstop. I was always mesmerized listening to this 'time machine' as she shared her wisdom and experience with me.

Over the course of the year, Rose became a campus icon and she easily made friends wherever she went. She loved to dress up and she reveled in the attention bestowed upon her from the other students. She was living it up.

At the end of the semester we invited Rose to speak at our football banquet. I'll never forget what she taught us. She was introduced and stepped up to the podium. As she began to deliver her prepared speech, she dropped her three by five cards on the floor. Frustrated and a little embarrassed she leaned into the microphone and simply said, 'I'm sorry I'm so jittery. I gave up beer for Lent and this whiskey is killing me! I'll never get my speech back in order so let me just tell you what I know.' As we laughed she cleared her throat and began,

'We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. There are only four secrets to staying young, being happy, and achieving success. You have to laugh and find humor every day. You've got to have a dream. When you lose your dreams, you die. We have so many people walking around who are dead and don't even know it!

There is a huge difference between growing older and growing up. If you are nineteen years old and lie in bed for one full year and don't do one productive thing, you will turn twenty years old. If I am eighty-seven years old and stay in bed for a year and never do anything I will turn eighty-eight. Anybody can grow older. That doesn't take any talent or ability. The idea is to grow up by always finding opportunity in change.

Have no regrets. The elderly usually don't have regrets for what we did, but rather for things we did not do. The only people who fear death are those with regrets.'

She concluded her speech by courageously singing 'The Rose.' She challenged each of us to study the lyrics and live them out in our daily lives. At the year's end Rose finished the college degree she had begun all those years ago. One week after graduation Rose died peacefully in her sleep. Over two thousand college students attended her funeral in tribute to the wonderful woman who taught by example that it's never too late to be all you can possibly be.

REMEMBER, GROWING OLDER IS MANDATORY. GROWING UP IS OPTIONAL.

We make a Living by what we get. We make a Life by what we give.

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage. If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it

Some good words of wisdom (from an old guy)

As I was lying around, pondering the problems of the world, I realized that at my age I don't really give a rat's ass anymore.

If walking is good for your health, the postman would be immortal.

A whale swims all day, mainly eat fish, drinks water, but is still fat.

A rabbit runs and hops and only lives 15 years, while a tortoise doesn't run and does mostly nothing, yet it lives for 150 years. And you tell me to exercise?? I don't think so.

Just grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to remember the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

Now that I'm older here's what I've discovered:

1. I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
2. My wild oats are mostly enjoyed with prunes and all-bran.
3. I finally got my head together, and now my body is falling apart.
4. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.
5. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.
6. If all is not lost, then where the heck is it?
7. It was a whole lot easier to get older, than to get wiser.
8. Some days, you're the top dog; some days you're the hydrant.
9. I wish the buck really did stop here; I sure could use a few of them.
10. Kids in the back seat cause accidents.
11. Accidents in the back seat cause kids.
12. It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.
13. The world only beats a path to your door when you're in the bathroom.
14. If God wanted me to touch my toes, he'd have put them on my knees.
15. When I'm finally holding all the right cards, everyone wants to play chess.
16. It's not hard to meet expenses . . . they're everywhere.
17. The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
18. These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter . . . I go somewhere to get something, and then wonder what I'm "here after".
- 19.. Funny, I don't remember being absent-minded.

The importance of walking

Walking can add minutes to your life. This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at \$4,000 per month.

My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. Now he's 97 years old and we have no idea where the hell he is.

The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.

I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

I joined a health club last year, spent about 250 bucks. Haven't lost a pound. Apparently you have to go there.

Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate.

I do have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, he looks good doesn't he.'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Every time I start thinking too much about how I look, I just find a pub with a Happy Hour and by the time I leave, I look just fine .

“7%” Written by a 90 year old

Written by Regina Brett, 90 years old, of the Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio. “To celebrate growing older, I once wrote the 45 lessons life taught me. It is the most requested column I’ve ever written.

1. Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short - enjoy it.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends and family will.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Stay true to yourself.
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first paycheck.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It's OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you shouldn't be in it.
15. Everything can change in the blink of an eye, but don't worry, God never blinks.
16. Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
17. Get rid of anything that isn't useful. Clutter weighs you down in many ways.
18. Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.
19. It's never too late to be happy. But it's all up to you and no one else.
20. When it comes to going after what you love in life, don't take no for an answer.
21. Burn the candles, use the nice sheets, wear the fancy lingerie. Don't save it for a special occasion. Today is special.
22. Over prepare, then go with the flow.
23. Be eccentric now. Don't wait for old age to wear purple.
24. The most important sex organ is the brain.
25. No one is in charge of your happiness but you.
26. Frame every so-called disaster with these words 'In five years, will this matter?'
27. Always choose life.
28. Forgive
29. What other people think of you is none of your business.
30. Time heals almost everything. Give time time.
31. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
32. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
33. Believe in miracles.
34. God loves you because of who God is, not because of anything you did or didn't do.
35. Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.
36. Growing old beats the alternative of dying young.
37. Your children get only one childhood.
38. All that truly matters in the end is that you loved.
39. Get outside every day. Miracles are waiting everywhere.
40. If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back.
41. Envy is a waste of time. Accept what you already have, not what you need
42. The best is yet to come.
43. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
44. Yield.
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift.”

As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world, too soon before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it, if I choose to read, or play, on the computer, until 4 AM, or sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50's, 6's and 70's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach, in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves, with abandon, if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And, I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years, my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break, when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But, broken hearts are what give us strength, and understanding, and compassion. A heart never broken, is pristine, and sterile, and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be.

And I shall eat dessert every single day (if I feel like it).

Senior citizens are constantly being criticized for every conceivable deficiency of the modern world, real or imaginary. We know we take responsibility for all we have done and do not blame others. HOWEVER, upon reflection, we would like to point out that it was NOT the senior citizens who took:

The **melody** out of music,
The **pride** out of appearance,
The **courtesy** out of driving,
The **romance** out of love,
The **commitment** out of marriage,
The **responsibility** out of parenthood,
The **togetherness** out of the family,
The **learning** out of education,
The **service** out of patriotism,
The **Golden Rule** from rulers,
The **nativity scene** out of cities,
The **civility** out of behavior,
The **refinement** out of language,
The **dedication** out of employment,
The **prudence** out of spending,
The **ambition** out of achievement or
God out of government and school.

And we certainly are NOT the ones who eliminated patience and tolerance from personal relationships and interactions with others.

And, we do understand the meaning of patriotism, and remember those who have fought and died for our country. Just look at the Seniors with tears in their eyes and pride in their hearts as they stand at attention with their hand over their hearts!

YES, I'M A SENIOR CITIZEN!

I'm the life of the party, even if it lasts until 8 p.m.
I'm very good at opening childproof caps.... with a hammer.
I'm awake many hours before my body allows me to get up.
I'm smiling all the time because I can't hear a thing you're saying.
I'm sure everything I can't find is in a safe secure place, somewhere.
I'm wrinkled, saggy, lumpy, and that's just my left leg.
I'm beginning to realize that aging is not for wimps.

Yes, I'm a SENIOR CITIZEN and I think I am having the time of my life!

Now if I could only remember who gave this to me.

Share the cheer Let's be happy while we're here.

BILL GATES

This should be posted in every school or kid's bedroom. Love him or hate him, he sure hits the nail on the head with this. Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a high school about eleven things they did not and will not learn in school. He talks about how feel-good, politically correct teachings created a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this concept set them up for failure in the real world.

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2: The world doesn't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice-president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping: they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So, before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one.

If you can read this ... Thank a Teacher.

If you can read this in English... Thank a Soldier!

And for life and everything else you have... Thank God!!

Now.... Think about this and smile if you agree and please share this with someone.

If you don't agree, go stick your head in the SAND and take a DEEP BREATH!!!!

“PO TATERS”

Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are just content to while others do the work.

They are called “**Spec Taters .**”

Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do the work.

They are called “**Comment Taters.**”

Some people are very bossy and like to tell others what to do, but don't want to soil their own hands.

They are called “**Dick Taters.**”

Some people are always looking to cause problems by asking others to agree with them. It is too hot or too cold, too sour or too sweet.

They are called “**Agie Taters.**”

There are those who say they will help, but somehow just never get around to actually doing the promised help.

They are called “**Hezzie Taters.**”

Some people can put up a front and pretend to be someone they are not.

They are called “**Immy Taters.**”

Then there are those who love others and do what they say they will. They are always prepared to stop whatever they are doing and lend a helping hand. They bring real sunshine into the lives of others

They are called “**Sweet Po Taters.**”

HANDBOOK 2024

Health:

1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a beggar.
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants.
4. Live with the 3 E's -- Energy, Enthusiasm, and Empathy
5. Make time to pray.
6. Play more games
7. Read more books than you did in 2023.
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
9. Sleep for 7 hours.
10. Take a 10-30 minutes walk daily. And while you walk, smile.

Personality:

11. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
12. Don't have negative thoughts or things you cannot control. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.
13. Don't over do. Keep your limits.
14. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
15. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
16. Dream more while you are awake
17. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need..
18. Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with his/her mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone. Don't hate others.
20. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
21. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
22. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
23. Smile and laugh more.
24. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

Society:

25. Call your family often.
26. Each day give something good to others.
27. Forgive everyone for everything.
28. Spend time with people over the age of 70 and under the age of 6.
29. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
30. What other people think of you is none of your business.
31. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.

Life:

32. Do the right thing!
33. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful, or joyful.
34. GOD heals everything.
35. However good or bad a situation is, it will change.
36. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
37. The best is yet to come.
38. When you awake alive in the morning, thank GOD for it.
39. Your Inner most is always happy. So, be happy.

ONE. Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.

TWO. Marry a man/woman you love to talk to. As you get older, their conversational skills will be as important as any other.

THREE. Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or sleep all you want.

FOUR. When you say, 'I love you ,' mean it.

FIVE. When you say, 'I'm sorry,' look the person in the eye.

SIX. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.

SEVEN. Believe in love at first sight.

EIGHT. Never laugh at anyone's dream. People who don't have dreams don't have much.

NINE. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it's the only way to live life completely.

TEN. In disagreements, fight fairly. No name calling.

ELEVEN. Don't judge people by their relatives.

TWELVE. Talk slowly but think quickly.

THIRTEEN. When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, 'Why do you want to know?'

FOURTEEN. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

FIFTEEN. Say 'bless you' when you hear someone sneeze.

SIXTEEN. When you lose, don't lose the lesson!

SEVENTEEN. Remember the three R's: Respect for self; Respect for others; and Responsibility for all your actions.

EIGHTEEN. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship..

NINETEEN. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

TWENTY. Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.

TWENTY-ONE. Spend some time alone.

Happiness Is A Voyage

We convince ourselves that life will be better once we are married, have a baby, then another.

Then we get frustrated because our children are not old enough, and that all will be well when they are older.

Then we are frustrated because they reach adolescence and we must deal with them. Surely we'll be happier when they grow out of the teen years.

We tell ourselves our life will be better when our spouse gets his/her act together, when we have a nicer car, when we can take a vacation, when we finally retire.

The truth is that there is no better time to be happy than right now. If not, then when?

Your life will always be full of challenges. It is better to admit as much and to decide to be happy in spite of it all. For the longest time, it seemed that life was about to start. Real life.

But there was always some obstacle along the way, an ordeal to get through, some work to be finished, some time to be given, a bill to be paid. Then life would start.

I finally came to understand that those obstacles were life.

That point of view helped me see that there isn't any road to happiness.

Happiness IS the road. So, enjoy every moment.

Stop waiting for school to end, for a return to school, to lose ten pounds, to gain ten pounds, for work to begin, to get married, for Friday evening, for Sunday morning, waiting for a new car, for your mortgage to be paid off, for spring, for summer, for fall, for winter, for the first or the of the month, for your song to be played on the radio, to die, to be reborn... before deciding to be happy.

Happiness is a voyage, not a destination. There is no better time to be happy than NOW! Live and enjoy the moment.

Are You Blind

There was a blind girl who hated herself because she was blind. She hated everyone, except her loving boyfriend. He was always there for her.

She told her boyfriend, "If I could only see the world, I will marry you."

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her. When the bandages came off, she was able to see everything, including her boyfriend. He asked her, 'Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?'

The girl looked at her boyfriend and saw that he was blind. The sight of his closed eyelids shocked her. She hadn't expected that. The thought of looking at them the rest of her life led her to refuse to marry him.

Her boyfriend left her in tears and days later wrote a note to her saying: 'Take good care of your eyes, my dear, for before they were yours, they were mine.'

This is how the human brain often works when our status changes. Only a very few remember what life was like before, and who was always by their side in the most painful situations.

Life Is a Gift

Today before you say an unkind word - Think of someone who can't speak.

Before you complain about the taste of your food - Think of someone who has nothing to eat.

Before you complain about your husband or wife - Think of someone who's crying out to GOD for a companion.

Today before you complain about life -Think of someone who went too early to heaven.

Before you complain about your children -Think of someone who desires children but they're barren.

Before you argue about your dirty house someone didn't clean or sweep -Think of the people who are living in the streets.

Before whining about the distance you drive- Think of someone who walks the same distance with their feet.

And when you are tired and complain about your job -Think of the unemployed, the disabled, and those who wish they had your job.

But before you think of pointing the finger or condemning another - Remember that not one of us is without sin and we all answer to one MAKER.

And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down - Put a Smile on your face and thank GOD you're alive and still around.

KURTIS THE STOCK BOY AND BRENDA THE CHECKOUT GIRL

In a supermarket, Kurtis the stock boy, was busily working when a new voice came over the loud speaker asking for a carry out at register 4. Kurtis was almost finished, and wanted to get some fresh air, and decided to answer the call. As he approached the check-out stand a distant smile caught his eye, the new check-out girl was beautiful. She was an older woman (maybe 26, and he was only 22) and he fell in love.

Later that day, after his shift was over, he waited by the punch clock to find out her name. She came into the break room, smiled softly at him, took her card and punched out, then left. He looked at her card, BRENDA. He walked out only to see her start walking up the road. Next day, he waited outside as she left the supermarket, and offered her a ride home.

He looked harmless enough, and she accepted. When he dropped her off, he asked if maybe he could see her again, outside of work. She simply said it wasn't possible. He pressed and she explained she had two children and she couldn't afford a baby-sitter, so he offered to pay for the baby-sitter. Reluctantly she accepted his offer for a date for the following Saturday.

That Saturday night he arrived at her door only to have her tell him that she was unable to go with him. The baby-sitter had called and canceled. To which Kurtis simply said, "Well, let's take the kids with us."

She tried to explain that taking the children was not an option, but again not taking no for an answer, he pressed. Finally Brenda, brought him inside to meet her children. She had an older daughter who was just as cute as a bug, Kurtis thought, then Brenda brought out her son, in a wheelchair. He was born a paraplegic with Down Syndrome.

Kurtis asked Brenda, "I still don't understand why the kids can't come with us?" Brenda was amazed. Most men would run away from a woman with two kids, especially if one had disabilities - just like her first husband and father of her children had done. Kurtis was not ordinary - - - he had a different mindset.

That evening Kurtis and Brenda loaded up the kids, went to dinner and the movies. When her son needed anything Kurtis would take care of him. When he needed to use the restroom, he picked him up out of his wheelchair, took him and brought him back. The kids loved Kurtis. At the end of the evening, Brenda knew this was the man she was going to marry and spend the rest of her life with.

A year later, they were married and Kurtis adopted both of her children. Since then they have added two more kids. So what happened to Kurtis the stock boy and Brenda the check-out girl? Well, Mr. & Mrs. Kurt Warner now live in Arizona, where he is currently employed as the quarterback of the National Football League Arizona Cardinals and has his Cardinals in the hunt for a possible appearance in the Super Bowl. Is this a surprise ending or could you have guessed that he was not an ordinary person.

It should be noted that he also quarterbacked the Rams in Super Bowl XXXVI. He has also been the NFL's Most Valuable Player twice and the Super Bowl's Most Valuable Player.

AND THE REST OF THE STORY: Today at church our minister mentioned that when Kurt, his wife and 7 children go out to eat he has one of his children pick out a family eating at the restaurant. Kurt then tells the wait staff he is picking up the tab for that family's dinner anonymously. He remembers the days he was working nights in the grocery store and feeding his family on food stamps.