

What Really Is Important in Life

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Like many of you, I have spent my life doing the things that I loved, the things that I needed to do and the things that were expected of me. Along the way, I have accumulated a wall of plaques, a binder of certificates, a number of degrees and certifications and a bookshelf of books, articles and training materials that I have written. I have held important positions in organizations and lead boards of directors. Occasionally, I am sometimes looked up to by others who ask “where do you find the time and energy for all the things that you do?” But in the final analysis, I sometimes wonder, “What does it all matter?” When I am dead and gone, where will the diplomas, certificates and plaques go? Will they be buried with me? Will they end up with my heirs? Will they be sold on eBay? The reality is that I will have no control at that point and they will likely end up in a land fill. Tossed aside by those who have no room for other people’s “junk” and to which they have no personal emotional attachment.

Interestingly, I received an email from a friend the other day. You know the type. They come attached with wit and wisdom that is penned by some unknown person and circulates the world via the Worldwide Web. This particular one was titled *Charles Schultz' Philosophy* and I thought I would share it with you since it ties directly into my comments above.

“The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just read the questions 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.
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 that 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 are the ones that care.

'Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia' (Charles Schultz)."

With these things in mind, I think it is important to try and find balance in our life. It is important to take time from all of our achievement-oriented tasks to focus on those things that will add so much more to our lives. I believe that another often used anonymous quote sums it up: "The last words that most people will not utter on their deathbed are, 'I wish I'd had more time to complete that project I was working on.'" In reality, at that point in our life, we normally start to realize that what we should have done is spend more time with those we love, share what we have with those less fortunate, take the time to do the little things that bring joy to us and our family. So before it is too late, I urge you to consider the following.

- Tell those who mean so much to you how much you care and love them.
- Do little things to make your partner recognize how much you appreciate him or her (e.g. put heart shaped I love you" notes on the bathroom mirror or buy flowers to surprise them for no special reason, and thank them for the little things they do around the house that makes your life easier, such as cleaning the dishes or tub, cutting the grass, or taking out the trash).
- Throw the ball or play house with the kids that look up to you and adore you because you are their caregiver and so important in their life.
- Let someone have a pet that they want because it is important to them.
- Take the time to go somewhere special with you family and friends on a regular basis.
- Recognize that life is about sharing and not about what others can do for you.
- And, to quote the lyrics of a popular song by Lee Ann Womack:

"I hope you never lose your sense of wonder,
You get your fill to eat but always keep that hunger,
May you never take one single breath for granted,
GOD forbid love ever leave you empty handed,
I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean,
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens,
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance,
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance.
I hope you dance...I hope you dance."

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compilations. He regularly conducts creative training, train-the-trainer, customer service, interpersonal communication and management and supervisory skills workshops. Bob can be reached at blucas@robertwlucas.com or through his website www.robertwlucas.com. Follow his blog at www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress and like him at www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises