



THE NOBLE HEART™

Sagely Advise

August 26th, 2009 eLetter

Counselor and author, Richard Leider, asked senior citizens over a 25 year span how they would live their life differently. (Fast Company, February 1998 issue) “Almost without exception, when these older people look back, they say the same things.”

“First, they say that if they could live their lives over again, they would be more reflective. They got so caught up in the doing, they say, that they lost sight of the meaning...Second, they would take more risks. Almost all of them said that they felt most alive when they took risks...Third, they would understand what really gave them fulfillment...doing something that contributes to life, adding value to life beyond yourself.”

From my research, the response to this question, “How would I live life differently?” is fairly universal for those in their later years. Age and the increased awareness of time bring perspective on life. As Moses prayed, “Teach us how short our lives really are so that we may be wise. (Psa. 90:12 NCV)

Reflection

There is a direction, theme, purpose, and orchestration to our life that we must recognize and understand if we are to discern the life we were created to live. It is important that we periodically disengage from our daily busyness and examine our life. If we are to truly “see” and “hear” our life, we must get away from all the ambient (surrounding) light and noise like we would if we were seriously studying the stars.

Oswald Chambers said, "...Looking back we see the presence of an amazing design, which, if we are born of God, we will credit to God. We can all see God in exceptional things, but it requires the culture of spiritual discipline to see God in every detail. Never allow that the haphazard is anything less than God's appointed order, and be ready to discover the Divine designs anywhere."

We must cultivate the "spiritual discipline" of seeing God's choreography in our life.

Risk

We all desire a life that requires something from us, not just our "showing up." It's exhilarating to attempt something that is risky, uncertain, and important. I have heard it said that the most spectacular vistas require traveling the roughest, most dangerous trails. And so it is with our life – to reach the most beautiful, authentic, fulfilling places in life will require some risk. A life lived in fear is a life half-lived.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

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Fulfillment

All of us, instinctually, want to know that there is meaning to our own life and that we add meaning to other's – that we are living a life of consequence and transcendence. Elton Trueblood wrote, “A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit.” We want to live for something bigger than ourselves. Meaning and fulfillment are only experienced as our life, in some way, touches another person. Those who live solely for themselves – their needs, their happiness, their comfort and protection will suffer heart claustrophobia – the acute discomfort of living in a small story.

A person's heart is as large as the things he loves.

Always learning with you,

Gary