

Living Without Regrets

Life is fragile and vulnerable...it is not the story line or length of life that matters; it's how we live the life we're given. Treasure every moment; turn to those you love and let them know how important they are; do today what may not be yours to do tomorrow.

Mary Manin Morrissey

A few years ago, while driving down the highway I spotted a billboard that said, "Life is short. Get a boat." The image behind the slogan revealed a young couple having fun in a powerboat, realizing that now was the time to have fun and enjoy life. As superficial as the image and meaning appeared, what remained true for me was the fact that life *is* short; none of us knows how long we are going to be alive. For Love, being the power that created us, doesn't guarantee a lifetime, It only guarantees this very moment.

A woman in my community recently died from a shark attack. One minute she was completing her daily swim, the next minute she was hit by the shark and, despite the valiant efforts of the lifeguards, died on the beach. Life really is fragile. We assume that we're going to be here for a long time. In fact, many of us cannot conceive of *not* being here. And so, we forget how important the people in our life truly are. Amidst our busyness, we put love on the back burner convincing ourselves that we'll make time for it, well...when we have time. Yet when we put other things before love, we end up having regrets. How many of us reach the end of our lives wishing we could live it over and do things differently?

Before my father passed away, I admired how he took care of some unfinished business within our family. My father and sister had become estranged and I knew this was very

painful for both of them since they had previously been very close. As he continued to age and become ill, I often wondered whether or not they were going to remain apart and the amount of regret they might both feel. However, toward the end of his life, my sister reached out and the two of them reconnected in a meaningful and healing way. As my father made his transition, both he and my sister experienced peace from the healing that had taken place within their relationship.

Are you putting love first?

This reminds me of a story I recently read written by Larry Harp titled the “Leaving the City of Regret.” In the story, the author cleverly weaves a theme of letting go of regret as the story’s character takes his annual “Guilt Trip” and attends the “Annual Pity Party.” At the pity party several families appear: the “Done Family,” including “Should Have,” “Would Have,” and “Could Have.” Also in attendance, were the “Shattered Dreams,” “Their Fault,” “Don’t Blame Me,” and “I Couldn’t Help It.” During this depressing experience, the character realizes that he can cancel his trip at anytime and has the power to make today a wonderful day. He courageously exits the “City of Regret” and heads to “Starting Again,” where he meets the “New Starts” and the “I Forgive Myself.” This enlightened traveler now lives on “I Can Do It Street.”

If your feet were to tread this earth for the last time, what regrets would you have?

Are there people in your life, community, workplace and family that are better off because of your existence? Nothing is more powerful than love. Ask yourself, “What can I do today to make a meaningful contribution?” and, “How might the world be a better place because I am here?” One of my favorite lessons in *A Course in Miracles* states, “I follow in the way appointed me.” It affirms the special role you have to fulfill. The role designed uniquely for you. Thus, unless you choose to complete the assignment you’re appointed to do, you’re going to feel a nagging emptiness that cannot be filled by anything outside of you. Your appointed role is simple: extend love to others. This doesn’t mean just to those you deem “important,” but to everyone you encounter. Whether it’s the person serving you at the restaurant or the person ringing up your groceries at the market, everyone you meet is part of the divine plan, and every encounter is meant to be a holy encounter.

Life takes on profoundly new meaning when we recognize the value of love. Who might you turn to today and tell them “I care” or “I love you?” The genuine power of the moment is ours to claim, right here, right now. But it must be extended each and everyday, leaving no room for regrets. Your life is meant to be the avenue from which love is given room to birth itself.

How can you demonstrate love today in a way as never before?

