

HINDSIGHT

An Octogenarian Viewpoint

"When most of Life's Road is seen in the rearview mirror."

Ron Adams

*This booklet is dedicated to my lovely wife,
Sarah Marie,
who for many years has stood by my side as a
preacher's wife and the mother of
our three children.*

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The articles in this booklet are about events that made a lasting impression that helped me navigate Life's Road. My prayer is that these accounts will help you as you travel Life's Road. There is much that can be learned from the experiences of others.

‘BE THOUGHTFUL AND KIND’

The Story Behind My Motto

Years ago I was looking for a saying or motto that would help me while interacting with another person. Especially someone with whom I had a disagreement or dispute. There has been times when I lost my “cool” and later regretted my actions. I needed something that would help me maintain the right attitude. Without the right attitude such interactions can quickly deteriorate and cause a greater problem.

I decided on “*Be Thoughtful and Kind*” because it’s succinct and easy to remember. Four words that says it all.

Keeping it in mind prepares me for any discussion or dispute, be it in person, over the telephone, in an email, or by written correspondence.

The only regret I have in choosing this motto is that I wish I had chosen it earlier in life because it would have saved me from the times when I wasn’t thoughtful and kind. The harm cannot be undone, but thankfully we have a loving and forgiving God.

Thoughtful: Having or showing heed for the well-being or happiness of others and a propensity for anticipating their needs or wishes.

Kind: Friendly, generous, or warmhearted nature; showing sympathy or understanding; considerate, forbearing, tolerant.

—American Heritage Dictionary

What has helped me to press on was the realization that I had to:

Learn From My Past Mistakes

If I didn’t there was a good chance I would make the same mistake again.

Learn From My Successes

I needed to use these to bolster my efforts to succeed at doing other things. “I can do it!”

Learn From My Problems

Remembering how I handled them (or didn’t handle them) gave me insight of how to handle new problems.

Learn to Live In the Present

It’s the only time I can act. How I live each day will impact tomorrow. “Doing what I can, with the ability I have, where I am now.”

Learn to Prepare For the Future

I need to be prepared to accept what it will bring. I need to accept change as a fact of life, realizing that much of what will happen is beyond my control.

RETROSPECT

(To look back on or contemplate things past.)

“Four score and seven years ago” gained new meaning after celebrating my “four score and seven” birthday recently. It has caused me to look back at what I had done during those years.

It’s good from time to time to look back at your past, recalling what you did and what was done to you. Yes, there are many pleasant memories to savor. And there are some that aren’t so pleasant. But the ink has dried and nothing can be changed, erased, or crossed out. It’s all permanently recorded. There are no do-overs. Wishing things had been different is to no avail.

‘IF ONLY’

It’s like the Monday morning quarterback who says “If only the team had ...” It’s easy to second guess and criticize in hindsight. “If only I had ...” It’s easy to critique your actions in hindsight. But such is vanity, for nothing can be changed.

On the brighter side there is much to be gained if we learn from our successes, our mistakes, even our failures. And we can glean lessons from the actions of others who impacted our lives. Oh, there is so much to be gained.

The operative word is “can.” It’s not automatic. We need to be good students who make application of what was learned. A poor student is destined to fail and suffer the consequences.

Some of the saddest words ever spoken are “I knew better.” “I knew, but.” “I knew I shouldn’t have.”

MAINTENANCE

A co-worker’s car had a muffler and tailpipe hanging dangerously low. When asked why he didn’t repair it, he said he planned to do it. Weeks went by, but it never was done. But he still was able to drive to work.

Then it came time for him to take his vacation. On a Friday afternoon, with the car fully packed with his family and their camping gear he began his much anticipated time off.

The next Monday he showed up for work. What happened? He replied, “As I was driving out of town the muffler and tailpipe broke off and damage the rear axle. The car had to be towed to a repair shop. The vacation money had to be used to pay for the repairs. Vacation was cancelled!”

My dad (he was an auto mechanic) said,
“Take care of your vehicle and it will take care of you.”

Take care to maintain your personal relationships:

marriage partner

family members

friends

neighbors

WHEN THE NEWNESS WEARS OFF

What I learned over the years was that whenever something new happened, there was excitement, exhilaration, and joyfulness. But over time the newness wore off. It gradually became the norm. After the first day, the first week, the first month, the first year, it became commonplace.

A new car is so nice to drive. But to keep it in good condition, it needs to be properly maintained.

A new house is so grand. It's such a great place to live. But to keep it in good shape, it needs to be properly maintained.

A new wife or husband. A terrific life partner. But to keep the marriage in good condition, it needs to be properly maintained.

PROPER CARE AND UPKEEP

Sooner or later the newness wears off, and if not properly cared for it will deteriorate. Not all at once, but over time. Not suddenly, but gradually. And it's easy to overlook what is happening until it becomes a major problem.

Everything new, with time, becomes old. That's why proper maintenance and upkeep are so important. This is especially true in a marriage. A broken down car is not good. A broken down house is undesirable. But a broken marriage is tragic.

Maintenance Is So Important

Proper Motivation

**Do it because you desire to do it,
not just because it is required.**

MIRROR

Looking at a mirror there is more to see than a reflection of my appearance. Yes, my appearance has changed over the years, Time has a way of changing it. What I see more and more is the person I have become. Maturity changes more than the outward appearance. It has changed my personality, my understanding, my view of life, my desires. Yet, I'm the same person inside.

Look Closely

It's a good idea when looking at a mirror to see more than your appearance. Look closely at the person you have become.

Words of Comfort

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

VIEW OF ONESELF

It was during my senior year at Colton Union High School. I was in Long Beach, California, with the coach of the track team and a few other runners. We were attending an invitational track meet of athletes from all over Southern California. That day I was entered to run the 220-yard race. When it came time for me to run, the coach said, “Do your best.”

I crossed the finish line fifth out of nine runners. I told my coach I wasn’t happy with my performance. What he said to me that day taught me a very valuable lesson. He showed me that I was looking at it all wrong. (1) My time for running that race was my best of the season. (2) I was competing with some of the best athletes in Southern California. (3) I finished ahead of four other runners. I had done my best and that is all I could do.

My personal best was what mattered. How true that is for everyone: “Do your best” is what counts in life. Not comparing myself with those who are better than me, nor comparing myself with those who are not. Such comparisons are worthless and harmful.

As a preacher of the Gospel, I refused to compare myself to other preachers. It mattered not if some were better or I was better than others, I was determined to do my best. That’s it!

Now in my later years of life, my ability and stamina are diminished, but I still use this as my daily guide: “Doing all I can, with what I have, where I am.”

SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the SERENITY to accept the things I cannot change; COURAGE to change the things I can; and WISDOM to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as the pathway
to peace.

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it.

Trusting that He will make all things right if I
surrender to His will.

That I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with Him forever in
the next.

Amen!

– Reinhold Neibuhr

THE VICISSITUDES* OF LIFE

In our lifetime my wife and I have lived in a one room apartment, a one bedroom apartment, and a two-bedroom apartment that was part of an old house. We have lived in a 17-foot trailer, a 24-foot trailer, a modest tract house, and a house worth more than \$700,000.

Some of the moves were dictated by the military, health concerns, or employment, and not of our choosing.

Our finances varied from below the poverty line to well above it. Several times we were on a “cash only” basis to make sure we could pay for necessities. While there were times when we were able to help others financially.

What remained constant was our strong faith in Christ, our commitment to our marriage, and our contentment and inner peace.

CONTENTMENT IS A CHOICE

Inner peace and contentment are achieved by accepting your current circumstances. Recognizing that many things are beyond your control. You may not like it, but you accept it as it is now. You pray for strength to endure, courage to change what you can, and put your trust in the Lord.

While enduring life’s up and downs, it’s important to maintain a pure heart, godly living, and a clean mind, as one who trusts in the Lord.

*Unplanned or unexpected changes or shifts often encountered in one’s life, activities, or surroundings.

What Others Say or Think

Early on in my life as a preacher of the Gospel, I found great comfort in these words:

But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

I realized that I had no control over what others think. Any attempt to control was just wasted effort.

On the Lighter Side

In high school I was embarrassed to learn that some of the girls saw me running and thought I had pretty legs.

PLEASING EVERYONE

(I'm sharing this because it taught me
a valuable lesson.)

There is an old allegory about a man, a boy and a donkey. All three were walking down a dusty road on a hot summer day. They overheard some passerby say, "Look at those foolish people walking when they could be riding." So they both climbed on the donkey.

They had ridden only a short distance when another passerby exclaimed, "Look at that poor donkey carrying two people. Aren't they heartless?" The son climbed down and walked beside the father riding on the donkey.

Then someone said, "Look at that inconsiderate man making that poor little boy walk while he rides." Upon hearing this, the father and boy exchanged places and still they had not satisfied the man who said, "Look at that young man riding and that poor old man walking in the heat of the day."

So the boy climbed down. The father and the son tied the feet of the donkey to a pole and proceeded to carry the donkey. Everyone exclaimed, "Look at those foolish people."

—Adapted and Revised

The lesson is obvious, isn't it? Don't spend a lot of time worrying about others being pleased with you. You can never please everybody. Don't try! You should strive to please God and do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

WISE WORDS

*The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,
gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits,
unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

James 3:17

*A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a
man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.*

Proverbs 1:5

*Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers
who are in a city.*

Ecclesiastes 7:19

*Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him
show by his good behavior his deeds in the
gentleness of wisdom.*

James 3:13

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and
acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who
built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the
floods came, and the winds blew and slammed
against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it
had been founded on the rock."*

Matthew 7:24-25

AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE OF WISDOM

Usually words of wisdom come from those who are experienced, intelligent, and perceptive. But some times we are surprised by something said by a most unlikely person.

It happened to me when I was working in the composing room of a daily newspaper. Most of the men I worked with had a close relationship, having worked together for many years. And, yes, that included some harmless pranks and joking around. But, if we were not careful, it could cross the line and hurt someone. There was one such occasion that taught me a valuable lesson.

His name was Frank. He worked in another part of the area. He was what one would call “weird.” He was so weird that he believed aliens from other planets lived in the canyon near his home. And it didn’t help that his physical appearance was, to be kind, not very attractive.

He had a menial labor-intensive job and he did his job very well. He kept to himself most of the time, but he would talk to you if you initiated a conversation.

Because of his demeanor and appearance, he became the butt of many pranks. Most of the time he took it in stride, but one day after enduring a number of humiliating antics, he confided in me, “I wish they wouldn’t do such things. You know, I have feelings, too.”

This happened more than fifty years ago, yet it remains fresh in my mind. Hopefully, this bit of wisdom will be a help to you.

Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

Luke 6:31

EXPERIENCE 101

Experience is a strict teacher.

Be a good student.

Failing any test is not good.

CLASSROOM: DAILY LIVING

Daily experiences, whether they are pleasant ones, exceptional ones, traumatic ones, unexpected ones, all affect our lives.

APPLICATION

How we act or react when interacting with family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers, strangers, and those who you don’t like, molds our character.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:9

EXPERIENCE

Active participation in events or activities,
leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skill:
a lesson taught by experience.

—American Heritage Dictionary

WISDOM COMES WITH AGE VIA EXPERIENCE

Looking back it became apparent that lessons learned and (hopefully) remembered are what helps guide you in life. You need to be a good student and learn from your experiences: your trials, your afflictions, your failures, your mistakes, and your successes.

APPLICATION NEEDED

You may learn from your experiences, but knowing is not enough. The lessons need to be applied. In the years to come you'll find what really mattered were not the experiences you had, but how you handled them and how well you applied what you learned from them. Failing to make the proper application of your experiences will cause you to suffer undesirable consequences.

*Wisdom doesn't always come with age,
else there would be no such person as an
"Old Fool."*

*Apply your heart to discipline
And your ears to words of knowledge.*
Proverbs 21:12

***The person you choose for your life's partner will have
the greatest impact on your life!***

~~~~~  
*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his  
mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall  
become one flesh.*

Genesis 2:24

*An excellent wife who can find? She is far more  
precious than jewels. The heart of her husband  
trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

*She does him good, and not harm, all the  
days of her life.*

Proverbs 31:10-12

*In the same way husbands should love their  
wives as their own bodies. He who loves his  
wife loves himself.*

Ephesians 5:28

*However, let each one of you love his wife as  
himself, and let the wife see that she respects  
her husband.*

Ephesians 5:33  
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LIFE'S CHOICES

The choices one makes early in life have a lasting effect. This is so true when I look back at the most important choice I made.

In July 1954 at the age of nineteen I married Sarah Marie Bond who was seventeen years old. Some would say we were too young, but the marriage has never been stronger after sixty-eight years in 2022.

From the beginning we both were determined to make it work. Yes, it takes effort to build a strong and vibrant union. With love for one another as the motivator the union not only survived but thrived.

There were times of stress due to illness, financial needs, and raising three children. The many relocations, separations during my time in the military, and many years of preaching the gospel produced many various challenges. What remained constant was the love for one another. The hard times brought us closer together and strengthened our relationship.

I cannot emphasize enough how important God's word has been in our individual lives and in our marriage. I encourage everyone to heed the teachings when making choices that will have a lasting effect on you personally and on the one you choose as your life's partner.

FOUR KEY ELEMENTS

Respect One Another

Care for One Another

Listen to One Another

Love One Another

"Have you eaten?"

In some countries when a person meets a friend and asks the question, "Have you eaten?" it is not just about being hungry. That may be the case in difficult times, but often it is an invitation to spend time together to talk while having a meal. Conversation and eating, what a pleasant experience.



*Better is a dish of vegetables where love is than
a fattened ox served with hatred.*

Proverbs 15:17

*Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than
great treasure and turmoil with it.*

Proverbs 15:16



So True, So Sad

A friend of mine who found himself living alone said that eating a meal on a tray watching television was a poor substitute for sharing a meal with another person.

THE BEST FOOD—THE WORST MEAL

In my early years I was a journeyman printer working at the Sun-Telegram newspaper in San Bernardino, California. I was among several employees who were invited by the owner to dine with him at one of the city's finest restaurants. It was a rare occasion and I felt honored to be one of only a few employees chosen because of our dedication to our work.

The ambience and the food was unsurpassed, yet I was miserable. By the time the food arrived, some were becoming boisterous because of the free alcoholic drinks they had consumed. I began to wish I had declined the invitation. I could envision my family sitting around the table at home eating hamburgers. I longed to be with my wife and children. I shared employment with the others, but not much else. Oh, to be at a table where the love of God and love of each other is found.

This event reinforced the fact that relationships based on what values are shared are more precious, more important, and more enjoyable. Yes, more than a tender steak at a famous restaurant paid for by someone else.

A meal with loved ones is more desirable even if it is just hamburgers.

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It is apparent that the Apostle Paul understood this concept when he wrote:

*“Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having an abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”*

Philippians 4:11-13  
~~~~~

THREE VALUABLE LESSONS

Over the years I have attended a number of auctions hoping to find something I wanted at a good price. It was there I learned three valuable lessons.

“As is, where is” is a term used at auctions. It means that when you bid on an item and make the winning bid, it’s yours “as it is now, where it is now.” Life is a lot like that.

Lesson 1: There are many things that happen in life about which I had nothing to say. I had no voice in deciding when I was born, the family into which I were born, or the social, cultural and economic status of that family.

Lesson 2: I must take it as it is now, where I am now. I’m not given the option of refusing to accept it until it is changed to my liking.

Lesson 3: There are many things which I have little control over: how others treat me, what kind of diseases I will contract, my length of life, etc.

Since I exert so little control over such external things, I need to accept life “as it is now, where it is now.” This is what produces contentment. Not that I wouldn’t like it to be different. Not that I shouldn’t try to improve my lot in life. It is accepting my present circumstances for now.

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REALITY CHECK

When we accept ourselves “as we are, where we are,”
we are able to face today, and gain strength to
change things tomorrow.

THOUGHTS ABOUT HABIT

“I did it without thinking.”

To do something without thinking can be
damaging as well as beneficial.

HABITUAL

It’s a matter of going through the motions
without emotion or mentally involved.

It’s being present in body, while
the mind wanders.

ROTE

A memorizing process using routine or
repetition, often without full attention
or comprehension.

“Old habits die hard.”

Some seem to have a way of returning from the dead.

HABIT

A recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition. An established disposition of the mind or character.

– American Heritage Dictionary

GOOD AND BAD HABITS

Long ago a friend shared with me the following information about making and breaking habits. And through the years it has helped me in dealing with the habits I formed. Good habits can be beneficial, but bad habits are definitely detrimental. And they can be formed intentionally or unintentionally (the more frequent way).



HOW HABITS ARE ESTABLISHED

Act at every opportunity. Make no exceptions.

HOW HABITS ARE BROKEN

Resist every opportunity. Make no exceptions.



HARD TO BREAK

It's hard to break a habit. I had a dish of ice cream every evening for a month, and found it's difficult not to have one.

MY WELL-ESTABLISHED HABIT

I do enjoy that dish of ice cream!

*It is a trap for a man to say rashly, "It is holy!"
And after the vows to make inquiry.*

Proverbs 20:25

*It's better not to make a promise at all than to
make one and not keep it.*

Ecclesiastes 5:5

**Be
Quick to hear
Slow to speak
Slow to anger**

James 1:19

I'LL DO IT! WHAT IS IT?

My wife and I were invited by a young couple who were new to the neighborhood to have dinner with them one evening. It turned out to be a pleasant time eating together. Afterwards, while playing a card game, the man asked if we could do them a favor.

Being full of food and tired due to the late hour, I replied, "Glad to help." When I found out what they wanted us to do, I regretted my thoughtless response, but I had committed myself.

He was in the Air Force and was being sent to Guam for three months and could take his wife with him. It would be such a nice trip for her.

Their request was to take care of their house while they were gone for three months. Just make sure everything was okay. Oh, they said they had a dog that would be staying in the backyard and needed to be looked after. And, as a bonus we could use their car if we needed a second car.

I'll spare you all the details, and share a few of the highlights (er, low lights). The deep freezer full of frozen chicken quit working. It took several days for us to clean up the mess (and smell). The dog got out and ran away. Did I mention it was a Great Dane? After several days I located it at the county dog pound. I still have a vivid memory taking the dog home in their car with him in the back seat licking my head and ears. Oh, he later mentioned that lawn care was also needed.

Upon their return we did receive a gift. Two small Japanese dolls in show cases (just what we didn't need).

Two valuable lessons: "What is It?" must be asked first. And "Are you busy?" is a loaded question. My answer needs to be, "What's on your mind?" Finding out what it is first saves a lot of regret.

THE INDEPENDENT SALES PITCH

"It's your life! Don't let others control your life, take charge. Don't let others tell you what to do. Rules, regulations, and morals are the tyrannical taskmasters that make life a chore, if not downright miserable. The confining aspect of such suffocate one's free spirit, taking the fun out of life. It is your right to be free."

It's so appealing, yet so devastating.

Don't buy it!

BE ACCOUNTABLE & RESPONSIBLE

Make wise choices

Exercise sound judgment

Be accountable

Accept responsibility

It's best to "test the waters" of being independent while under the watchful eye of your parents.

I was seventeen years old and I had enough money to buy a new car. The Chevrolet dealership had a 1952 Chevrolet Corvette in stock and I decided to look at it. Before I arrived at the dealership my dad called and told them to not let me buy one. I was able to take a test ride in it, but there was no sale.

INDEPENDENT

Looking back, the ability to manage my own affairs and make my own decisions sounded great. When I reached my teenage years, I began to feel I had matured to the point that I was able to make my own decisions. I soon became aware that being independent meant I would be held accountable and responsible.

ACCOUNTABLE

You, and you alone, are accountable for any and all decisions made by you. You have complete control of what is decided.

RESPONSIBLE

You accept full responsibility for your actions. You do not try to pass the responsibility on to someone else. You do not blame your parents, others, or circumstances. You do not make excuses to justify what you did, The “buck stops with you.”



INDEPENDENT STATUS

You are self reliant. You do not depend on your family, friends, or any group or system. You are not relying on others for support, care, or funds. Yes, that means all of your needs and wants are your responsibility.

It's true, being independent has its allure, but it has its requirements also. You can't have one without the other.

Yes. It's best to “test the waters” of being independent while under the watchful eye of caring adults.

FLEE!

Flee immorality. *Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body,*

1 Corinthians 6:18

*For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But **flee from these things**, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.*

1 Timothy 6:10-11

*Now **flee from youthful lusts** and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

2 Timothy 2:22

Run for Your Life!

It may be the only way of escape.

Second thoughts are often fatal.

To reconsider is evidence of doubt.

A WAY OF ESCAPE

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

Looking back at the times I was tempted to do or say something, I see that there was a way of escape. I could flee, perish the thought, or hold my tongue. It was my decision to make. There was that moment of decision when pangs of conscience, second thoughts, and hesitation, sounded the alarm. What to do? Resist or yield. Once the decision was made there was no way to undo it.

The lure of the forbidden can cause you to ignore the way of escape. The satisfaction that can be enjoyed can blot out any thought of adverse consequences.

I found that resisting temptations strengthened my ability to resist. Yet, I must guard against becoming overconfident. I had to learn the hard lessons that come with yielding. "I knew I shouldn't" are words of regret that produce remorse.



Don't ever think there is no way of escape.

***"I couldn't help it." Really?
You were the very one who could!***

~~~~~  
Communication (the vehicle of transmitting information) can be beneficial, harmful, or harmless.

Words spoken cannot be taken back, They have a life of their own. Tears of regret have been shed because of what was said.

There are so many new ways to communicate with an internet connection. And the ways continue to expand. Use them wisely and carefully.

### **Be Selective**

With the words you hear.

With the words you speak.

With the things you see.

Because you will be affected by it.  
You can't un-hear, un-say, or un-see.

~~~~~

‘SHOULD I HEAR IT?’

In a large workplace there is that daily exchange of ideas and talk about things unrelated to work, especially in the break room. Most of the time what is shared is harmless. But there are times when someone approaches you wanting to share some juicy bit of gossip, tell an off-colored joke, or share some other inappropriate information.

As a Christian how do you shield yourself from hearing such things? You can't control what someone says. But you can control what you hear.

I found a way to keep from hearing such things. When asked, "Have you heard ...?" My reply was, "Should I hear it?" It didn't take long before when asked, "Have you heard?" it was quickly followed by "you probably don't want to hear it."

As time went by I wasn't asked very often, because my response had become well known. Once in awhile when someone wanted to tell me something, they would say, "You probably don't want to hear this."

I was spared hearing the offensive subject matter. And, I gained the respect of most of the other employees and the management team.

Consider Before Hearing

CONTENT

Is it true? Is it hearsay? Is it gossip?

MOTIVE

Why am I being told this?
Will hearing it benefit me?

EXAMPLE

An exercise used to illustrate a principle or method.

Most everyone at one time or another
has asked these questions:

How did mom (dad) do it?

I read the instructions, but I don't understand it.

Would you show me how it's done?

Can you give me an example?

Follow Good Examples

Be a Good Example

*Let no one look down on your youthfulness,
but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity,
show yourself an example of those who believe.*

1 Timothy 4:12

AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE

Her name was Jewel. She was a widow who lived alone. She had experienced numerous health issues (including heart trouble) during her 60+ years. She was only able to be out of bed for about six hours a day. One could easily feel sorry for her, but she wouldn't hear of it. She tended a small garden outside the back door of her apartment. She made quilts on a quilting rack in her front room. (I still have one.) She was always thinking of others. And she made it to church services regularly. I can recall seeing her sitting in the second row with a smile on her face, yet all the while knowing she was suffering.

Her determination, her cheerful disposition, and her genuine love of the Lord were something to behold. Now many years have passed and she is no longer with us, but I continue to draw strength from her example.

I'm sure there are those who have impacted your life in a positive way. Be grateful for what they have done. And be thoughtful of how you may affect the lives of those coming along after you.

Be inspired by other's examples. But don't let it stop there. Be an inspiration to others. Don't discount the impact you may have on those you encounter daily.

There have been several occasions where I have learned that what I said or did years ago had made a lasting impression on someone.

**One can fail by not trying as well as trying.
But one can only succeed by trying.**

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It's said that often the individual is unaware of his or her potential. A look at history reveals that many achieved success in their endeavors because of the encouragement given by friends who believed in them.

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The Apostle Paul saw potential in Timothy and chose him to accompany him in his work. And for many years Timothy was a great help to Paul.

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.

Acts 16:1-2

A LIFE CHANGING QUESTION

It was years ago on a Sunday morning when I was in my mid 20s. I can vividly recall the incident. I was a fill-in speaker for the morning worship. Afterwards, one of the elders came up to me and asked, "Have you thought about becoming a preacher?" It caught me off guard and I said, "Not really." But it caused me to think about what he asked. Did he see something in me that I didn't?

I had presented sermons from time to time on a fill-in basis when a church in the area was faced with a last minute replacement. (I had become known as one who could be available on short notice.) But this would be life changing. Quitting a well-paying job with a wife and three children was a major decision. After much thought and prayer and discussing this with my wife, I made a decision. And the rest is history.

MY QUESTION TO YOU

When someone you trust asks you the question "Have you thought about ...?" That person may be able to see what you don't see. They are looking out for you and trying to help. Maybe there is something you need to do or not do. Consider the question and give it much thought. It just may be a life altering moment.

Don't let modesty or humility cause you to dismiss what you cannot see. Your vision of yourself is limited by your perception.

A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.

Proverbs 1:5

Change Happens!

The one thing that will happen, and continue to happen, is change. Sometimes it is what we change and sometimes what changes is beyond our control.

Dealing With Change

Change can be good, bad, or of little consequence. But every change requires us to adapt. Refusing to accept change doesn't keep it from happening. Change tests our ability to adjust.

Accept change as part of living.

Carpe Diem

Seize the day with thought for tomorrow.

Make the most of the present moment.

Change things today for a better tomorrow.

Change for the better.

CHANGE

To become different or undergo alteration.

The other day I decided to go online and use Google maps to look at the town where I grew up. I expected there would be changes after seventy years, but I was not prepared to see what it looked like now. The satellite view startled me. The main part of downtown was completely different. Gone were the stores, movie theaters, banks, grocery stores, and the places where my dad worked. Every school I had attended had been torn down, except the high school (all new buildings). In the street view I saw nothing familiar, everything was changed.

“Time marches on!” It’s so true. Things change. Circumstances are forever changing. Every living thing is in the process of change. Sometimes change is for the better. Some times it isn’t.

Change happens is a fact that cannot be ignored. Most of the time I have little or no control over it. But there is one matter over which I have control. How I handle change. I have full control of my thoughts and my actions in dealing with change. I could become discouraged, bitter, resentful, but that would only make things worse. Or, I can embrace change and accept it and make the best of my present circumstances.

It’s good to embrace every day as a gift from God, and make it the best you can. As yesterday actions impact today, what I do today will have an affect on tomorrow.

FRIEND

A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts.

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*True and lasting friendships are based on a mutual admiration of inward qualities.*

*Friendship is a relationship wherein people overlook each others imperfections.*

*True friends are always trustworthy.*

*True friends are supportive and available during difficult times as well as pleasant ones.*

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## FRIENDSHIPS

Looking back over the years, I find myself reflecting on some of the mysteries of life. One mystery in particular is friendship. Sometimes after meeting what seems to be a congenial person, one with which I would like to establish a close relationship, I put forth the effort to establish a friendship. But over time nothing develops. We know each other but never become more than acquaintances. This has caused me to ask the question, “Why?”

Looking back on such attempts, I have come to realize that true friendships just happen. They are not planned, nor are they the result of my efforts. True and lasting friendships seem to be based on a mutual admiration of inward qualities, which are not easily discernable early on.

Over time a friendship grows and thrives despite hardships, separation, or other circumstances. Outward appearance is not part of the equation. Friends look past the “cover” and see the “content.” They admire the person inside, not the body that houses the soul.

I am thankful for the friendships that have developed over the years— and continue to develop. I am thankful there are those who saw something in me that they considered worthy of friendship. Blessed is the person who has true friends, even if they are only a handful.

Friendships just happen. That’s the only way I can explain it! Thank God for friendships that last for years, decades, even a lifetime.

## JUST THINKIN’

### REMEMBERING

Memory is like a file cabinet with four drawers. Each person is given one at birth to store memories. At first it’s easy to store and retrieve the few things in the top drawer. As the years go by, the second, then the third, and finally the fourth drawer become quite full. No problem. It’s all neatly filed away, or at least it was. In the constant retrieving and returning the memorized bits of information, some are put back in a different place. And finally, there is not much you can retrieve without searching through all the drawers.

Hence the saying, “I know it’s in there, but I just can’t put my fingers on it.”

### TIME AND DISTANCE

I used to think my parents were rather odd when they couldn’t remember in what decade something happened: “Was it the 20s, 30s, or 40s?” Being a little older and wiser, I now understand. Let me explain. Visualize this: A country road with power poles along side. The poles nearest you seem far apart and you can tell one from another. But the farther away they are, the closer together they seem. At a great distance they appear to touch one another. You could easily tell which nearby pole had a cow next to it. But if there was a cow down the road: Is it near the 10th, 15th, or maybe the 20th pole? It’s hard to tell!

*Don’t laugh. In time you’ll understand.*

*Ron Adams*