

Think Abouts 03

Condensed and annotated  
by  
Jackson Koller

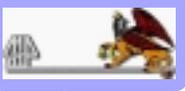


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### Introduction

Welcome to this collection, one of several in a series. . .

Mostly about life, and living, but some on Nursing, Religion, etc., no jokes here though. These again are mostly from the email circuit, passed around until their origins are lost in the paperless trail!

I hope that they may cause you to pause and consider them as they did for me.

If I feel strongly enough about any essay my comments will follow it!

In thoughts we live,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackson Koller".



## 16 life lessons

1. You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight-savings time.
2. You should never say anything to a woman that even remotely suggests you think she's pregnant unless you can see an actual baby emerging from her at that moment.
3. The most powerful force in the universe is gossip.
4. The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, we ALL believe that we are above-average drivers.
5. There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your birthday. That time is age 11.
6. There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."
7. People who want to share their religious views with you almost never want you to share yours with them.
8. If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be "meetings."
9. The main accomplishment of almost all organized protests is to annoy people who are not in them.
10. If there really is a God who created the entire universe with all of its glories, and He decides to deliver a message to humanity, He WILL NOT use, as His messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairstyle.
11. You should not confuse your career with your life.
12. A person who is nice to you, but rude to the waiter, is not a nice person.
13. No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.
14. When trouble arises and things look bad, there is always one individual who perceives a solution and is willing to take command. Very often, that individual is crazy.
15. Your friends love you, anyway.
16. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.

Alright, these were kind of borderline between jokes and think abouts! But, in all jokes there is a bit of life embedded! Do you KNOW why we laugh? Deep, belly-rolling laughter? One theory was to ease the pain (of another, so that they could laugh off the stupid thing that just happened)! Think about it, clowns falling down, slapstick humor (pretty rough and violent at times), etc.

Regardless, of why, there is no better medicine than laughter and good cheer!

Each one of these could be taken apart minutely, but, we won't. Just read them and get your own opinions of what they mean to you. . .



## A child's wish list

### CHRISTMAS LETTER

Snowflakes softly falling  
Upon your window they play  
Your blankets snug around you,  
Into sleep you drift away.

I bend to gently kiss you,  
when I see that on the floor  
there's a letter, neatly written  
I wonder who it's for.

I quietly unfold it  
making sure you're still asleep,  
It's a Christmas list for Santa  
one my heart will always keep.

It started just as always  
with the toys seen on TV,  
A new watch for your father  
and a winter coat for me.

But as my eyes read on  
I could see that deep inside  
there were many things you wished for  
that your loving heart would hide.

You asked if your friend Molly  
could have another Dad;  
It seems her father hits her  
and it makes you very sad.

Then you asked dear Santa  
if the neighbors down the street  
Could find a job, that he might have  
some food, and clothes, and heat.

You saw a family on the news  
whose house had blown away,  
"Dear Santa, send them just one thing,  
a place where they can stay."

"And Santa, those four cookies that  
I left you for a treat,  
Could you take them to the children  
who have nothing else to eat."



“Do you know that little bear I have  
the one I love so dear?  
I’m leaving it for you to take  
to Africa this year”.

“And as you fly your reindeer  
on this night of Jesus’ birth,  
Could your magic bring to everyone  
goodwill and peace on earth”.

“There’s one last thing before you go,  
so grateful I would be,  
If you’d smile at Baby Jesus  
in the manger by our tree.”

I pulled the letter close to me  
I felt it melt my heart.  
Those tiny hands had written  
what no other could impart.

“And a little child shall lead them,”  
was whispered in my ear  
As I watched you sleep on Christmas Eve  
while Santa Claus was here.  
(author unknown)

**Just very sweet, and where do we lose that childhood innocence?**

### A message from my brother in Oz

Sometimes I really need a kick in the pants to remember things like this. I hope this will make you feel as empowered as it made me realize I am. I hope you choose to have a great day...

Michael is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, “If I were any better, I would be twins!”

He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day, Michael was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Michael and asked him, “I don’t get it! You can’t be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it?”

Michael replied, “Each morning I wake up and say to myself, Mike, you have two choices today. You can choose to be in a good mood or you can choose to be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood.

Each time something bad happens, I can choose to be a victim or I can choose



to learn from it. I choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or I can point out the positive side of life. I choose the positive side of life.”

“Yeah, right, it’s not that easy,” I protested.

“Yes, it is,” Michael, said, “Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people will affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood. The bottom line: It’s your choice how you live life.”

I reflected on what Michael said. Soon thereafter, I left the Tower Industry to start my own business. We lost touch, but I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it.

Several years later, I heard that Michael was involved in a serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Michael was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back. I saw Michael about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied.

“If I were any better, I’d be a twin. Wanna see my scars?”

I declined to see his wounds, but did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place.

“The first thing that went through my mind was the well-being of my soon to be born daughter.” Michael replied. “Then, as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or I could choose to die. I chose to live.”

“Weren’t you scared? Did you lose consciousness?” I asked.

Michael continued, “...the paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read ‘he’s a dead man.’ I knew I needed to take action.”

“What did you do?” I asked.

“Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me,” said Michael. “She asked if I was allergic to anything. ‘Yes,’ I replied.

The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, ‘Gravity.’ Over their laughter, I told them, ‘I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead’.”

Michael lived, thanks to the skill of his doctors, but also because of his amazing attitude. I learned from him that every day we have the choice to live fully.

Attitude, after all, is everything.

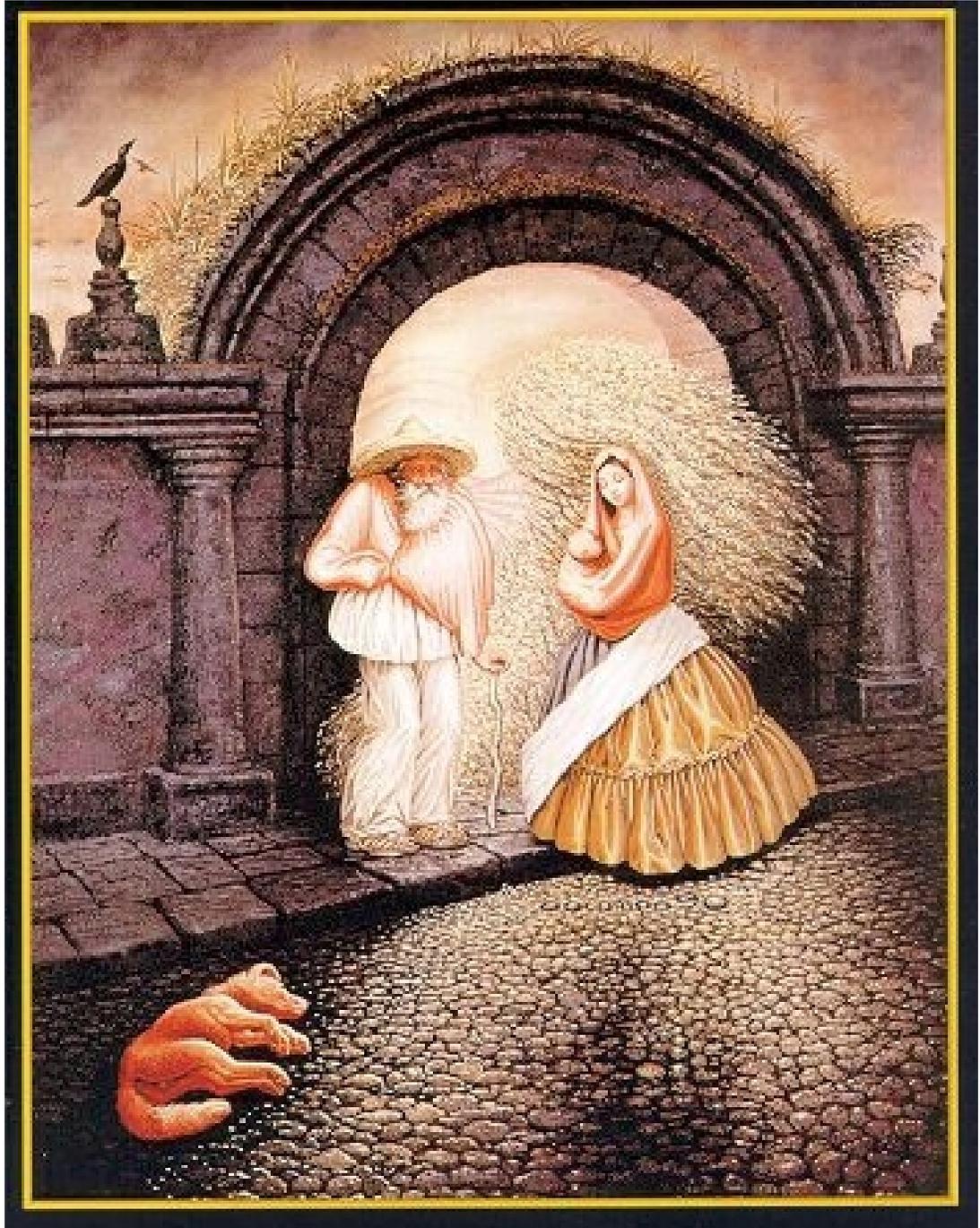
“IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO BE WHO YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN.” George Eliot

There is another one that sounds pretty much the same, except Michael gets shot in that story. Basically, goes back to ‘if ya can laugh about it, you can reduce the seriousness of the situation!’

Laughter aside, life is full of choices, many beyond our control, but, the biggest choice that most forget about is the choice to be what they are. To live life fully by choosing to be alive, not just living. . .



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Nine people?

Just for fun, there are nine (9) people in this picture. Actually, I found eleven (11), so see how you do!



### A note of encouragement!!!!

#### **Keep Your Fork**

There was a woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things “in order”, she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

The woman also requested to be buried with her favorite Bible. Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. “There’s one more thing,” she said excitedly.

“What’s that?” came the pastor’s reply. “This is very important,” the woman continued. “I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.”

The pastor stood looking at the woman, not knowing quite what to say.

“That surprises you, doesn’t it?” the woman asked.

“Well, to be honest, I’m puzzled by the request,” said the pastor.

The woman explained. “In all my years of attending church socials and pot-luck dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, ‘Keep your fork’. It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming...like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie.

Something wonderful, and with substance! So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder “What’s with the fork?” Then I want you to tell them: “Keep your fork....the best is yet to come” The pastor’s eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged the woman good-bye. He knew this would be one of the last times he would see her before her death. But he also knew that the woman had a better grasp of heaven than he did. She KNEW that something better was coming.

At the funeral people were walking by the woman’s casket and they saw the pretty dress she was wearing and her favorite Bible and the fork placed in her right hand. Over and over, the pastor heard the question “What’s with the fork?” And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her. The pastor told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either. He was right.

So the next time you reach down for your fork, let it remind you oh so gently, that the best is yet to come.

Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.



## True Wonder

The true wonder of the world is available everywhere, in the minutest parts of our bodies, in the vast expanses of the cosmos, and in the interconnectedness of these and all things —Michael Stark

### Couple of mini-notes (thoughts to ponder):

1) there was as much money spent on cosmetics in the U.S. as NASA spent to land the first man on the moon in the same time period!

2) you know that hemp is illegal? Well, our Declaration of Independence is written on hemp paper? ? ?

### Coincidentally:

I'm into noting coincidences when they occur, points to a greater force in the universe, that chaos does resolve into order:

We went for our 2nd anniversary on the 20th, and guess what the only check I had with me number was? Yep: 2000!

### Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain & bitter; for always there will be greater & lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.

Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue & loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, & whatever your labors & aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with you soul.

With all its sham, drudgery & broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.

{Found in Old Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore; dated 1692}

Tidbits

“You cannot belong to anyone else, until you belong to yourself.” —Pearl Bailey

“Fortune favors the brave.” —Proverb

“It is never too late to give up your prejudices.” —Henry David Thoreau

Maintain a healthy skepticism when you invest:

“The safest way to double your money is to fold it over once and put it in your pocket.” —Frank M. Hubbard

“Never invest you money in anything that eats or needs repairing.” —Billy Rose

“If stock market experts were so expert, they would be buying stock, not selling advice.” —Norman Augustine

**EVERY day is special, there will never be another one like it. Quit squandering them and your life, live fully. Along the way you'll find you enjoy it as well. . .**

A Friend...

- (A)cccepts you as you are
- (B)elieves in “you”
- (C)alls you just to say “Hi”
- (D)oesn’t give up on you
- (E)nvisions the whole of you (even the unfinished parts)
- (F)orgives your mistakes
- (G)ives unconditionally
- (H)elps you
- (I)nvites you over
- (J)ust wants to “be” with you
- (K)eeps you close at heart
- (L)oves you for who you are
- (M)akes a difference in your life
- (N)ever judges
- (O)ffers support
- (P)icks you up
- (Q)uiets your fears
- (R)aises your spirits
- (S)ays nice things about you
- (T)ells you the truth when you need to hear it
- (U)nderstands you
- (V)alues you
- (W)alks beside you
- (X)-plains things you don’t understand
- (Y)ells when you won’t listen, and
- (Z)aps you back to reality

RUDY'S ANGEL...

I walked into the grocery store not particularly interested in buying groceries. I wasn't hungry. The pain of losing my husband of 37 years was still too raw. And this grocery store held so many sweet memories.

Rudy often came with me and almost every time he'd pretend to go off and look for something special. I knew what he was up to. I'd always spot him walking down the aisle with the three yellow roses in his hands. Rudy knew I loved yellow roses.

With a heart filled with grief, I only wanted to buy my few items and leave, but even grocery shopping was different since Rudy had passed on. Shopping for one took time, a little more thought than it had for two.

Standing by the meat, I searched for the perfect small steak and remembered how Rudy had loved his steak.

Suddenly a woman came beside me. She was blond, slim and lovely in a soft green pantsuit. I watched as she picked up a large pack of T-bones, dropped them in her basket, hesitated, and then put them back.

She turned to go and once again reached for the pack of steaks.

She saw me watching her and she smiled.

"My husband loves T-bones, but honestly, at these prices, I don't know." I swallowed the emotion down my throat and met her pale blue eyes. "My husband passed away eight days ago," I told her. Glancing at the package in her hands, I fought to control the tremble in my voice. "Buy him the steaks. And cherish every moment you have together."

She shook her head and I saw the emotion in her eyes as she placed the package in her basket and wheeled away. I turned and pushed my cart across the length of the store to the dairy products. There I stood, trying to decide which size milk I should buy. A quart, I finally decided and moved on to the ice cream section near the front of the store. If nothing else, I could always fix myself an ice cream cone.

I placed the ice cream in my cart and looked down the aisle toward the front.

I saw first the green suit, then recognized the pretty lady coming towards me. In her arms she carried a package. On her face was the brightest smile I had ever seen. I would swear a soft halo encircled her blond hair as she kept walking toward me, her eyes holding mine. As she came closer, I saw what she held and tears began misting in my eyes.

"These are for you," she said and placed three beautiful long stemmed yellow roses in my arms. "When you go through the line, they will know these are paid for." She leaned over and placed a gentle kiss on my cheek, then smiled again.

I wanted to tell her what she'd done, what the roses meant, but still unable to speak, I watched as she walked away as tears clouded my vision. I looked down at the beautiful roses nestled in the green tissue wrapping and found it almost unreal. How did she know?

Suddenly the answer seemed so clear. I wasn't alone. "Oh, Rudy, you haven't forgotten me, have you?" I whispered, with tears in my eyes.

He was still with me, and she was his angel.





The point of these stories is to impart an idea, a hope!  
They are vehicles to inspire, whether or not you believe in angels, spirits, mystical happenings or miracles, or even if the stories are real or conjured, is beside the point!

Read them for the messages behind them, for the beliefs and hopes that are so difficult to express in any other way. . .

**Everyday be thankful for what you have and who you are.**

**Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings, thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.**

**Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible, thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.**

**Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising, thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.**

**Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned and tempers are short, my children are so loud, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.**

**Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced, thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.**

**Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.**

**Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest, thank you, Lord, for life!**

**Be thankful for what you have, not what you wish for.  
Enjoy and cherish your time today together, time is all too short as it is!  
What you could have enjoyed today may be lost tomorrow. . .**

**Don't talk: act!**

**“Don't talk about what you have done or what you are going to do—do it and let it speak for itself.” —Martin Vanbee**

**“Action is the foundational key to all success.” —Tony Robbins**

**“Leadership is action, not position.” —Donald H. McGannon**



## Under His Wings

An article in National Geographic several years ago provided a penetrating picture of God's wings...

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree.

Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick.

When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise.

She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies.

When the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, so that those under the cover of her wings would live...

"He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge;..." (Psalm 91:4)

Being loved this much should make a difference in your life.

Remember the One who loves you and then, be different because of it.

"Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."

**Their is nothing so strong as a parents love for their child(ren). . .**

### Boxes

I have in my hands two boxes, which God gave me to hold.

He said, "Put all your sorrows in the black,  
And all your joys in the gold."

I heeded His words, and in the two boxes both my joys and sorrows I stored.  
But though the gold became heavier each day the black was as light as before.

With curiosity, I opened the black box. I wanted to find out why.  
And I saw, in the base of the box, a hole by which my sorrows had fallen out.

I showed the hole to God, and mused aloud,  
"I wonder where my sorrows could be."  
He smiled a gentle smile at me."  
"My child, they're all here with me."

I asked, "God, why give me the boxes, Why the gold, and the black with the hole?"



**“My child, the gold is for you to count your blessings, The black is for you to let go.”**

**One of the hardest tasks in life, letting go of the extra baggage we all carry around, day-to-day. . .**

### Boy

**FROM THE MOUTHS AND HEARTS OF BABES WE ARE REMINDED OF MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT BE PUT OFF...**

**A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated, to find his 5 year old son waiting for him at the door.**

**“Daddy, may I ask you a question?”**

**“Yeah, sure, what is it?” replied the man.**

**“Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?”**

**“That’s none of your business! What makes you ask such a thing?” the man said angrily.**

**“I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?” pleaded the little boy.**

**“If you must know, I make \$20.00 an hour.”**

**“Oh,” the little boy replied, head bowed.**

**Looking up, he said, “Daddy, may I borrow \$9.00 please?”**

**The father was furious. “If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is just so you can borrow some to buy a silly toy or some other nonsense, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you’re being so selfish. I work long, hard hours everyday and don’t have time for such childish games.”**

**The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The man sat down and started to get even madder about the little boy’s questioning.**

**How dare he ask such questions only to get some money.**

**After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think he may have been a little hard on his son. Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that \$9.00 and he really didn’t ask for money very often.**

**The man went to the door of the little boy’s room and opened the door.**

**“Are you asleep son?” he asked.**

**“No daddy, I’m awake,” replied the boy.**

**“I’ve been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier,” said the man.**

**“It’s been long day and I took my aggravation out on you. Here’s that \$9.00 you asked for.”**

**The little boy sat straight up, beaming.**

**“Oh, thank you daddy!” he yelled.**

**Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some more crumpled up bills. The man, seeing that the boy already had money, started to get angry again.**

**The little boy slowly counted out his money, and then looked up at the man.**

**“Why did you want more money if you already had some?” the father grumbled.**

**“Because I didn’t have enough, but now I do,” the little boy replied.**



**“Daddy, I have \$20.00 now. Can I buy an hour of your time?”**

**When you go home tonight take that hour to spend some time to those you gave life to, or someone who’s feeling neglected, if they don’t live with you take 15 minutes to call them. Try to do something they’d like to do, even if you’re tired. You can give your employer 8 - 12 hours a day and still be frustrated, can’t you find a lil time to make someone you love smile just for no reason at all?**

**Whoa, chooker! When we listen to children, are we listening with their hearts or our adult ears attuned to adult preconceived needs and wants?**

### **Class of 2004**

**Just in case you weren’t feeling too old today, this will certainly change things.**

**Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the mindset of that years incoming freshmen.**

**Here is this year’s list:**

**The people who are starting college this fall across the nation were born in 1982.**

**They have no meaningful recollection of the Reagan Era and probably did not know he had ever been shot.**

**They were prepubescent when the Persian Gulf War was waged.**

**Black Monday 1987 is as significant to them as the Great Depression.**

**There has been only one Pope.**

**They were 11 when the Soviet Union broke apart and do not remember the Cold War.**

**They have never feared a nuclear war.**

**They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.**

**Tianamen Square means nothing to them.**

**Their lifetime has always included AIDS.**

**Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic.**

**Atari predates them, as do vinyl albums.**

**The expression “you sound like a broken record” means nothing to them.**

**They have never owned a record player.**

**They have likely never played Pac Man and have never heard of Pong.**

**They may have never heard of an 8 track.**

**The Compact Disc was introduced when they were 1 year old.**

**As far as they know, stamps have always cost about 33 cents.**

**They have always had an answering machine.**

**Most have never seen a TV set with only 13 channels, nor have they seen a black and white TV.**

**They have always had cable TV**

**There has always been VCRs, but they have no idea what BETA is.**

**They cannot fathom not having a remote control.**

**They were born the year that the Walkman was introduced by Sony.**

**Roller-skating has always meant in-line for them.**



Jay Leno has always been on the Tonight Show.  
 They have no idea when or why Jordache jeans were cool.  
 Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.  
 They have never seen Larry Bird play.  
 They never took a swim and thought about Jaws.  
 The Vietnam War is as ancient history to them as W.W.I, W.W.II and the Civil War.  
 They have no idea that Americans were ever held hostage in Iran.  
 They can't imagine what hard contact lenses are.  
 They don't know who Mork was or where he was from.  
 They never heard: Where's the beef?, I'd walk a mile for a Camel, or "de plane, de plane".  
 They do not care who shot J.R. and have no idea who J.R. is.  
 The Titanic was found? They thought we always knew where it was.  
 Michael Jackson has always been white.  
 Kansas, Chicago, Boston, America, and Alabama are places, not groups.  
 McDonalds never came in Styrofoam containers.  
 There has always been MTV.  
 They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter.  
 Do you feel old yet? Pass this on to the other old fogies.

**OLD? Naw, just getting started! There is a video that I have where an instructor talks about how the attitudes and beliefs are formed based on what was going on when you were in your formative years. Points out why the 'generation gap' is so real and hard to bridge! I still call my CD's, "albums!"**

### Count

Count your garden by the flowers,  
 Never by the leaves that fall.  
 Count your days by golden hours,  
 Don't recall the clouds at all.

Count your nights by stars not shadows,  
 Count your life by smiles, not tears,  
 And with joy and love in your heart,  
 Count your age by friends not years.

### Deep thoughts

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote:  
 Many people will walk in and out of your life  
 But only true friends will leave footprints in your heart  
 To handle yourself, use your head  
 To handle others, use your heart.

Anger is only one letter short of danger



If someone betrays you once, it is his fault  
If he betrays you twice, it is your fault.

Great minds discuss ideas  
Average minds discuss events  
Small minds discuss people

He who loses money, loses much  
He who loses a friend, loses much more  
He who loses faith, loses all

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature  
But beautiful old people are works of art

Learn from the mistakes of others  
You can't live long enough to make them all yourself

**REMEMBER THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!**

#### The Dime:

Bobby was getting cold sitting out in his back yard in the snow. Bobby didn't wear boots; he didn't like them and anyway he didn't own any.

The thin sneakers he wore had a few holes in them and they did a poor job of keeping out the cold.

Bobby had been in his backyard for about an hour already. And, try as he might, he could not come up with an idea for his mother's Christmas gift. He shook his head as he thought, "This is useless, even if I do come up with an idea, I don't have any money to spend."

Ever since his father had passed away three years ago, the family of five had struggled. It wasn't because his mother didn't care, or try, there just never seemed to be enough. She worked nights at the hospital, but the small wage that she was earning could only be stretched so far. What the family lacked in money and material things, they more than made up for in love and family unity.

Bobby had two older and one younger sister, who ran the household in their mother's absence. Three of his sisters had already made beautiful gifts for their mother. Somehow it just wasn't fair. Here it was Christmas Eve already, and he had nothing. Wiping a tear from his eye, Bobby kicked the snow and started to walk down to the street where the shops and stores were.

It wasn't easy being six without a father, especially when he needed a man to talk to. Bobby walked from shop to shop, looking into each decorated window. Everything seemed so beautiful and so out of reach. It was starting to get dark and Bobby reluctantly turned to walk home when suddenly his eyes caught the glimmer of the setting sun's rays reflecting off of something along the curb. He reached down and discovered a shiny dime. Never before has anyone felt so wealthy as Bobby felt at that moment.

As he held his newfound treasure, warmth spread throughout his entire body and he walked into the first store he saw. His excitement quickly turned cold



when the salesperson told him that he couldn't buy anything with only a dime. He noticed a flower shop and went inside to wait in line.

When the shop owner asked if he could help him, Bobby presented the dime and asked if he could buy one flower for his mother's Christmas gift.

The shop owner looked at Bobby and his ten-cent offering. Then he put his hand on Bobby's shoulder and said to him, "You just wait here and I'll see what I can do for you." As Bobby waited he looked at the beautiful flowers and even though he was a boy, he could see why mothers and girls liked flowers. The sound of the door closing as the last customer left, jolted Bobby back to reality. All alone in the shop, Bobby began to feel alone and afraid. Suddenly the shop owner came out and moved to the counter. There, before Bobby's eyes, lay twelve long stem, red roses, with leaves of green and tiny white flowers all tied together with a big silver bow. Bobby's heart sank as the owner picked them up and placed them neatly into a long white box. "That will be ten cents young man." the shop owner said reaching out his hand for the dime.

Slowly, Bobby moved his hand to give the man his dime. Could this be true? No one else would give him a thing for his dime!

Sensing the boy's reluctance, the shop owner added, "I just happened to have some roses on sale for ten cents a dozen. Would you like them?"

This time Bobby did not hesitate, and when the man placed the long box into his hands, he knew it was true. Walking out the door that the owner was holding open for Bobby, he heard the shop keeper say, "Merry Christmas, son."

As he returned inside, the shopkeeper's wife walked out. "Who were you talking to back there and where are the roses you were fixing?"

Staring out the window, and blinking the tears from his own eyes, he replied, "A strange thing happened to me this morning. While I was setting up things to open the shop, I thought I heard a voice telling me to set aside a dozen of my best roses for a special gift. I wasn't sure at the time whether I had lost my mind or what, but I set them aside anyway. Then just a few minutes ago, a little boy came into the shop and wanted to buy a flower for his mother with one small dime. When I looked at him, I saw myself, many years ago. I too, was a poor boy with nothing to buy my mother a Christmas gift. A bearded man, whom I never knew, stopped me on the street and told me that he wanted to give me ten dollars. When I saw that little boy tonight, I knew who that voice was, and I put together a dozen of my very best roses."

The shop owner and his wife hugged each other tightly, and as they stepped out into the bitter cold air, they somehow didn't feel the cold at all.

May this story instill the spirit of CHRISTmas in you enough to pass this act along?

Have a Joyous and Peace-filled season.

**Exemplifies the spirit of the season. Give when and where your giving will do the most good, give willingly and whole heartedly. The returns are always worth more than what is given. . .**



Subject: English Language

No wonder the English language is so very difficult to learn:

We polish the Polish furniture.

He could lead if he would get the lead out.

A farm can produce produce.

The dump was so full it had to refuse refuse.

The soldier decided to desert in the desert.

The present is a good time to present the present.

At the Army base, a bass was painted on the head of a bass drum.

The dove dove into the bushes.

I did not object to the object.

The insurance for the invalid was invalid.

The bandage was wound around the wound.

There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.

They were too close to the door to close it.

The buck does funny things when the does are present.

They sent a sewer down to stitch the tear in the sewer line.

To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.

The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

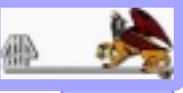
After a number of Novocain injections, my jaw got number.

I shed a tear when I saw the tear in my clothes.

I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.

How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

I spent last evening evening out a pile of dirt.



Forget

Sondra Sloan wrote: A GREAT QUOTE

“It takes a minute to have a crush on someone, an hour to like someone and a day to love someone - but it takes a lifetime to forget someone.”

FRIENDSHIP

This is a test...of the emergency friendship system

A friend....

Accepts you as you are

Believes in “you”

Calls you just to say “HI”

Doesn't give up on you

Envisions the whole of you even the unfinished parts

Forgives your mistakes

Gives unconditionally

Helps you

Invites you over

Just “be” with you

Keeps you close at heart

Loves you for who you are

Makes a difference in your life

Never judges

Offers support

Picks you up

Quiets your fears

Raises your spirits

Says nice things about you

Tells you the truth when you need to hear it

Understands you

Values you

Walks beside you

Explains things you don't understand

Zaps you back to reality

“Flexible people don't get bent out of shape”



### Funny, Isn't It?

**Funny how a \$100 “looks” so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the mall.**

**Funny how long it takes to serve God for an hour, but how quickly a team plays 60 minutes of basketball.**

**Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church are, but how short they are when watching a movie.**

**Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray, but don't have difficulty thinking of things to talk about to a friend.**

**Funny how we get thrilled when a baseball game goes into extra innings, but we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.**

**Funny how hard it is to read a chapter in the Bible, but how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best selling novel.**

**Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but, scramble to get a back seat at church services.**

**Funny how we need 2 or 3 weeks advance notice to fit a church event into our schedule, but can adjust our schedule for other events at the last moment.**

**Funny how hard it is for people to learn a simple gospel well enough to tell others, but how simple it is for the same people to understand and repeat gossip.**

**Funny how we believe what the newspaper say, but question what the Bible says.**

**Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, or think, or say, or do anything.**

**Funny how you can send a thousand ‘jokes’ through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.**

**Yes, funny, isn't it?**



## GOD'S VOICE MAIL.....

We have all learned to live with "voice mail" as a necessary part of modern life. But have you wondered, "What if God decided to install voice mail?"

Imagine praying and hearing this:

Thank you for calling My Father's House. Please select one of the following options:

Press 1 for Requests  
 Press 2 for Thanksgiving  
 Press 3 for Complaints  
 Press 4 for All Other Inquires.

What if God used the familiar excuse... "I'm sorry, all of our angels are busy helping other sinners right now. However, your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received, so please...stay on the line"

Can you imagine getting these kinds of responses as you call God in Prayer:  
 If you would like to speak to:

Gabriel, Press 1  
 For Michael, Press 2  
 For a directory of other Angels, Press 3  
 If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm please press 4.  
 To find out if a loved one has been assigned to Heaven, Press 5,  
 enter his or her Social Security number, then press the pound key.  
 (If you get a negative response, try area code 666.)

For reservations at "My Father's House" please enter J-O-H-N followed by 3-1-6.

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive here.

Our computers show that you have already prayed once today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.

This office is closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday.  
 Please pray again Monday after 9:30 AM.

If you need emergency assistance when this office is closed, contact your local pastor.

**THANK GOD, HE DOESN'T HAVE VOICE MAIL AND HE LISTENS WHEN WE PRAY!  
 AMEN!**



### Granny, wake up!

The rain came pelting down, for days and days it poured. And her neighbors came by in a 4x4 and said to the little old Granny, “Best you flee to high ground!”

“No,” she says. “I have faith. God will take care of me. The Lord will provide.”

And the rains continued. Her pigs were swept away and her cow was treading water in the barn. Up the flooded road comes a boat. The driver stops by her porch and shouts, “Granny! The place’s flooding! You must leave!”

“No,” she says. “I have faith. God will take care of me. The Lord will provide.”

The waters continue to rise, and she’s forced to retreat to the rooftop with her chickens. A helicopter swoops down to hover just above her and its pilot says, “Gran, we’re here to save you, get in!”

Again, she says. “No. I have faith. God will take care of me. The Lord will provide.”

But, the waters kept rising and Granny drowned. She goes up to Heaven and the Lord’s waiting there to meet her and, boy is she mad! She gets right in the Lord’s face and shouts, “How could you, Lord?! The one time I ask you for help - and you’re not there!”

The Lord looks at her and He’s sorely puzzled.

“Granny, how can you say I didn’t provide? I sent you a 4x4, a boat and a helicopter!”

Blessings are all about you: you just have to look!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Our ‘gifts’ come in many shapes and forms. Sometimes we just have to look harder to see what is before us!

I find one thing that most people find hard to believe is that ‘NO!’ is a valid answer to the prayers we offer! When we don’t get what we want, we forget the bigger picture that it may not be what we NEED at that time in our lives.

Not ‘getting’ something may be the ‘right’ answer to our needs. . .



“The Handwriting On The Wall”

A weary mother returned from the store,  
Lugging groceries through the kitchen door.  
Awaiting her arrival was her 8 year old son,  
Anxious to relate what his younger brother had done.

“While I was out playing and Dad was on a call,  
T.J. took his crayons and wrote on the wall!  
It’s on the new paper you just hung in the den.  
I told him you’d be mad at having to do it again.”

She let out a moan and furrowed her brow,  
“Where is your little brother right now?”  
She emptied her arms and with a purposeful stride,  
She marched to his closet where he had gone to hide.

She called his full name as she entered his room.  
He trembled with fear — he knew that meant doom!  
For the next ten minutes, she ranted and raved  
About the expensive wallpaper, and how she had saved.

Lamenting all the work it would take to repair,  
She condemned his actions and total lack of care.  
The more she scolded, the madder she got,  
Then stomped from his room, totally distraught!

She headed for the den to confirm her fears.  
When she saw the wall, her eyes flooded with tears.  
The message she read pierced her soul with a dart.  
It said, “I love Mommy,” surrounded by a heart.

Well, the wallpaper remained, just as she found it,  
With an empty picture frame hung to surround it.  
A reminder to her, and indeed to all,  
Take time to read the handwriting on the wall.

God’s interview.

I dreamed I had an interview with God.

“Come in,” God said. “So, you would like to interview Me?”

“If you have the time,” I said.

God smiled and said: “My time is eternity and is enough to do everything;  
what questions do you have in mind to ask me?”



**“What surprises you most about mankind?”**

**God answered: “That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up, and then long to be children again. That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health. That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future. That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived...”**

**God’s hands took mine and we were silent for while and then I asked... “As a parent, what are some of life’s lessons you want your children to learn?”**

**God replied with a smile: “To learn that they cannot make anyone love them. What they can do is to let themselves be loved. To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but whom they have in their lives. To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others. All will be judged individually on their own merits, not as a group on a comparison basis! To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but is one who needs the least. To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and that it takes many years to heal them. To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness. To learn that there are persons that love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or show their feelings. To learn that money can buy everything but happiness. To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it totally different. To learn that a true friend is someone who knows everything about them...and likes them anyway. To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they have to forgive themselves.”**

**I sat there for a while enjoying the moment. I thanked Him for his time and for all that He has done for my family, and me. He replied, “Anytime. I’m here 24 hours a day. All you have to do is ask for me, and I’ll answer.”**

**People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.**

**Amen!**

### Last Time

**If I knew it would be the last time that I’d see you fall asleep,  
I would tuck you in more tightly and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.  
If I knew it would be the last time that I see you walk out the door,  
I would give you a hug and kiss and call you back for one more.**

**If I knew it would be the last time, I could spare an extra minute or two to stop and say “I love you,” instead of assuming, you would KNOW I do.  
If I knew it would be the last time I would be there to share your day... well I’m sure you’ll have so many more, so I can let just this one slip away.**

**For surely there’s always tomorrow to make up for an oversight,**



and we always get a second chance to make everything right.  
There will always be another day to say our “I love you’s”,  
And certainly there’s another chance to say our “Anything I can do’s?”

But just in case I might be wrong, and today is all I get,  
I’d like to say how much I love you and I hope we never forget,  
Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike,  
And today may be the last chance you get to hold your loved one tight..

So if you’re waiting for tomorrow, why not do it today?  
For if tomorrow never comes, you’ll surely regret the day,  
That you didn’t take that extra time for a smile, a hug, or a kiss, and you  
were too busy to grant someone, what turned out to be their one last wish.

So hold your loved ones close today, whisper in their ear,  
Tell them how much you love them and that you’ll always hold them dear.  
Take time to say “I’m sorry,” “please forgive me,” “thank you” or “it’s okay”.  
And if tomorrow never comes, you’ll have no regrets about today.

Do today what you plan to do tomorrow. . .

### Jesus’ face



CONCENTRATE ON THE FOUR DOTS IN THE MIDDLE  
OF THE PICTURE FOR ABOUT 30 SECONDS.

THEN CLOSE YOUR EYES AND TILT YOUR HEAD BACK.

KEEP THEM CLOSED. YOU WILL SEE A CIRCLE OF LIGHT,  
CONTINUE LOOKING AT THE CIRCLE...

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Oh to judge as little children do.....

A mother and her family ate Christmas dinner in a small restaurant many miles from their home. Nancy, the mother relates: We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Eric in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly eating and talking.

Suddenly, Eric squealed with glee and said, “Hi there!” He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were wide with excitement and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin. He wiggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man with a tattered rag of a coat, dirty, greasy, and worn. His pants were baggy; zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map. We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled.

His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. “Hi there, Baby! Hi there, Big Boy. I see ya, Buster,” the man said to Eric.

My husband and I exchanged looks. “What do we do?” Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the old man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby.

Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, “Do ya know patty cake? Do ya know peek-a-boo?”

Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk. My husband and I were embarrassed! We ate in silence—all except for Eric who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot.

The old man sat poised between the door and me. “Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Eric,” I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to side step him and any air he might be breathing. As I did, Eric leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby’s pick-me-up position. Before I could stop him; Eric had propelled himself from my arms to the man’s.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love relationship. Eric, in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man’s ragged shoulder. The man closed his eyes and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain and hard labor gently cradled my baby’s bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever



loved so deeply for so short a time.

The old man rocked and cradled Eric in his arms for a moment, and then his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, “You take care of this baby!”

Somehow I managed to say, “I will” from a throat that contained a stone.

He pried Eric from his chest unwillingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, “God bless you, ma’am, you’ve given me my Christmas gift.”

I said nothing more than muttered thanks. With Eric in my arms, I ran to the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Eric so tightly, and why I was saying, My God, my God, forgive me.” I had just witnessed Christ’s love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, made no judgment, a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not.

I felt it was God asking, “Are you willing to share your son for a moment?” — when He had shared His for eternity.

The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me,

“To enter the Kingdom of God, we must become as LITTLE CHILDREN.”

This story really “got to me”—maybe because I have also been guilty of sometimes judging on appearances. And some of those same people have turned out to be treasured friends—after I got to know them.

The Letter was signed: A Better Christian

### Slow Dance

Have you ever watched kids?  
 On a merry-go-round?  
 Or listened to the rain?  
 Slapping on the ground?  
 Ever followed a butterfly’s erratic flight?  
 Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?  
 You better slow down.  
 Don’t dance so fast.  
 Time is short.  
 The music won’t last.  
 Do you run through each day  
 On the fly?  
 When you ask “How are you?”  
 Do you hear the reply?



When the day is done  
 Do you lie in your bed  
 With the next hundred chores  
 Running through your head?  
 You'd better slow down.  
 Don't dance so fast.  
 Time is short.  
 The music won't last.  
 Ever told your child,  
 We'll do it tomorrow?  
 And in your haste,  
 Not see his sorrow?  
 Ever lost touch,  
 Let a good friendship die  
 Cause you never had time  
 To call and say, "Hi"?  
 You'd better slow down.  
 Don't dance so fast.  
 Time is short.  
 The music won't last.  
 When you run so fast to get somewhere  
 You miss half the fun of getting there.  
 When you worry and hurry through your day,  
 It is like an unopened gift....  
 Thrown away.  
 Life is not a race.  
 Do take it slower  
 Hear the music  
 Before the song is over.

### The Secret Of Life

By Gretchen Peters  
 Sung by Faith Hill

Couple of guys sittin' around drinkin'  
 Down at the Starlight Bar  
 One of them says, you know  
     I've been thinking  
 Other one says, that won't get you too far  
 He says, this is your life and welcome to it  
 It's just workin' and drinkin' and dreams  
 Ad on TV says "Just do it"  
 Hell if I know what that means

The secret of life is a good cup of coffee



The secret of life is to keep your eye  
on the ball

The secret of life is a beautiful woman  
And Marilyn stares down from the  
barroom wall

You and me we're just a couple of zeros  
Just a couple of down-and-outs  
But movie stars and football heroes  
What have they got to be unhappy about?  
So they turn to the bartender,  
"Sam, what do you think?  
What's the key that unlocks that door?"  
Sam don't say nothin',  
just wipes the bar  
And he pours them a couple more

'Cause the secret of life is Sam's martinis  
The secret of life is in Marilyn's eyes  
The secret of life is in  
Monday night football  
Rolling Stones records and  
mom's apple pie

Sam looks up from his Sunday paper  
Says, boys, you're on the wrong track  
The secret of life is there ain't no secret  
And you don't get your money back (hey)

The secret of life is getting' up early  
The secret of life is staying up late  
The secret of life is try not to hurry  
But don't wait...don't wait  
The secret of life is a good cup of coffee

The secret of life is keep your  
eye on the ball  
The secret of life is  
to find a good woman  
The secret of life is nothin' at all  
(oh it's nothin' at all)

Couple of guys sittin' around drinkin'  
Down at the Starlight Bar  
One of 'em says,  
you know I've been thinking  
Other one says, that won't get you too far  
That won't get you too far



The secret of life IS whatever makes YOU happy. For me, a good cup of coffee, not to mention a good woman by my side, does it!

The only 'secret' to life is: what is yours? For some it's family, for some (sadly) it is work, others play, once you've found your secret, pursue it! The secret to life is as individual as you are, yours alone to hold!

I remember in the 60's (hush, I know how old that makes me) that we were all busy running around trying to "find ourselves!" We missed the point, we find ourselves within not externally!

The 'secret' of life is whatever makes life worth living for you!

### A Gift From God

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class was walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd."

I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw a tear in his eye.

As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives."

He looked at me and said, "Hey thanks!" There was a big smile on his face.

It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before.

We talked all the way home, and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with my friends and me. He said yes.

We hung all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle, the more I liked him. And my friends thought the same of him. Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Darn boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship.

Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak.



Graduation day, I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than me and all the girls loved him!

Boy, sometimes I was jealous. Today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began.

"Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach . . . , but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story."

I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse.

God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way. Look for God in others.

Each day is a gift from God! Don't forget to say, "Thank you!"

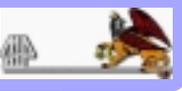
### Twass the night before Christmas

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS,  
HE LIVED ALL ALONE,  
IN A ONE BEDROOM HOUSE MADE OF  
PLASTER AND STONE.

I HAD COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY  
WITH PRESENTS TO GIVE,  
AND TO SEE JUST WHO  
IN THIS HOME DID LIVE.

I LOOKED ALL ABOUT,  
A STRANGE SIGHT I DID SEE,  
NO TINSEL, NO PRESENTS,  
NOT EVEN A TREE.

NO STOCKING BY MANTLE,  
JUST BOOTS FILLED WITH SAND,  
ON THE WALL HUNG PICTURES  
OF FAR DISTANT LANDS.



WITH MEDALS AND BADGES,  
AWARDS OF ALL KINDS,  
A SOBER THOUGHT  
CAME THROUGH MY MIND.

FOR THIS HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT,  
IT WAS DARK AND DREARY,  
I FOUND THE HOME OF A SOLDIER,  
ONCE I COULD SEE CLEARLY.

THE SOLDIER LAY SLEEPING,  
SILENT, ALONE,  
CURLLED UP ON THE FLOOR  
IN THIS ONE BEDROOM HOME.

THE FACE WAS SO GENTLE,  
THE ROOM IN SUCH DISORDER,  
NOT HOW I PICTURED  
A UNITED STATES SOLDIER.

WAS THIS THE HERO  
OF WHOM I'D JUST READ?  
CURLLED UP ON A PONCHO,  
THE FLOOR FOR A BED?

I REALIZED THE FAMILIES  
THAT I SAW THIS NIGHT,  
OWED THEIR LIVES TO THESE SOLDIERS  
WHO WERE WILLING TO FIGHT.

SOON ROUND THE WORLD,  
THE CHILDREN WOULD PLAY,  
AND GROWNUPS WOULD CELEBRATE  
A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS DAY.

THEY ALL ENJOYED FREEDOM  
EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR,  
BECAUSE OF THE SOLDIERS,  
LIKE THE ONE LYING HERE.

I COULDN'T HELP WONDER  
HOW MANY LAY ALONE,  
ON A COLD CHRISTMAS EVE  
IN A LAND FAR FROM HOME.

THE VERY THOUGHT  
BROUGHT A TEAR TO MY EYE,



I DROPPED TO MY KNEES  
AND STARTED TO CRY.

THE SOLDIER AWAKENED  
AND I HEARD A ROUGH VOICE,  
“SANTA DON’T CRY,  
THIS LIFE IS MY CHOICE;

I FIGHT FOR FREEDOM,  
I DON’T ASK FOR MORE,  
MY LIFE IS MY GOD,  
MY COUNTRY, MY CORPS.”

THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER  
AND DRIFTED TO SLEEP,  
I COULDN’T CONTROL IT,  
I CONTINUED TO WEEP.

I KEPT WATCH FOR HOURS,  
SO SILENT AND STILL  
AND WE BOTH SHIVERED  
FROM THE COLD NIGHT’S CHILL.

I DIDN’T WANT TO LEAVE  
ON THAT COLD, DARK, NIGHT,  
THIS GUARDIAN OF HONOR  
SO WILLING TO FIGHT.

THEN THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER,  
WITH A VOICE SOFT AND PURE,  
WHISPERED, “CARRY ON SANTA,  
IT’S CHRISTMAS DAY, ALL IS SECURE.”

ONE LOOK AT MY WATCH,  
AND I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT.  
“MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FRIEND,  
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT.”

This poem was written by a Marine stationed in Okinawa Japan. The following is his request. I think it is reasonable.....

PLEASE. Would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities.

Let’s try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your small part to plant this small seed.



Having served my time in the Navy, I have to agree.

I was among that group, in spite of the 60's influence felt it was our 'duty' to serve. Luckily I fell into the medical corps, but, every one of my High School buddies signed up for a tour.

It was sad to see the way 'my generation' treated the returnees from Viet Nam, a true shame. They put their lives on the line (whether the cause was right or not) for their country, their families, their loved ones.

As in *Starship Troopers*: "the greatest service any person can do is to put his own flesh between the enemy and those he cares for!"

Your thought for the day.....

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote:

Many people will walk in and out of your life, heart.

To handle yourself, use your head;

To handle others, use your heart.

Anger is only one letter short of danger.

If someone betrays you once, it is his fault;

If he betrays you twice, it is your fault.

Great minds discuss ideas;

Average minds discuss events;

Small minds discuss people.

He who loses money, loses much;

He who loses a friend, loses much more;

He who loses faith, loses all.

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature,

But beautiful old people are works of art.

Learn from the mistakes of others.

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

Friends, you and me....

You brought another friend....

And then there were 3....

We started our group....

Our circle of friends....

And like that circle....

There is no beginning or end....

Yesterday is history.

Tomorrow is mystery.

Today is a gift,

That's why it's called the present.



OK, that last may have been a repeat, but, anything worth saying is worth repeating. . .

That's it for volume 03, catch ya later. . .