

BluesNews

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My friend, best man at my wedding, as I was at his, passed away, in early August. He died at home, his family by his side. I think his optimism and spiritedness had partially prevented his daughters from truly appreciating the severity of his illness and how precarious his health has been over the last two years. He didn't really like anyone to know, not even his friends. His wasn't really a brave face, but stoicism—no question.

Earlier in his last week, his daughters attended the congestive heart failure clinic with him. They learned their Dad was in end stage heart failure and that the proposed plan was to stop the internal defibrillator. At this point, he was also struggling with ulcerative edema but wasn't keeping his feet elevated. He treated his sores with a popular topical antibiotic ointment rather than a drying, anti-itch agent like Calomine. He was not eating properly. He looked terrible.

The defibrillator was turned off on Thursday. On Friday, he started his goodbyes, dictating email messages for his daughters to transcribe and send on. He skyped with his younger brother in Costa Rica and spoke with his older brother in town. They moved a hospital bed into their dining room and he struggled to get comfortable. For the first time in a very long time, he complained about his pain and discomfort. They had supper together as a family and in the very early evening, just before 7:00pm, he passed. We (my wife and I) were called. We were able to say our goodbyes.



Empty. Lost. Confused. A great big something, now missing. ANGRY. Hurt. Another friend now gone. A weekend bridge partner no more. It was, has been, and is, devastating. As much as it was anticipated and expected, this was sudden.

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There was not enough time to prepare. Our estrangement with his spouse (that had occurred months earlier) left the whole circumstance feeling surreal.

Six years ago, another good friend took his own life. His death severely took my breath away and sent me reeling. Not quite so, this time. I wrote a brief eulogy. I had an opportunity to reflect and remember, a chance to bring order to my thoughts, to find my perspective. My friend's passing has taken a part of me away with him, but it is not a mortal wound....

So, I learned some things about myself that these experiences have taught. For now, I will keep my thoughts about lessons learned to myself. I still feel this need for privacy I still feel the need for some measure of healing. I do want to share someone else's thoughts about dying and some of the lessons they have learned. The title of the one article is it's own best description. The second piece, I have shared previously on social media and in BluesNews, (August 2016). Here it is again....

4 Things I Learned About Grief, Loss, and Healing After My Dad's Death*

"Give time, time." —Martha Beck

My dad died when I was 19, when he was almost 60. He was a writer like me. He was also an addict. It was expected (he had a bad heart and no plans to surrender his vices), but it was still a shock when it actually happened. Sometimes it feels like 14 years ago. Sometimes it feels like it all happened so recently—especially when he visits me in dreams.

When I reflect upon what I've learned about loss, grief, and life in the years since, these are four truths I know for sure:

1. *Love is stronger than death.*

I still have a father. He lives within me and my sister and in our memories. When I make an English roast dinner, drive a car (he taught me how), play Scrabble or cards, read the classics, watch English television, and even sit down to write, I feel his presence. The first time I held the book I'd authored in my hands, I felt him say, "I told you so! You did it."

When someone leaves your life, all that's gone is his or her physical form. That notion has been tremendously comforting to me.

2. *Spending real time with loved ones is important.*

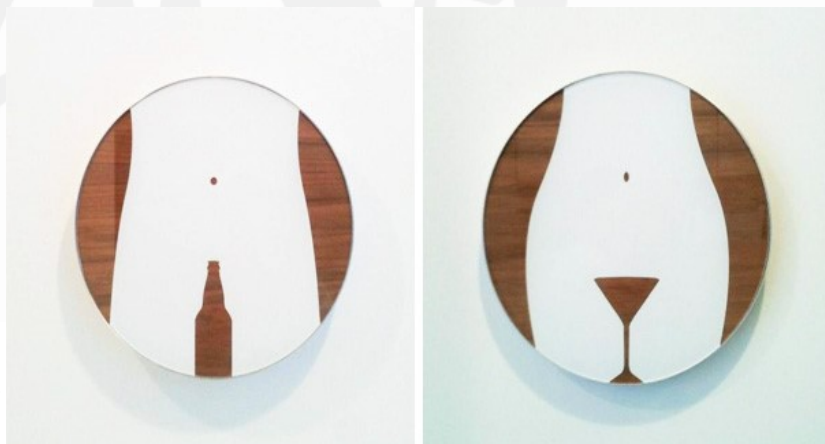
I visit my mum in the U.K. twice per year. Life is busy, yes. But making time for the people you love matters. Spend time with your parents (and everyone who's important to you). And try not to spend all the time you're with them on your phone.

Ask them questions. What did they think about the world when they were your age? What were they doing? What year were they the happiest? What are their favorite memories of you? Write it down too! You'll revisit those stories many times in your life.

3. *Just because someone looks OK doesn't mean they are OK.*

After losing her husband suddenly last year, Sheryl Sandberg said, "Don't ask someone who's grieving, 'How are you?'"

No edition of BluesNews would be complete without some inspiring images and a measure of humor. In this edition, we bring you some potty humor, (with apologies for omitting the LGBT community for fear of being somewhat insensitive). Some of these are quite creative; none of them leave any question about the gender they portray.



Ask, 'How are you today?'"

Emotions for someone who's grieving are a roller coaster—they can go from laughter to tears in seconds. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and we should never judge anyone who is experiencing grief. The process is deeply personal. I don't talk about my father unless it's with my family or I'm speaking to someone going through a similar experience. I don't want sympathy or questions. This is my way of handling things, and that's OK.

4. Death can inspire you to live life to its fullest.

If I live to my dad's age (and I hope to live much longer than that), my life is already more than halfway through. This sounds scary, but to me, it's motivating. Death gives life meaning. When I contemplate my own imminent death one day, I feel courageous, fearless, and powerful. You're allowed to feel this way too. The hardest lessons bring the greatest freedoms.

I think of my dad every day—especially when something funny happens. And I talk to him every time I achieve a significant milestone. I admit: I'm jealous when I see other people with their dads. And that's OK too. I practice compassion for my own emotions, which I consider the highest form of self-care.

My grief has changed shape over the years, but it's true what they say about time. My physical pangs of suffering are fewer now. And in moments of questioning, the most healing thing I can think to do is live a life he would be proud of. Because we'll always be in it together.

**From GREATIST, August 29, 2017, Susie Moore: life coach columnist and a confidence coach in New York City.*

SHIPWRECKS

Someone on reddit wrote the following heartfelt plea online: "My friend just died. I don't know what to do...."

A lot of people responded. Then there's one old guy's comment that stood out from the rest that might just change the way we approach life and death:

"Alright, here goes. I'm old. What that means is that I've survived (so far) and a lot of people I've known and loved did not. I've lost friends, best friends, acquaintances, co-workers. grandparents, mom, relatives, teachers, mentors, students, neighbors. and a host of other folks. I have no children, and I can't imagine the pain it must be to lose a child. But here's my two cents.

"I wish I could say you get used to people dying. I never did. I don't want to. It tears a hole through me whenever somebody I love dies, no matter the circumstances. But I don't want it to "not matter". I don't want it to be something that just passes. My scars are a testament to the love and the relationship that I had for and with that person. And if the scar is deep, so was the love. So be it. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are a testament that I can love deeply and live deeply and be cut, or even gouged, and that I can heal and continue to live and continue to love. And the scar tissue is stronger than the original flesh ever was. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are only ugly to people who can't see.

"As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything



floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

"In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks. maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come. they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything ... and the wave comes crashing. But in between waves, there is life.

"Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come. they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out.

"Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks."

As Only the Irish Can Tell A Story ...

Paddy had long heard the stories of an amazing family tradition. It seems that his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been able to walk on water on their 18th birthday. On that special day, they'd each walked across the lake to the pub on the far side for their first legal drink.

So when Paddy's 18th birthday came around, he and his pal Jim took a boat out to the middle of the lake, Paddy, stepped out of the boat... And nearly drowned!

Jim just barely managed to pull him to safety.



Furious and confused, Paddy went to see his grandmother . "Grandma," he asked, "Tis me 18th birthday, so why can't I walk across the lake like me father, his father and his father before him?"

Granny looked deeply into Paddy's, troubled blue eyes and said, "Because ye father, ye grandfather and ye great-grandfather were all born in December, when the lake is frozen, and ye were born in August, ya bloody idiot!"

WHAT THEY TEACH IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...

OLEG VISHNEPOLSKY

GLOBAL CTO AT DAILYMAIL ONLINE AND METRO.CO.UK



INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

These points above are all good.

I would add just a few more:

- ▶ "Try to be a person of value, not of success." - Albert Einstein.
- ▶ "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right." - Henry Ford
- ▶ "To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart." - Eleanor Roosevelt
- ▶ "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." Alfred Tennyson
- ▶ "The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me." - Ayn Rand
- ▶ "It is never too late to be what you might have been." - George Eliot
- ▶ "Small actions beat big intentions." - Oleg Vishnepolsky
- ▶ "We live for the moments to do die for." - Oleg Vishnepolsky
- ▶ "When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves." - William Arthur Ward
- ▶ "To be successful, you have to have your heart in your business and your business in your heart." - Thomas J. Watson Jr.
- ▶ "If you want to succeed in your life, remember this phrase: That past does not equal the future. Because you failed yesterday, or all day today, or a moment ago, or for the last six months, the last 16 years, or the last 50 years of your life, doesn't mean anything!" - Tony Robbins

And my take on luck:

See the next page....



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

RESPITE. We have a new family providing respite. Tammee and Ben R. reside in the small community of Forest, Ontario. They have not been foster parents previously. Their inexperience in foster care is easily addressed in their life experience. Tammee works in Resources in a local school for indigenous youth; Ben is an outreach worker for adult services. They have two children who do not reside with them and no children in the home. If you are seeking respite, enquire through your Bluewater Family Support Services worker; our staff can assist through making all of the necessary arrangements.

STAFFING. We are pleased to announce the pending start on September 18, 2017 of Mr Steven Dmytrow, our new foster family support staff in Essex county. Mr Dmytrow comes with several years experience as Youth and Family Counsellor at Trailcross Treatment Centre in Fort Smith, NT and Stepping Stones Youth Services in Fort McMurray, AB. Prior to moving west and north, Mr Dmytrow was the Urban Aboriginal Health Living Coordinator at the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre of Windsor. Mr Dmytrow's experience is really quite varied: a renown personal fitness trainer, North America's Strongest Man champion in 1999, and a multi year veteran of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in Barrie. Please join us in welcoming Steve to our Bluewater community.

ERRATUM. Before John Tyler retired, he provided invaluable assistance to editing BluesNews. He worked hard to ensure my grammar was correct, my jokes not too far off color, and my dates for Professional Development / InService accurate. I want to thank Darlene Medeiros for catching my latest gaffe. The Professional Development / InService dates printed in the July BluesNews are incorrect. A revised, corrected schedule is printed on the last page of this edition.



THE PARADOX OF OUR TIME IN HISTORY...

George Carlin's wife died early in 2008 and George followed her, dying in July 2008. It is ironic George Carlin - comedian of the 70's and 80's - could write something so very eloquent and so very appropriate. An observation by George Carlin:

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider Freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

Remember to spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

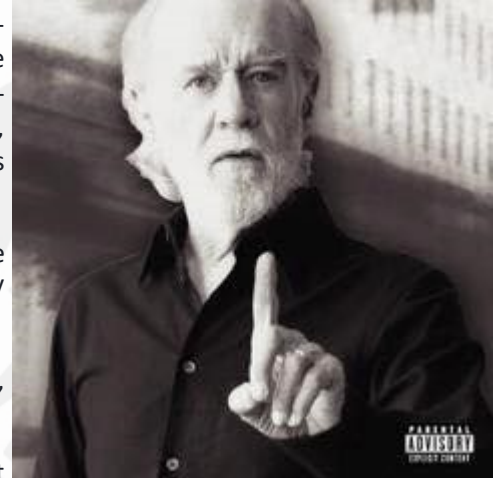
Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say, 'I love you' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

And always remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by those moments that take our breath away.



George Carlin

Professional Development / InService

Leamington
1st and 3rd Wednesday

Parkhill
2nd and 4th Wednesday

Sept 20
Oct 4
Oct 18
Nov 1
Nov 15
Dec 6

Sept 27
Oct 11
Oct 25
Nov 8
Nov 22
Dec 13

2018

Jan 17
Feb 7
Feb 21
March 7
March 21
April 4
April 18
May 2
May 16
June 6
June 20

Jan 10
Jan 24
Feb 14
Feb 28
March 14 (March Break)
March 28
April 11
April 25
May 9
May 23
June 13

