

Words of life

As I live life, talk with friends, watch movies, or live theater, I come across words that in some way touch my life. That touch may only be for a second or two, but the results can be extraordinary.

Last night, I was humbled. People came down after the show to express their gratitude for our acting. My little performance received high praise from many people. As I said, I was humbled. This is a role, as late early this week, I did not feel was my best effort. I am very glad it pleased the audience. Those short "thank yous" meant a lot to me.

Over the course of my life, I've been fascinated with words and our ability to communicate many things with those words and how we say them. Written communication can never compete with the vocal/visual combination, but they do have some effect on the way I view things. If they didn't, I don't think I would be writing a blog.

Being able to communicate well is helpful in most situations. There are times that I wish my skills in this area were better, but I will take what I have. Of course I want to share the words that have touched my life in some way or another.

Around in the winter of 1983 and 1984 I started hearing the words "Hi Daddy" from a precocious 2 year old. Those two words changed my life. In her eyes, I was daddy from the time those words were uttered. According to the State, it took until 1985. I was able to hear those words from 3 other lovely young ladies over the past years too. Sometimes I wonder what I did to be able to hear those words with the love that is evident every time they say them.

Of course, other words from my family have also deeply touched me. Words like: "Father of the Bride", "Husband and Wife", "I love you." There have been sad words too. "I'm sorry we

couldn't do more.", "We need to go to the hospital (or emergency room).", "We don't know.", "It was a heart attack.", "It was cancer."

And with my family there were also many movie quotes that are used in our daily lives. Here are a few that I think are special.

This is my family. I found it, all on my own. Is little, and broken, but still good. Yeah, still good.

I always have a wonderful time, wherever I am, whomever I'm with.

No matter what happens tomorrow, or the rest of my life, I'm happy now because I love you.

Years ago my mother used to say to me, she'd say, "In this world, Elwood, you must be" – she always called me Elwood – "In this world, Elwood, you must be oh so smart or oh so pleasant." Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant. You may quote me.

I'll give you a winter prediction: It's gonna be cold, it's gonna be grey, and it's gonna last you for the rest of your life.

I know. You know I know. I know you know I know. We know Henry knows. And Henry knows we know it. We're a knowledgeable family.

Words and how they are said make a difference. That is one reason I am careful with the words that come from my mouth, pen or keyboard.

A night off

I'm sitting here doing a lot of nothing. No rehearsal, no lines to memorize, chores that can be put off for a day or two. All of that is good, because I'm in desperate need to rest my throat a bit. I have one part in the show that I really have to force my voice a bit. Every rehearsal, I need some liquid to help sooth my throat. Part of this is the voice I use, and the other is my winter sinus problems. If it was just one of the two, my throat would be fine. So tonight I relax and maybe drink some hot tea.

Not much more to say. Life is boring, and for tonight that is good. □

Maybe it is coming together

We have one more dress rehearsal tomorrow night. Tonight was the first night I really felt comfortable in my role. I had flashes of comfort in the past week or so, but tonight felt good. Few things that I would like to improve on, but that is a never ending quest.

I haven't written much about this show, partly because of how I was feeling about my character. Another point was an actor dropped out. The sickness and then death of someone close to him prevented him from doing the play. That situation did not help the feelings I was having.

Our director stepped in to take the role and had the part

memorized in under a week. That made me feel bad, since I had my role for a month before that and I was still trying to get the lines down. It took me some time, but I eventually got there.

The of course there were the problems of getting the entire cast there on time and on the same day. That is three plays (that I have been involved with) in a row. What is happening. I remember more than one show that it was odd for a person to miss a rehearsal. Hmm.

Anyway, today's show fell together nicely. We lost a cast member or two because of their work schedules, but we were able to work around that. Tonight was funny and in some parts very touching.

So to put it in a very few words: We have a show. ☐

What was I thinking?

I'm in another play. Tryouts were just before Christmas. Rehearsals started the week of Christmas (I think). I'm trying to memorize my lines and get the character down.

I shouldn't have tried out. I shouldn't have taken the part. I knew better, but I did it anyway. It was the only show of the season that I even wanted to be a part of.

It wasn't that I just finished one show and rushed into a second. That is no problem at all. I usually like rehearsals and getting the part down. No, it was the timing of the show. It is the time of year and the days that surround it. I'm only doing half the work I need to do to get the character down. I'm actually doing less than that to get the lines memorized.

My mind is unable to focus once I get home.

Maybe it will get better in the coming week or two (it better, the show is only 2 weeks away). I really hope so.

I have a handle on the why and the when. I am making a promise to myself to really limit my selection of shows to do in the early part of the year. Too many other things on my mind.

I remember the last thing we watched together. I remember our last meal together. I remember that damn oxygen machine. I remember sitting and holding your hand while you were going in and out of a fitful slumber. I remember walking you down the hall, you holding me for support. I remember the last time I tucked you in. I remember your last words. I remember my last words to you. I remember that first New Years Eve without you. I remember the memorial service and the people there. I remember that first anniversary without you.

Those are the thoughts that fill my head at this time of year. The inconsequential needs of a play find very little room in my head. Even after six years, the thoughts of you are one with me and I with them. I remember love.

This day in History

On January 20th, 1984 I left the realm of being single and became a married man. That same year, NW Ohio was under a bitter cold spell and the daytime high temps were below 0 Fahrenheit. I was also blissfully happy, as all newlyweds should be.

On January 20th, 1994 I was married for 10 years. Father of 4

beautiful daughters. We were very happy family. I'm not sure if much else happened that day.

January 20th, 2003 this was our 19th and last anniversary together, we just didn't know it then. Still happy.

January 20th, 2004, my first anniversary alone. Not very happy, nothing else happened that day in my life. Should have been 20 years.

On January 20th, 2009 I should have been married 25 years. I am sure that if my wife had lived, I still would have been blissfully happy. On that day the first black American became President of the U.S.A. That seemed inconsequential to me.

Funny how an important day in your life can color the history around it.

My computer died....

It came quickly, but my laptop screen died. I wasn't sure exactly what happened but there was a quick blackout of the screen.

I now have my laptop attached to an external screen. After doing a quick search, I think what the problem is. Either the backlight or the inverter are going bad. They might be fixable, but it isn't an easy fix for me. I have the knowledge but not the ability. Fixing these problems requires fine motor skills. I'm much better at gross motor skills.

This would require soldering small wires, careful handling of a delicate bulb with mercury on the inside. Replacement of another delicate part. My fumble fingers and weak eyes just aren't up to that. Tomorrow, I will check to see how much it

will cost to replace the parts. If too much, I may end up getting a new laptop. This laptop still works, but I will probably use it as another desktop at home. It can replace the older computer my youngest uses at home. Then she will be able to play some of the games that no longer work for her.

Just a bit of bad luck for the New Year.

Reading a Book Series

Another tangents' blogger made comments on reading the Harry Potter series. I am currently reading a series by a different author. I'm reading "The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" again. While I know that some people don't like reading a long series in succession, that is usually my goal. I like to finish the story. I really don't like waiting for the next book in the series.

Anyway I've had these books for years and they are finally wearing out. They are paperbacks, and they have been read repeatedly. The covers are starting to come off and the pages now have some tears. So I looked them up on the web to see how much it would cost to replace my series. Since I like them a lot, I was hoping to find them in hardback. What I found was that the series was continued. I really didn't realize this. I will have to do some research, but it looks like there are two additional books with two more on the way. I'm not sure how I feel about this, but I will have to get the books to see if I want to continue the series.

There is my problem. I like to finish a series if I start it and like it. I don't know how long I will have to wait for the additional books of the series. On one hand I hope the new books are good, on the other hand, I hope I don't have to wait

for the additional two books. A puzzlement.

Proof I'm getting older...

I think I'm in the final stages of some illness. I lost most of my voice for a day and 1/2. On top of that I had a headache that would not go away for long. It was there, and then it got better. But then it came back again. The headache is gone, the sore throat is better. I can talk without pain now, so that is good.

But today I had to go out and split some wood. It is supposed to get cold this weekend, so I wanted to make sure I had enough wood. I really didn't want to go out to get wood in single digit temps. It looks like I will have to go out in the cold. I couldn't spend more than 1/2 hour splitting wood. I know I'm just getting over something, but I didn't feel like my energy was that drained.

Now none of this is indication of getting older. No, it is just an indication that I was sick. The older part is the wood I brought up to the house. I've been cutting wood since I was 15 when I helped my Dad. I've spent a good 35 years knowing what wood was good to burn and what wasn't. All the wood I split today, and the stuff I brought up to the house before I was sick was from trees that don't give off good heat. Hmmm. Now I forgot all about wood that was good to burn. I guess I shouldn't be too hard on myself, because of the large variety of wood I was cutting. The cut pieces were all mixed in together. Tomorrow I need to some good wood up to the house. I hope I can determine what is good to burn.

A winter prediction

I'll give you a winter prediction: It's gonna be cold, it's gonna be grey, and it's gonna last you for the rest of your life.

A quote from a movie I watch over and over again, kind of matches the forecast for this weekend. It's going to be cold and most likely grey, but I'm fairly certain it won't last for the rest of your life. But is this quote an indication of the weather, or the ramblings of a depressed man? At the point it is said, I would say the latter.

For me it is an indication that I need to get more firewood up to the house. With weather getting down to the single digits, I want some wood that will burn long and hot. I don't want to have to go outside often to get more wood, and I want to make sure the fire puts out enough heat to keep my heating bills a bit lower.

I have some good wood, but I need to be careful with the wood I bring to the house. There were multiple trees knocked over when the big oak fell. The oak burns very well if dry, but there are other types of trees in the fallen lumber that are not oak. Some burn well, some do not. So while moving the wood, I need to pick and choose the good burning wood.

So there is another metaphor on life. You need to pick the good stuff, the stuff you need to make life warm and comfortable.

May you find some warmth on cold winter nights.

Pictures of that big tree. My daughter stands about 5 feet tall, she is about 15 feet from what was ground level of this

tree.



Close Up same tree, same daughter.



What is in a play?

I was sitting here wondering why I decided to get involved in another play right after the last show I was in. The first play was extremely fun, but it cut into time I could spend with family and friends. Getting right back on stage kept me from spending a lot of time doing Christmas shopping for my family. This show will take up all of January and again cut into time for family and friends.

Of course, since I am an amateur actor, the only pay I receive is the emotional support of the audience. That is what makes it all worthwhile. That emotional surge the actors get from the audience gives life to the show. It is what makes a live show so much different than a movie or TV show. The actors

live, breath and die with the reaction of the audience.

The sound of applause, the gasp of tears, the bubbling of laughter make an actors day. We put in a lot of time for those few shows. And our audience rewards us.

So, that is why I do it. I live for that recognition. It is a good feeling.