

Thanks, Congratulations and Apologies

First and foremost this past holiday weekend was to remember those who served this country as part of the military. A special thank goes out to all members of the services past, present and the future. They all gave more of themselves than I will ever know. Special thoughts go out for two of these servicemen, my father and brother.

I've also used this weekend to remember loved ones no longer living. They are gone but never forgotten. Sometimes I think there are way too many for my span here on this earth.

Congratulations go out to the numerous graduates I know, both from High School and College.

Belated, although not entirely missed congrats to a couple who celebrated their 4th anniversary. I hope you enjoy or enjoyed the bison steaks. I enjoyed the gathering Saturday and I'm glad I could get your gift to you.

And of course I am sorry to all the people who had gatherings this weekend that I was not able or did not attend. I totally forgot the Sunday pot-luck, for some reason I thought it was next week. Big Sorry there. Sorry about missing the special Saturday game night, but I was delivering an anniversary present to my little draclet and her husband. And there is that regular Saturday function that I am so fond of. [OK, there were a lot of personal wants and desires here, it doesn't mean I didn't want clones for the weekend. ☐] So to my fellow bloggers, who planned weekend activities, I'm sorry I didn't show up.

And finally thanks to my daughters. The time you give your dear ol' dad is a gift I will never forget. If you are ever at a loss for a gift for me, remember those words.

Philosophy 101

Back in the day, when I let myself go, I would talk about different philosophies. It was an interest of mine that I had a yearning to discover. I have since dropped the formal training from my current recallable knowledge base. (it has been too many years since I've read or discussed anything about formal Philosophies.) So if you are expecting me to name drop some famous philosophers you will be disappointed.

I am now more interested in the interactions between people. What makes friendships. How can we remain friends with someone we rarely see or communicate with. What is trust? Why do people behave differently in a group. What masks do we weave for others to see. And of course, how does this all interact with the new electronic neighborhood.

I've always been a people watcher. I do tend to notice the background or driving force behind the hustle and bustle of daily life. I notice when people are having a bad day, sometimes, to my embarrassment, before they realize themselves. I notice when people aren't getting along. I see when people really like each other. I usually can tell that people are putting on a mask to hide their true feelings, and at times I can see the truth behind the mask. I find that interesting.

I also see the way people are on-line compared to how they are in real life. Some people really hide behind the machine. Others, thinking they are anonymous in their computer lives. They hope their employer never finds out about their on line activities. Again, I find it interesting.

We are social beings, constantly (almost) looking for

acceptance in our little parts of the world. Not finding that acceptance can cause pain or sorrow. Finding too much can give inflated feelings of self-worth. We need to look elsewhere for our worth. Find it, hold on to it and live it. Everything else is then just gravy on the meal. Nice to have, but the base can stand on its own.

I don't know your pain.

Sometimes I get inspiration from my little posts on facebook. Sometimes I get inspiration for little posts on facebook from my blog. This is a bit of both.

A blog post with the above title was started on the 20th of May. Five days later, I think the original thoughts are finally gelling. All from a facebook post I made yesterday.

I don't know your pain. I only know my own. I can, however, listen when you need it, advise when you want it, and care for you always, because I call you friend.

There it is. The original idea behind this was that I have a number of friends going through some difficult times right now. I was able to listen to their description of pain and sorrow. I offered a bit of advice when asked. And through it all I think I became a better person.

It takes a lot to try to ignore or temper your own sorrows when dealing with the problems of others. Your problems, sorrows, worries are of the utmost importance to you. Nothing can be bigger or more intense than the situation you are in . These are your feelings and are rightfully justified.

That being said, if a person shares their situation with you,

their problems are going to be bigger than yours, at least in their eyes. To be a truly caring individual, you need to look past your problems and listen to what your friend needs to share. There are times when this cannot be done. In those times, you should beg the others indulgence and say you are at best willing to listen, but advice would not be the best from you right now. Good friends will be able to understand this. There is never a good time to be in a war of who has the worse problems.

And through all of this, maybe you will be able to see that other peoples problems can be bigger and even more intense than your own. Then we come to true understanding of the people we share our lives with.

And that leads me to one of my favorite movie quotes. From the movie "Harvey":

Elwood P. Dowd: Harvey and I sit in the bars... have a drink or two... play the juke box. And soon the faces of all the other people they turn toward mine and they smile. And they're saying, "We don't know your name, mister, but you're a very nice fella." Harvey and I warm ourselves in all these golden moments. We've entered as strangers – soon we have friends. And they come over... and they sit with us... and they drink with us... and they talk to us. They tell about the big terrible things they've done and the big wonderful things they'll do. Their hopes, and their regrets, and their loves, and their hates. All very large, because nobody ever brings anything small into a bar. And then I introduce them to Harvey... and he's bigger and grander than anything they offer me. And when they leave, they leave impressed. The same people seldom come back; but that's envy, my dear. There's a little bit of envy in the best of us.

Rocks and other things...

My oldest daughter almost stole my next blog post right out from underneath me. ☐

In the past, I've been told the story about rocks and other things many times. Most of the time it is almost exactly the same. The situation changes a bit, but the story and the message behind it stays roughly the same. One story really got me thinking and it had an extra twist.

I'll give a rough outline with my own little twist...

A master had three large piles of Stones, pebbles and sand behind him. He went to the pile of stones and filled his bucket with them. He asked is the bucket full? All of his students responded yes.

He then proceeded to add pebbles to the bucket, shaking them down until he could fit no more. Again he asked if the bucket was full. One brave student muttered probably not, or you would not have asked us the second time.

The master was pleased and then added sand to the bucket until it filled each crevice. He asked is the bucket full? All of his students said no.

"Very good!" the master replied, "You are learning." He then added water until it almost reached the top. A student saw this, and said "The bucket is not yet full master." At that point the master took his teapot and filled the bucket the rest of the way.

"What do you learn from this?" the master queried. One student responded, "No matter how full your life is, there is always

room for more.”

The master said to this, “Not quite, the message is that if you don’t fill in the big rocks first, you will never get them in. So decide, what are your big rocks in life. Do those first. The little stuff will find its own path.”

“But why did you not fill the bucket with the water master?” a student finally asked.

To this the master replied, “No matter how busy you get, always leave room for a cup of tea with one you love.”

And that my friends is my story of the rocks, stones and sand...

Thinking about thinking

Has anyone noticed that the “thinking” gorilla has been on this page for a while now? I noticed. I haven’t felt like changing it recently. And I have been thinking a lot.

Some thoughts are coalescing in my mind.

1) I should spend more time with family and friends. That does mean less time doing theater stuff. I think I’m going to be very choosy about my theater endeavors. I’m not going to limit the number of shows, but I won’t be in a show just because it is the only show I’m the least bit interested in.

2) Part of everything is doing what I really want to do. Yes, some chores just can’t wait, but a lot of them can. Clear evenings should be spent with a telescope. Sleeping during the day should not be a problem on weekends.

- 3) NO is a very important word. I should use it more often.
 - 4) YES is another important word. I should use it more often.
 - 5) I didn't contradict myself in the last two items. I need to learn when to say yes and when to say no.
 - 6) I may end up hurting some feelings when I say yes or no. I will apologize for that, but not for my decisions.
 - 7) Life is too short. There will never be enough time to do everything. There won't even be enough time to do all of the important things. It is best to choose the most important things first. Old simulation with rocks, pebbles, gravel, sand and water... If you really want to know, ask. I may explain it in another blog...
 - 8) I will stop worrying about sleep. The best thing is to sleep when I can and the rest will take care of itself.
 - 9) Relationships with others are the keys to a happy life. If you are getting along with others, your life will be better. Hmm that was deep.
 - 10) I know what real love is. I can't really explain it, but I know what it is. Guess what, nobody can take that away from me. It is mine and it will always be a part of me.
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Dark Thoughts???

I do have a 'Facebook' account. Yes, I have joined the evil dead some time ago. I have yet to play any of the games or join groups. I try to keep up with some friends and my children.

Anyway, I will occasionally post things to the status. A few (very few I think) friends have said to me that my updates on facebook seem a bit dark. I did tell them that they need to read some of my blog posts if they want dark. Hee Hee. I doubt that they will read them. I just wonder sometimes.

Yes, I have put a few quotes from Edgar Allen Poe. They could be considered dark, Poe is dark at times. But for the most part I have 'happy go lucky' little comments. Quotes from movies and little jokes. I wonder if my humor is being missed?

Oh well, it was just something I wanted to comment on.

Going into the night

I was recently reminded of how alone I felt back just a few short years ago. I often wondered what my future would be like. In a few short months all of my future plans were crushed. For the next couple of years, I felt that there was no need to plan for any future.

Tonight, as I sat here trying to figure out if I wanted to read, watch a movie, or listen to a ballgame, I started to think about what the future may hold for me. And of course I started to think what sort of things I should be doing to get the future that would be best for me.

No definite answers this evening. That would just be too easy. No, I have some more thinking to do. I guess I will have plenty of time to do it. One day at a time for now. But at least I have given some thought about tomorrow.

Music in my head and other ramblings

I don't often listen to music using ear-buds or headphones. I usually enjoy a more encompassing sound from some good speakers. But, since I now have music loaded on my nook reader, and I hate the tinny little speakers on it, I am using some good ear-buds. Have you ever noticed that when wearing these, the singer and band are in the middle of your head? Interesting effect, at least for me. I could plug the nook into a set of speakers, but then it just isn't as portable.

The past couple of mornings have been a bit chilly. Funny how just a few short weeks ago, we would have considered the same temperatures warm.

I've always wondered why food tastes better when you are in good company. Eating alone can make for bland meals, even when made exactly the same. For me, eating outside always makes the food taste better too. So great big picnics with good company should have the very best food.

Sometimes I like to say things just to get people to think. It works well with my children, and people I know well, but not so much with the greeters at Wal-Mart.

If you have a glowing blue-tooth device in your ear, and say something to someone, do they assume you are talking on the phone?

I remember liking so many different candies as a child. Why is it that most of them don't satisfy in the same way? Of course I was eating all that stuff before I was introduced to 'Good' Chocolate. My taste in chocolate got expensive. But I still

like Good and Plenty. ☐

Back in the summer of 1983, my future wife and I were trying to decide what music to have at our wedding. We picked a song that we both liked, and had some meaningful words. For years that song reminded us of our vows and our love for each other. Today when I hear that song, I can be brought to tears in one second and laughter from happy memories in the the next. I never know which will occur until they do.

There is another song from the same performer that reminds me of my relationship with my parents. Kind of puts life in perspective for me.

I'm not a fan of country music, and I'm not a fan of bars. So why is one of my favorite songs a country song about a bar?

Hmm maybe this time

Two weeks ago, I received a letter to report for Jury Duty. That case did not make it to court, so I didn't have to report.

Last week I got my second letter. Well, this time I do have to report for Jury Duty, but there is a chance I won't get selected. I won't know until I get there.

Last time I served on a jury was in the play that wouldn't end. It seemed like most of my life, for a year, was taken up by the play "12 Angry Men". I just hope the jury duty doesn't seem like that.

Probably won't blog too much in the next few days.

Another night of music.

After getting a few things done this evening, I sat down to read a bit and listen to some music. The story got put down early as I sat and payed more attention to the selection of songs playing. Random shuffle of songs I like played and stirred many memories.

Memories of children being born. Memories of good family times. Memory of love. Memories of people missing. Memories of people still around.

It has been said, that music touches the soul, and this I believe to be true. It is a gift to be able to recall the good times.