

Different Directions

It is strange how life takes many twists and turns. Just a few short years ago, was it really over 8, I was very happy. I had everything I ever thought I needed. Events changed that happiness. After that time, I had happy moments, but not really a happy life. Everything was tinged in a bit of grey. It seemed the color in my life was gone. I wasn't sure how long that situation would last, and I really didn't care.

Things did change over time. The happy moments became more frequent and the grey periods less dark. I was open to new things. This blog was a very instrumental part of my coming back to the world, so to speak. In it I opened my own mind to living again.

It is interesting to me to see the changes in me. I actually started looking for a way to get out and see the world again. I was surprised that during the searching, I actually found a world out there.

Through the various blog posts I opened my heart and soul to electronic world. I am glad I did, but that part of this blog has come to an end. I found that in sharing here, I was able to share in the real world. Fascinating that it turned out this way.

With less to vent about, I think I need a different direction. I have a story or two developing in my head, they may need a place to go. This blog may or may not be the spot for them. I have many other interests that I only touched on here, I may go back and visit them. There are other parts of my life vying for my attention, they do come first.

In the few years I've been blogging, I had 3 of 4 daughters leave high school and graduate from college (the oldest was already out on her own when I started blogging) 3 of 4 daughters were married (youngest is still single). And 3 out

of 4 daughters blessed me with grandchildren. I have a busy life indeed. I met someone very special and I guess you could say I'm building a new life too. That adds to my time away from blogging.

I will be back. I guess you can look forward to more recipes, thoughts on astronomy, computers, and other things of science. I may even post a political piece or two when I really get tired of the election year.

Here is to starting on a different path....

Bittersweet

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure.

That is one of the definitions of this word and the topic of this post.

In June, my life started heading in a new direction. A lot has happened in the past few weeks. Most of the events were extremely pleasant, but there is a touch of sadness involved.

I am now in the middle of a growing relationship. The wonderful time learning how two people can fit their lives together has been occupying a good portion of my days. I must admit that the start of the journey is most enjoyable. I am looking forward the continuation of the time we have had. But other things took me away from the experience.

I had a trip partially planned for quite some time. A daughter and her husband were expecting their first child together. After the birth, my departure to the sunny south was a certainty. I made this trip alone. The preceding sentence is

filled with sadness. I could not take any of my children, or another special someone with me.

I got to Florida and was able to hold my newest granddaughter for the first time. As with all of my grandchildren, it was love at first sight. The only difference is that with this little girl, I was able to see her weeks after her birth, not the years needed for my daughters to meet their husbands and the children that came with them. My thought as I held her was how sad it was that her maternal grandmother could not be here to see her. Another bittersweet moment.

I've been spending time with my family, and the older two grandchildren went to spend the weekend with their birth mother. Time for them to bond with another parent, sometimes life can be so complicated for our young. There will be a few days without their smiles in the morning. I am grateful for any time I spend with them.

In a few short days I will again be on the road. I will be leaving behind a family that I love dearly, and going back to the rest of my family that I love with equal passion. I am torn with leaving, but I am looking forward to seeing the others again.

I am also looking forward to spending more time getting to know someone new in my life. We have grown quite fond of each others company. It is a very good feeling. That is tinged with another bittersweet feeling. The history of our lives and why we were able to meet and start a relationship has some sadness and pain. There were difficult times in the past, and these experiences will influence our futures. It will be a journey of learning for both of us.

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure... A taste that is both bitter and sweet...

As long as the bitter and the sweet do not overwhelm the senses, this feeling or taste can be a fulfilling experience.

Our lives are filled with these types of feelings. We must learn to take everything we can from these situations. They are part of life and they make it worth living.

Widower's rant. You've been warned.

Just read a comic strip that involves a widower. His new love interest said the following words to him: "today was special.. Because it was the first time I didn't see Lisa in your eyes.". Ok, that did it. Something in me tripped, and I knew I had a rant to write.

So many problems with those thoughts. But let's go back a bit in the life of a widow, widower, and just about everyone else. If you are not a hermit, there is a good chance that you will meet people who have great influence in your life. Whatever lessons you learn, you keep them close to your heart and mind. These things are important to you and they become part of who you are. To remove them is to remove part of your being.

Now, take the situation of a widow/widower who had a good relationship. (this was the situation of the characters in the comic strip, and my life for what it is worth.). They spent a good many years with one person, and that influence was immense. Then at some point, the relationship is torn apart and the surviving party only has memories to see them through what ever lies ahead.

The relationship, the following period of grief, and everything else that follows becomes part of who you are. But your only connection to your best friend, lover, parent to your children is in the memories you retain. If you believe

that the eyes are the windows to the soul than a reflection of your dead spouse remains and is reflected out. It is a part you don't want to lose.

I guess if I heard those words from someone I felt close to, I would need an explanation. The reflections of my late wife that you may see in my eyes, made me who I am. I am not looking to remove or replace those memories. I'm looking to build new memories. Hopefully the new memories will build on and add to the old memories. The minute I feel that someone is trying to replace my memories is the time I say so long.

What you see in me today is the result of all of my experiences in life. I cannot remove parts of my past and remain the same person I am today. I cannot live life tomorrow without changing who I will be. What you see in me tomorrow, is the result of all I experienced through today.

Rant over.

January 20th

I'm usually very good at remembering dates. I don't always remember to do something on the dates, but I do remember them. Kids' birthdays, sure, and if I think about it I can remember the years. Siblings' birthdays, yep all of them. A few other birthdays yep. First crushes birthday, now why would I remember that? First serious girlfriend? Yep, got that. So I really have no trouble remembering this date at all. But as there is one half of the interested party missing from the celebration, the day brings a touch of sadness with it now.

Today would have been 27 years of marital life. I have no doubt that those would have been 27 good years too. Today, I

remember. Today, I may shed a tear or two. Today, I may smile at some inner thought. Today, i remember that it has been 7 years without her.

Without her, I would never have been the person I am. Our love changed who we were, but let us reach who we were supposed to be.

SJO 1962-2003 Always in my heart.

7 Years Ago

7 years ago my best friend, the love of my life and mother of my children left this world. Cancer claimed yet another victim.

This year, I will spend the day with two of my Florida family. I'm not sure what we will be doing, but throughout the day I will be thinking of her.

After 7 years, the pain in my heart is dulled. Time has done that. Memories, mostly pleasant, have filled the have filled the places where pain once stayed. Life continued even when I didn't want it to.

I've tried to remember what the pain I had experienced. Others have lost loved ones this past year, I had hoped my experience could help, but I know nothing will relieve the pain. It must be lived through. It must be experienced. It must be faced for healing to occur.

I know for a fact that time will not heal all wounds. Some stay with you the rest of your life. Those wounds, both physical and mental, are part of your life. You live with them. They become part of your fiber. They become a part of

who you are.

On this 30th of December, I will pause to wish all a Happy New Year. May it bring joy to you and yours. If not joy, may it bring just a bit of hope and peace.

A day was remembered

and celebrated in my heart.

A 7th birthday came and went without you being here to celebrate it with us. We have spread apart a bit this little family of ours. 3 not much more than an hour away, one more than 18 hours away (at least by car). And I know you were missed.

On your birthday, I had to take your dog to the vet. He needed some care, and would be in observation for two days. I had taken him in for a checkup the week before, making sure all of his shots were up to date. He was scheduled for a couple of days in a puppy vacation. I had scheduled time with some friends and he would have been in good hands. But then I got the news he needed some medical care. I was at a in a bit of a quandary. Should I go on my trip while he was at the vets, or take that time to be around for him.

Unless the unfortunate happened, I would not be seeing the little guy for two days. Unlike hospitals, there are no visiting hours at the vets office. My being around would not help him at all, so I decided (with a bit of a heavy heart) to go on my trip. I'm glad I did.

On your birthday, I went to the Cincinnati Zoo with some friends. Unfortunately, you never knew them, and they never

knew you. I think you would have liked them. It was a good day.

As I wandered around the zoo, I did wonder about the changes that were made. Some of the exhibits were exactly like I remembered them. Others seemed very new to me. Since this was not a zoo we visited often, I imagine most things were new. It has been a few years since my last trip there. We were still pushing a stroller or two around the last time. I'm sure the manatees were not there on our last visit. I seem to remember more elephants, but I could be thinking of another zoo. I think you would have remembered that. A couple of red pandas (one of your favorite animals) were doing what they do best, sleeping in trees. Just like almost every other time we saw them.

We did spend a full day at the zoo, but like all of our trips, we never seemed to have time for the entire zoo. Extra time spent at this animal, or another seemed to slow down the pace. But then again, what sort of pace should there be at a zoo. If we can't take the time to learn, observe and wonder about animals we share this planet with, why would we care if the places they live are there in the future. That was the lesson we tried to teach our children, so that they could teach theirs.

Again, it was a day well spent, but I wish you could have been there. Miss you still.

Take me home from the

ballgame . .

Not a post about Major League Sports, but of girls fast pitch softball and a coach I knew.

We started helping out because our girls were on teams. For my last few years of coaching girls softball I was his assistant. We tried to instill some knowledge of the game, but our biggest task was to get young teen and pre-teen girls to have some fun playing ball.

We had many good players, but sometimes their interests headed away from the ball field. We took this in stride and hoped that the girls had some fun. Funny I can't seem to remember how many years I coached with this man, but I think it was 3. They were good summers.

Through the following years, we failed to keep in touch, even though my youngest was friends with one of his step-daughters. When we did see each other, it did bring back some of the those good memories. For years he walked in the "Walk for Life" to remember my dear wife. He will no longer walk that walk, he lost his own battle to the very opponent he walked against. I will miss the occasional meetings at Wally World or Taco Bell. I will miss a friend. Children will miss a father. A wife will miss her husband. And Cancer takes one more...

27 years ago today...

Apparently not much happened. I checked on various places that google found and the only reference for that date was that tennis star Arthur Ashe had bypass surgery. I found that Summer Solstice occurred at around 7:00pm Eastern Daylight

Savings time. But then I knew that. I've known that time for most of these 27 years.

At almost exactly Summer Solstice in the year 1983, I proposed to my future wife. Later on she wondered why I picked that day. It was VERY early in our relationship, and it could have been assumed that this could cause problems. I stated as an absolute fact that the stars were aligned properly. My lovely wife knew, even at that point in our relationship, that I did not mean astrology. I was never a believer in horoscopes of any kind. She looked up what I meant, and found the time of the Solstice.

The timing was a complete coincidence, but it did help me remember that date. It was one anniversary that I could surprise her with. I always remembered to get her a little something special on the first day of Summer.

I remember that day even now. There are many important days that I tend to forget, but this will never be one of them. 27 years and counting. I remember that first day of Summer in 1983...

Expanding on a theme

There are times we recall those we have lost. These times can cause tears or laughter. Don't fight the tears, don't live in the laughter. Doing either will cause us to forget the past and ignore the present and then we will miss the future.

A facebook post for today. These thoughts and the thoughts of my children this weekend push me to expand on the above. (Somebody push Froggy to read this!!) □

I'm almost certain it was a tough weekend for all of my daughters. I was with the youngest all day yesterday, so she did have a bit of comfort on mothers' day itself. The other 3, well I still have a hard time being in multiple places at once. I did make the effort to see the 3 I could, but not enough effort to talk to number 4. Sorry K.

With all of the heartache from the past year. All of the Joy felt. And the new situations we found ourselves in, I am offering some of my thoughts and words.

On mother's day, my daughters found themselves 6 years without their mother. They were all too young to lose someone so important in their lives. I am not, and will never be a suitable replacement. I just try, with all my human failings, to be the best Dad I can be. Remember her in your hearts. Share your stories with each other. You share that common loss. If there is anyone that you should talk to, it should be your sisters. You know each other, and could comfort each other if you wish.

Don't fight the tears, the anger, or even the joy you feel when thinking of those you lost. Yes, you should curb your responses to some feelings. Good social contact almost demands it. But try to recognize those feelings. If you need to yell and scream, be open about it. Tell people why you are mad. Try not to take these feelings out on others, but share them. Let the tears fall, if someone asks why, share the reason. It is much easier for us as people to share the good times. WE MUST make the effort to share the hard times with people. Good friends will support us in that. Of course you may not want to share those hard times with the wrong people (social graces, covering your back, ect.).

Don't be totally consumed by the past. This is a very hard one (I know from experience). At some point the past has to become the past. For each of us that is a different time. In fact, from day to day it may be different. Let it go when you are

able. Again, look for help.

I don't pretend to know all you are going through. You are all different. You are all in different situations. I know what it is like to lose my parents, but that came after I had many years to share with them, and I was on my own. I don't know what it was like to have a depressed widowed father responsible for me. I don't know what it was like for you not to have your mother there for you on the important days of your life. I only know what it was like not to have 1/2 of me available at those same times.

Know that I will listen and offer advice (unless you tell me to just listen) and I love you all. I'm only a phone call or two away. And one more thing, ask your sisters if they have read this.

Changing Tides

Unlike the precision of the tides, you will never know which way the wind will blow. The tides come in and go out on a very precise schedule. They have charts made for high and low tides in areas where that is important. The winds of the day can make the tide higher or lower, but it will not cause the tides to cease.

Life is very much like the tides, it flows in an almost predictable pattern. We are born, we live and then we die. The length and form of our lives depends on other influences. Inland the tides are never noticed, but they can be measured with the right equipment. On some ocean fronts you will see the tides marked on the beaches. In other places you see the marks of the tides on cliff walls. Much the same with our lives. We can sometimes see the tides and other times they are

barely noticeable.

It is that way until something changes. Winds blow in, the coast line changes and the tides come in with quick fury. The winds change, and in our life things change.

We never know which way the wind will blow but we must prepare for the tides.

A cold wind blew tonight, and I was not prepared....

You knew my unspoken words. You knew the way my mind worked. You knew things before I knew them myself. You knew my heart, and I miss yours.