

The Most Important Things

Hey Gang!

Thanks to all of you who attended the concert last night. We had one of the best shows we have ever given. The crowd was wonderful and the band was really tight. I was on cloud nine!

Tonight as I drove back from a SAC (School Advisory Council) meeting at my daughter's school I was listening to a book on tape. Books on tape are a great way to pass the time on the endless drives I make to get to the next gig. I love the chance to listen to subjects that I might not have time to read up on because driving gives me time in which to lend an ear. I abruptly turned off the cassette after it asked me to stop and write down the three most important things to me. I found myself almost stumped by a desire to answer what could be considered a trick question in the company of others. There was a moment of nothing in my mind, when I asked myself this question. In a flash, the answer came to me like a gavel pounding on a judge's bench. Time, Time, Time. Time to be creative; time to be with my family; and time to be alone. While this answer seems like only one value - it isn't. We work; we give our time. We clean the house; we give up our time. We obligate ourselves to things we think we should do; we give up our time. Why is it that we save for last the things we love and value the most?

Yes, the practical You will step up to the plate and say, "if I don't work, I don't eat" - I'm with you. Consider this - do you love what you do? When you obligate yourself to others are they the people you love? Do you give your time based on your values or the values of others? If you can keep this in mind when you make decisions about your life, don't you think it could be easier to be happy? Your perception will be shifted to an appreciation for the moments you spend in service to your family because you love them instead of thinking you owe them. Your time gains a personal and intimate value that makes no apologies to anyone who differs with you about YOUR choices in using YOUR time.

At Christmas, my daughter got a GameCube and a game called the SIMS. The SIMS (for those of you without access to children) is a game where you create a person from top to bottom. You select its sex, coloring, shape, clothing, job and even sun sign. The sun sign dictates the personality of the SIM. The goal of the game is to make your SIM get through life and make sure it gets all the necessary things like food, sleep, socialization, trips to the bathroom (! true!),etc. You also need to make sure your SIM makes it to work so they can earn money and buy things. If you take good care of your SIM you will know because they have a little "happiness gauge" in the corner of the TV screen. I got interested enough in the game to build my very own SIM. My SIM was a dark haired, medium build, funky clad Libra I named Zoe Saws. This gave her the personality trait of being very social, not too neat and none too ambitious.

Three hours later I was on a suicide watch for my SIM! I was unable to keep her happy. It seems we had a little conflict of personality traits. I felt I needed to improve her work habits by making sure she got plenty of rest and got to work on time. When she got home from work I made her clean up the messes that accrued in the house from the sloppy

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roommate she was saddled with during the game. I wouldn't let her go out and socialize until everything was taken care of. I thought this a stable approach to her life. In the second hour she started having crying jags and angry moments. I let her go visit her mom and friends more but then she started missing work and there were flies buzzing around in her home. So I reined her back in and made her clean up and rest more for work... by the third hour, she had locked herself in the bathroom and she wouldn't come out! She was despondent and very unhappy. I couldn't keep up with her needs, and I got frustrated. So I left the game to my daughter to takeover from my failure to succeed with the SIM.

I returned to find Dagny had brought her around to a better perspective, she was happy and productive at her new job in her new digs. I watched my daughter play the SIMS and then I saw how she turned Zoe around. Dagny let her do things she liked to do, got her out of the house more to socialize AND she got her a maid. My daughter had compassion for the SIM'S needs and worked toward them. I wanted to mold her into my values. This doesn't work in the game and guess what? It really doesn't work in life either. I learned something valuable but it didn't make it home to my heart until I started this letter to you. I hope this hit the mark.

Namaste,
Stacey