

Making a Living or Living a Life

People of character have the integrity to do what is right even when it is likely to cost them more than they want to pay and more than they think is fair. - Michael S. Josephson

It's the little things we do day-in and day-out that count. That is the way we teach children, the way we teach each other, the way we do our jobs, and the way we make positive differences for others and ourselves each day. Often, the difference between a successful career, marriage, friendship and a happy life versus a mediocre career, struggling marriage and keeping friends, and just being unhappy with life in general are the little things left undone. One of the secrets of a successful life is to treat all disasters as incidents and none of the incidents as disasters. It could be that the difference between a happy life and a life with friction consists of leaving one or two things unsaid each day.

It is in the little things that we shape our lives, and consequently, we shape and influence relationships not on the grand scheme of life, but through day to day living. As we grow older, some types of central relationships are absolutely vital for our ongoing development. Without them we do not develop to our full potential. It is important to learn early in life that positive relationships consist of giving to one another and never taking from one another.

But is it really possible? Can people create and maintain a great relationship? You may not think so, because in your search for a meaningful relationship, you may have only met with failure and disappointment. In fact, if you're like some people you may have given up completely. You may have come to expect that any meaningful relationship you have will end up being quite painful -- nothing will ever change and you'll never get what you really need. It would be really sad to go through life with this attitude, because things don't have to be this way.

Life provides us with many forks in the road, a time to pause and consider other options. You can continue to head down the path you're on, which promises to be easy because your inertia is already pushing you in this direction. You won't have to make any changes whatsoever. The problem, though, is that the old way may be a lifetime filled with frustrating relationships and bad choices. But, hey, it will be easy, so many folks will just keep floating down this road ... complaining all the way.

But there's another route you can take to find a positive relationship. However, a journey down this path promises to be much harder and perhaps slower going. Yet when you've reached the end, the rewards could be tremendous. It's just that the process to get there will require much more effort on your part. This path will also challenge you to uncover the real issues in your life that effect your relationship with yourself and others -- some of which, you may not want to think about.

Understanding who you are is a struggle, but it's a battle worth fighting. Doing anything less than this is a disservice to you and those around you. The process never ends. So, the choices we make are ultimately our personal responsibility. If we don't have the best of everything, we will still win the game of living if we make the best of everything we do have. A basic fact is that it isn't how much time we have to spend in life; it's how we spend the time. Nothing is a waste of time if we use the experience wisely and make positive changes for future outcomes. James T. Adams said it quite well, "There are obviously two educations. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live." I have also seen the following..."Work honestly to earn your pay, but don't get so busy in making a living that you forget to make a life.