

Taking time to notice what's dear

[Mark Pavilons](#)



?If I died tomorrow, what is one thing you would always remember about me??

This question made its rounds on Facebook over the weekend.

It's quite an interesting query, perhaps a little self-serving, but it does offer some food for thought.

I think we'd all like to be remembered by our loved ones, of course for our finer qualities. As parents we try desperately not to ?wound??our youngins with harsh words or ego-deflating comments. We don't want to be remembered as disciplinarians, but as wonderful parents.

I think our memories and opinions change with age, wisdom and perspective.

My dad was not known for his winning personality or his fun-loving nature. But when he did laugh, it was a biggie. I?remember watching him laugh to the point of tears during an episode of the Carol Burnett Show, starring Tim Conway, Vicki Lawrence and Harvey Korman. Priceless.

By comparison, my dad literally invented the sour look or what's commonly referred to today as ?stink eye.? When he was mad or disappointed, boy did you know it!

But these are minor things in the big picture.

What I remember most about him was his passion for the environment and growing evergreens, political justice, caring for his family and travelling.

My mom, who made it to just shy of her 80th birthday, had a lasting impact on my family. She had the opportunity to really enjoy her grandchildren and that's something that not only helped bring joy to her life, but theirs as well.

They will never forget her home-cooked dinners, stories, card-playing and laughter.

I remember her love of the simple things in life ? relaxing with a good book on the beach; watching a good movie or compelling TV mini-series; feeling the sun on her face as she had her morning coffee.

You see, previous generations were much simpler, even though they likely saw the greatest changes during their lifetimes.

They grew up during the Second World War; they knew what fear, hunger and death were all about. They worked hard to have a decent life for themselves and their families and they tried to instill some fundamental yet time-honoured values in their children.

They loved having a good time and sharing it with family and friends.

So, to remember my parents is to remember all that came before them and what they endured. I?can never truly empathize with what they went through during their teenage years and coming to a new country to make a new life for themselves. I?doubt many 20-somethings today are even capable of making such a journey.

Maybe my dad wasn't my best friend or ?buddy.??He didn't know how. He didn't have to be.

My mom was very loving and while she enjoyed all of her family members, she quite liked her ?alone time.?

Both had painful memories and seldom discussed them.

It's funny when we become parents ourselves, the characteristics we bring to the table from our own parents.

It's a totally different world today, but age-old sentiments and human qualities are never out of date. Things like good manners, a solid work ethic, a respect for your elders and a consideration of history never go out of style.

That's the beauty of our predicament here on earth. We learn, grow and pass on these things to our offspring. It's the circle of life. We're lucky that we're here in the first place. If you think about it, in order for us to be here today, we have to have thousands of years of unbroken lineage ? in fact we all can trace our roots to the very beginning. Our ancestors beat the odds ? survived diseases like the Plague, lived through the Crusades and various other global conflicts.

To deny our past is to deny who we are.

But back to the original question at the outset of my column.

The qualities of those we know should be cherished daily and enjoyed.

I love my wife and all of my children for all of their strengths, weaknesses, faults and positive characteristics. For my wife of almost 19 years, the same qualities that attracted me to her in the first place are still there. Sure we all change with age and are impacted by the world around us, but deep inside we are great souls.

I would find it hard to describe just one thing I'd remember about her most. I?admire her strength, will, determination, sense of right and wrong, mothering skills and compassion for others.

My children are still evolving and pieces of their personal puzzles are still being shaped.

They are all curious, head-strong thrill-seekers. They are emotional critters. Their laughter can make the very soul of the earth jiggle.

I would miss everything about them.

As for me, well it's not really for me to say. Others always have the final word.

I would like to be known for being fair, logical, loving with a razor-sharp wit and odd sense of humour. I?am what I am.

I'm shaped by my past, and I continue to change thanks to my present.

The bottom line is to take notice of the wonderful qualities that human beings possess. They're all we have, so we may as well enjoy them ? to the point of tears!