



What is the measure of a life?

To me the love and intent with which you live your life is the most important legacy you can enrich this earth with. My mom thought that she did not accomplish a lot in her life and I took it as a challenge to show her how many lives she's enriched.

Words can only attempt to explain what and who a person is. But we are so much more, and while we do not always use all of our abilities how we are with others becomes our life. She was loving to everyone she met. Her kindness reached beyond her material possessions, she gave of herself.

I will miss hearing her voice and being in her company, but I know that who she is, was not the body that she inherited, but the spirit that lived with that body.

I know that I just have to think about her and she is with me. I know that love doesn't end with death but carries on forever. I know that as much as she has been a peaceful person, she is now so much more at peace.

The beauty of her spirit continues to live on in all the lives she touched. Her ability to affect others in her own quiet and caring manner changed the lives of others. I know it changed mine, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to let her know that, and feel blessed to have been a part of her life.

To my MOM I love you always.

Dedicated to the memory of Sybil D. Fernando

January 19th, 1931 - November 20th, 2005

Introduction

Even as a child I knew that life was simple but only seemed difficult because people complicate it. I saw people fighting and even to this day a part of me feels pain when I see the un-necessary pain and suffering caused by personal conflicts. I could not understand why people had to fight when cooperation made more sense.

As an adult I've had to face the reality that our world operates by different rules. Fair play, which we try to teach our children, is rarely mirrored by the world we see and experience. Most people act like the only way to get what we want means that someone else has to lose.

When I was 11 my mother decided to convert from Catholicism and we started attending our local AME church. The structure of the Catholic church gave way to the evangelical fervency of the Methodist Church. My favourite part of church was the conversations I had with the pastor. We discussed the bible and how its lessons provided a framework for living with love. It must have meant something to him also as unbeknownst to me one Sunday he introduced me as the speaker and asked me to come up front.

I remember feeling nervous but confident. I don't remember what the theme was or what I said, but do remember the ease with which the words flowed. When I was finished (approximately 5 minutes), I sat down and listened as he continued my talk for another 30 minutes. (Maybe 5 minutes is not enough to get a message across). What I marvel at today is that I did this without preparation of any kind and just said what came to me, without fear, trusting totally, and speaking from my heart.

After that I was asked to speak every two months or so. While I may not remember the words I do remember my philosophy on life and the bible. I knew that the messages and lessons of the bible should not be applied literally as we live in a different time with different problems. I felt that while the stories were great the lessons needed to change or be adapted. The underlying principle was that we are divine beings meant to live with love for each other and ourselves.

This led to the belief that life as we are living is limiting, as we don't seem to recognize the immense capabilities we have. I also felt that a new way of being would slowly be revealed to me over the years. (What I now realize is that meant experiencing life's difficulties first hand). I knew that when I was older I would "get it".

I've always cared about others wanting to help in any way that I could. (The best compliment I've ever received was my mother telling me that I was always the most loving person she'd known). When I was 8 years old we lived in the country and I had to walk about two miles to school each day. On my way to school I passed a home where two older ladies lived, and each morning I would stop and asked if there was anything I could get for them at the junction. Thirty



years later my mother said they still asked about me every-time she saw them. We impact the lives of others by the little things we do, without regard for personal gain. Little things for us may mean a lot for others and that is one way we can simplify life for each other.

I moved to Canada with my father and step-mother (one of the two mothers to whom this book is dedicated) when I was about to turn 14 years old. It was at this time I discovered that I was shy, finding it difficult to talk to other people because I was concerned about what they thought of me. I realized that being shy was holding me back from taking the opportunities that lead to positive experiences, and that was not how I wanted to live.

When I was 17 this lead to reading self-help books and one of the first I can remember was *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Dr. Maxwell Maltz. The essence of the message was how Dr. Maltz's explained the workings of our mind, and how we perceive our reality based on what we believe. Our reality IS our perception of our world coloured by how we feel about our experiences. We each use a different brush and different colours. So while the underlying foundation (life) is the same, we each paint it differently.

As an adult I discovered *The Four Agreements* by don Miguel Ruiz. A simple four step guide to a living a life of peace, a copy of which I keep on my desk.

1. Be Impeccable with your word.
2. Don't take anything personally.
3. Don't make assumptions.
4. Always do your best.

Another of his books "*Mastery of Love*" helped remind me of the importance of loving unconditionally. We've been taught that love comes with a price. Our understanding of love is usually based on others acting, and doing certain things to continue to receive our love. No amount of outside love can fill the void that a lack of self-love creates within us.

When I was 44 years old I experienced the most difficult period in my life. My wife and I separated and what caused the most difficulty was realizing that the image I had in my mind about our relationship was much different than reality. I felt adrift, without direction, in a way I can best describe as being in an ocean of despair.

It was then I really started looking for answers, and to truly understand the purpose of our existence. I would drop my son at school and found sanctuary in our local conservatory, a place in nature that gave me the peace I couldn't find at home. As difficult as life was at the time I realized that sometimes change is forced upon us so that we will recognize that we are more than we are allowing ourselves to be. For that reason I was thankful for the experience as I recognized the opportunity to allow my spirit more expression in my life.

Each relationship since then has helped me recognize something else about myself. For example:

- * It isn't fair to have expectations of others based on my personal needs.
- * To truly live, I must allow the people in my life to choose their own destiny and not take their comments and actions personally.
- * I must allow others the freedom to fully express themselves at all times, even if that includes me not being a part of their daily lives.

* It's easy to be centered and have inner peace when alone but the challenge is doing so within a relationship of any kind.

* I learned that as much as we would like it to be otherwise, it's the difficulties we face that makes life worth living. It's like music. Without silence between notes, music loses its beauty and becomes noise. So it is with life, our challenges help us appreciate life more fully when everything seems to be operating smoothly.

* I've also realized that we must learn to embrace our difficulties because they serve as a reminder of our creative capabilities, and our ability to choose how we live.

* Just because a relationship doesn't last doesn't mean it didn't work.

It was at this time I discovered the *Conversations with God* books by Neale Donald Walsch. I had found a "truth" that mirrored how I felt inside. I consider this one of the most profound set of books I've ever read on spirituality and God, and in some ways that this was what my bible could be. Yet, even though I'd read the bible many times, I've always been careful not to make any particular book the only truth. The true ability of profound works is to ignite the spark within that guides us to finding the divine within ourselves, and more importantly, experiencing God in our daily experiences.

One night after a particularly difficult day with my ex-wife, I decided that I would have my own "*Conversation with God*". I asked, "Why isn't my life working"? "Why is life so difficult"? I needed answers and was prepared to sit for as long as it took. Within a minute the words expressed on page ___ (I asked... and God responds) came to me.

Here is a sample: "The answers are within dear one. They always are. The moment you ask the question the answer already exists. In whatever you do, whatever you feel there it is. You do not have to wait for me, you decide, that is how I experience life, through you. The reason you feel the way you do is because you don't trust yourself. That is your downfall, feeling that you have to wait for my guidance. It is not my guidance you seek but your own. Look inside yourself".

I believe that there is an energy that exists in everything including us. That energy never dies, it never fades, it just changes form. Our thoughts use this energy to create our experiences and possessions for the expansion of our being. I believe we are each a part of that energy doing what energy does - create.

I also believe that this energy is light. Quantum Physics is well on the way to proving that everything is made of strings of light, and this light oscillates, vibrates, and changes form according to the observer.

In John 12:36; Jesus states "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light". He also considers himself as a light onto the world. John 12:45; "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness".

John 14:12; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."



I believe the message is that we are capable of great things when we believe in and accept the light within us and our world. If we choose this belief, we then view everyone we meet as God expressing himself/herself/itself in a different form. When we live like this we automatically treat others with respect and love. We accept them as they present themselves, which they do with every action, every word and every thought.

At times I've read what I've written and thought, Where did that come from? It's then I realize that at certain times in our lives, we open ourselves and allow the divine within us to fully express its presence. We become more aware of a higher connection and utilize this to bring answers to the questions and challenges we face.

Although I use the word God, I know that the word God evokes strong emotions. It is my choice, however equally powerful are the words, energy, love, light and life. If you feel challenged using the word God, I ask that you substitute, energy, light, life or any other word you are more comfortable with.

As I've shared my writings with others, They've responded by asking for copies to put on their fridge or somewhere they could read it daily. They've also asked for a copy of the book when it is published, because it speaks to them on such a deep level. So after being asked numerous times "When am I going to write a book?" – I finally got around to putting it all together incorporating my other love, photography.

In February 2007 I had lunch with Neale Donald Walsch, and as our conversation progressed, he suggested I write a book. When I told him that I already had but it was not yet published he asked to read it. As he read it he highlighted parts he thought was introducing information in a different way. After informing him that I wasn't fully satisfied with the working title "Inspire Within", he suggested the title "Uncomplicating your life" "Simple Truths that can change everything".

I offer the following with the hope that as you read it, you feel a connection to the divine spark within that I believe is the part of God that is always with us all.