

Living in the

NOW

Life is short. And *we should all strive to make the very most of our time on earth, writes Sharmini Hensen.*

I was driving home after a lovely evening with a dear friend. On the highway I saw a crumpled, motionless body, people hovering and cars stopping to assist. I said a prayer and was reminded of the brevity of life. One moment we are here, the next we're gone. So what fragments of our life do we leave behind? How did we live our life? Was it a worthy life? How will we be remembered for years to come?

So let's consciously create our life, while we have the gift of life. I have been thinking about it for a long while. Eventually, we all have to face our own mortality. Death is such a taboo topic in our society. It is surrounded by mysteries and scary folklore. Heaven forbid we even mention death and dying. We say "if we die" not "when we die". The only choice we have is how we live it, creating the experience of life we truly desire. It is possible to have it all.

Firstly, let us reframe death. I remember sitting one weekend having my roti canai breakfast while my son was reading the newspapers. He saw articles about wars, accidents and all the gory, unfortunate events that occur daily. And he asked me 'why'? I explained that sometimes, people choose to fight to reach a solution regardless of who gets hurt. My answer did not satisfy him. Finally, I understood what he was really asking. "What if I die, Mommy?"

If you thought the sex question was difficult, try this one. I took a deep breath and shared with him my thoughts and beliefs

about the subject.

"Most parents outlive their children, son," I said to him. "However, if you should go before me, I would be very sad. I would cry for the loss of you. While your body is gone, I will always have my memories of you and it will warm my heart. Thoughts of you will remind me of how much I love you and how you love me. And your spirit lives on that way. Your spirit will never die. You'll be my angel. When I close my eyes, I will feel you in my heart and your presence all around me. I will remember you always and in all ways. Is that a good enough answer? Do you understand?"

He smiled and nodded, pleased.

WE NEED A NEW VIEW ON LIFE AND LIVING.

Life begins when you let go of the fear of dying. How do you do that? **Here are tools I have learned to use:**

Live like today is your last day on earth

Thinking like this gives you a new perspective. Would you be doing what you are doing now? If your answer is 'no', make a list of what you are doing now and examine each item closely. What needs to be changes immediately? It's probably the one that's causing you the greatest pain. If it's a job, look for new one. That's easy but what if it's your relationship, with your dad? You cannot divorce him or change him for a new one. If it was your last few hours, what would you say to him? What

action would you take this very moment? How would you like to feel about him now? How would like him to feel about you after you go? You start to realize that you can do something different right now.

You may have noticed how I have chosen to focus my examples on relationships rather than on money, a house or something tangible. Why? Because in the end, it is the part of you that you leave behind with the ones you love that defines the meaning of your whole existence.

You deserve to have at this moment all the experiences you desire in all areas of your life: career, relationships, family, spirituality and health to live everyday like it was your last day, full and fulfilled.

So really what is in the way? Pride, Pain, Righteousness, Anger, Fear, Disappointment and the list goes on and on for most of us. We all carry them faithfully like a treasure chest, safely buried within us.

But in the end, we all turn to dust. Nothing really matters then. What does matter is NOW. What would you do NOW? How much longer would you wait? It truly is all about you and only you. Let unsatisfactory matters and unsatisfactory people in the past remain in the past. And you'll be surprised at what that would do for your peace of mind.

Make things better, not worse

That brings us to the next point. Before you say or do something, ask yourself, "Will this improve the situation? So, you could either vent

“Life begins when you let go of the fear of dying”

your hurt and anger at your dad for leaving you and your mom or you might say, “I forgive you and I love you”. Or you could simply sit quietly, close your eyes and remember all the good times you shared with him and all wonderful moments you will create now.

Who benefits? You or the other person?

I choose win win. There are moments when you are rushing out the door and drama unfolds with the kids and the maid, all at the same time. Been there? And really you are so late for your appointment with that important client so you can't stop.

What do I do? I say to my son, “I'm sorry I screamed at you. I'm running late, and that's no

excuse. Forgive me?” He ignores me. The power struggle unfolds. “You know, I really don't want us to have a bad day. Let's make it better now ok?” Still silence.

“Okay”, I say and walk to my car. Moments before I drive away, he comes to the gate and says, “I am sorry.” Then he runs back in, leaving both of us smiling. And the client understands and is happy to wait because I am being my best.

When you decide to leave situations and experiences with people, in the best possible state every moment of every day, your life begins to transform. Slowly you realize that the emotional baggage you accumulate as you go through life lessens. You begin to engineer your life as you want it.

At work, you do what you are good at doing and ask to pass on what you're not so good at doing. That's called leveraging or working synergistically. The same applies to your relationships. Leverage on each other's strengths and know that it is why opposites attract. You would not want another you in the relationship, would you?

You pick only what brings you the best experiences: joy, passion, love, caring, giving, respect and that wonderful stuff. You let go and drop what does not. Your life begins to have clarity and focus because now, you have only what you want. You feel the richness that life has to offer. You are now living in the present... when you experience the bliss of being in the present, you will always only choose to live in the NOW!

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