

No regrets

FOUR RESOLUTIONS THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

“**H**e’s crashing,” was the last thing I heard the emergency medical technician say before my heart stopped. When I regained consciousness, I was lying in an ambulance. With the sirens wailing and the equipment around me shifting from side to side, I knew we were moving at full speed. I looked through the glass panels in the back door of the ambulance and saw my frightened wife and daughter in the car following closely behind.

“This is it,” I thought, as the technician scrambled around me, inserting needles and connecting electrodes. “This is my last moment.”

And then I had a revelation that changed me forever.

Suddenly, 50 years of living condensed into a single realization: I had no regrets.

Certainly, I wanted more days to live, and there were things I would have done differently given the chance. This is not what I mean. What I mean is that, in that moment, I realized I had lived the life I wanted to live.

I had loved the people in my life with all my heart. I had also pursued my life’s work with passion and dedication, found activities that I loved and made time for them, and had given myself to those causes that were important to me. If this moment were to be my last, then I would pass from this world to the next knowing that I had done what I wanted to do. No regrets.

In a moment in which I

believed I was dying, I learned the greatest lesson about living.

I learned that death is not a tragedy. The tragedy is what dies inside you still unborn — the talent you never developed, the dreams you never followed and the people whom you never told how much you loved them. Instead of fearing death, fear the moment when you will realize all that you could have done with your life but didn’t because you were too busy, too tired or too scared to make it happen.

Recovering in my hospital bed in the days that followed, I made four resolutions that transformed my life, and I know they can do the same for you.

I will truly love the people in my life. No one has ever died asking to be surrounded by all the awards he or she had won. In your final moment, you will ask for the people who love you, and all you will want them to know is how much you loved them. Make a list today of the people who matter most and resolve to show them how much they mean to you before this week is over.

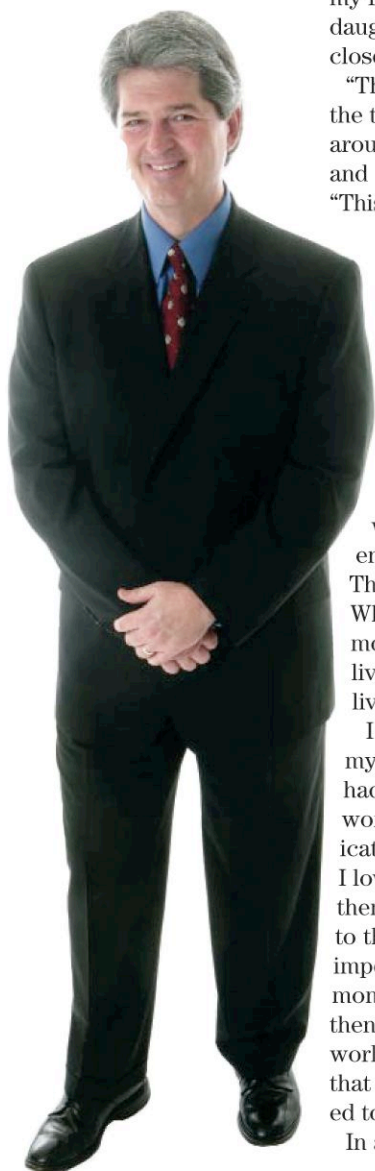
I will forgive those who have hurt me. No matter what has happened to you, withholding your forgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person will get sick. You can decide to

never be hurt by them again without carrying anger, bitterness and resentment inside you every day.

Close your eyes now, see the face of each person who has harmed you and extend him or her your forgiveness. In your final moments, most of what has upset you in life will seem unimportant anyway. Adopt that perspective now, and you will be able to forgive.

I will pursue my dreams, despite my fears. If today were your last day, how many of your dreams would die unfulfilled? As painful as this realization may be, the greater pain will be in realizing how insignificant the fears were that held you back. Fear of failing, embarrassment or criticism will be poor excuses for not experiencing all that your heart desired. Bring your forgotten dreams to life by taking one small step toward them this week, despite your fears.

I will live each day as though it were my last. Three hours before my ambulance ride, I was having dinner with my wife and daughter at a favorite restaurant, and life couldn’t have been better. But if I had known it was our last meal, imagine what I would have said and how present I would have been. Begin each day with the perspective that it could be your last, and it will change your life. <<



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