

The Gift of Our Life Purpose

By Karel Murray, CSP

Being an eternal optimist must be tiring; living with one must be even harder. Imagine trying to have a conversation where all you want to do is break your day down into the segments of frustration you experienced and hang onto the low feeling because that is where you want to wallow...But the optimist counters every bad attitude statement with a new positive insight.

I wonder if optimists are a category of citizens who are a high crime statistic for assault?

After trying to bring a family member's perspective to the positive spectrum, I realized I'm the optimist in the family. Right now I'm a rookie optimist and currently hold the title "realist". I realized my status when I was discussing a medical condition I had last year and my friend, a kind hearted soul, commiserated with me about the recovery process. In response to her comforting supportive comments, I said "At least I didn't have to endure skin grafts due to an wild animal attack."

Where in God's name did that come from?

That's when I understood that by thinking of every bad thing that happened to me, I can find a worse situation to compare it to and feel better - that what I experienced wasn't so bad. It's the perspective of "it could have been worse" that has pushed me solidly into the realist frame of mind.

Quite frankly, I've developed this mind set from watching the movies. I've never had to run away from rabid zombies, hide from a serial murderer, crouch in the floor of a car as bullets ricochet around the interior, try to feed myself in the wild with no camping supplies, survived the aftermath of an atomic explosion, or endure a hostile marriage. I've never participated in a 1,000 mile race on my horse in the desert, fought off invading aliens or suffered from crippling fear by storming the beach in Normandy. These cinema images of human perseverance and courage raise our spirit when we realize anything is possible as long as we don't give up.

Humans have the capacity for incredible endurance and I've begun to wonder what I'm capable of. And I'm not alone. Perhaps it's this thought that drives people to create bucket lists which involve physical hardship or trips to remote locations shunning the comforts of a middle class life. How do we know what we can do until we experience it?

Renewal of spirit and life perspective is something that we can pursue with purpose. Looking for those opportunities that can truly show us what we are made of has to create a foundation of strength that will help us the rest of our lives. Just ask Mark LeBlanc who discovered what he was capable of when he walked the 500 miles, Camino de Santiago in Northern Spain. The inspiration he gained from his walk resonates in his book "Never Be the Same".

I think it is finally time to make the life experience list and start crossing off items one at a time. After all, we only have the here and now, and as each day passes we perhaps get further and further from the gift of our life purpose.

You never know what is around the corner...isn't it time to find out?

Karel Murray, author, humorist and business trainer speaks nationally and internationally. She is the author of "Hitting Our Stride: Women, Work and What Matters", "Straight Talk – Getting Off the Curb", co-author of "Extreme Excellence" and publishes a monthly online newsletter, "Think Forward® which has thousands of subscribers, The Profitability Blueprint Series: Career Building Concepts for the Real Estate Licensee and numerous articles in local, regional, and national publications. You can listen to exciting interviews at <http://www.JustForAMomentPodcast.com>. You can contact her at karel@karel.com or call 866-817-2986 or access her web site at <http://www.karel.com>