

The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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Keeping Your Dreams Alive

Making Marriage Work After the Golden Anniversary (4)
By Norman & Ann Bales

We grew up listening to the song, "When I Grow Too Old To Dream" (lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II). The song expresses a promise to the one with whom life is shared. "When I grow too old to dream... Your love will live in my heart." It's an affirmation of unconditional commitment, and we surely need more of that in today's world. Nevertheless we've got a bit of a problem with the song.

We're septuagenarians (past seventy) and we haven't stopped dreaming. Furthermore we don't intend to. There's more to experience in life than we can possibly get around to in one lifetime.

There's a long list of people who achieved great things late in life.

- Ronald Reagan was pushing seventy when he became president of the United States.
- George Burns won an academy award when he was 80.
- Winston Churchill was

past eighty when he completed *A History of the English Speaking People*.

- When Gladstone became Prime Minister of England he was 83.
- Frank Lloyd Wright completed the Guggenheim Museum when he was 89.
- Grandma Moses was painting when she was 100.



We all know people who suffer a decline in mental ability in old age, and none of us can guarantee that we will be exempt. Our bodies may not function as well as they once did, but there's no reason why rational people shouldn't continue to dream as long as they live.

Longfellow wrote

*Ah, nothing is too late
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.*

Our dreams help keep our relationships alive and in a growth mode. We're privileged to know others who think the same way. Garth and Doris Black have been friends of ours for many years. They're older than we are. Garth is 80 and

Doris is 79. They've always had their dreams. Among other things they've dreamed of traveling to the South Pacific. At last they've been able to book a tour, and they're as excited as any two tourists you can imagine. We applaud them for sticking with their dream.

Maybe you won't ever be able to take a trip around the world, a Caribbean cruise, or a trip to Hawaii, but there's nothing to keep you from dreaming. We feel sorry for those who say, "We've already lived all our dreams."

Your dreams don't have to involve trips, entertainment experiences, and recreational fulfillment. More realistically, the dreams might involve relationship growth, spiritual development, more satisfactory communication. Maybe you've got some service project in mind that excites you. We know several older people who visit small churches for the purpose of lending a helping hand when those churches are struggling. It's amazing how unselfish service takes your mind off your aches and pains.

Maybe we just need to dream of a time when we can come to appreciate one another more, live more unselfish lives, and develop the

skills to become compassionate caregivers if our partners' health should decline.

A few years ago we met an 83 year old salesman. We got acquainted with him in the last three months of his life as he battled cancer. He was out making sales calls every work day until he was diagnosed with a terminal disease. We have always admired the way he chose to live his life. He was always looking forward to something else. To us that's a good way to live. Do you have any dreams? If not, why not?

—from *All About Families*, February, 2010



News & Notes

HARVARD AND ATHEIST MORALITY. One of the hottest debate topics between believers and atheists is whether atheism promotes immorality and Christianity opposes immorality. Atheists claim academic reasons to be moral and point out that people who claim to be Christians are frequently immoral. Harvard University has been at the center of this controversy because of its reputation and its emphasis on secularism and naturalism. Starting with the class of 2021 Harvard will deny students leadership positions and the right to apply for Rhodes and Fulbright scholarships if they are members of

single-sex fraternities or sororities. Harvard has semisecret societies called “final clubs.” Final club parties are “lavish affairs in which alcohol, cocaine, and freshman girls are brought in for the entertainment of privileged male members.” Harvard has been held up as an intellectual haven for free thinkers, but the morality demonstrated by the institution belies its claims. Source: *The Week*, May 27, 2016, page 19.

SKEPTICS CHILDREN'S CAMP CANCELLED. Several years ago the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI) began a summer camp for children to “have children walk away applying critical thinking skills.” The camp was considered by many skeptics to be an alternative to Christian camps, and a significant amount of energy was spent bashing religion. This past summer the camp was canceled because it was losing money and CSI considered it to be “no longer sustainable.” Those of us who have worked in summer camps know how difficult and demanding the camps are. It is no surprise that atheists and skeptics have found it to be more than they can tolerate, both in work and in finances.

WHEN YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD, YOU WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING. The “2015 Chapman University Survey of American Fears” reports that 41.4% of all Americans believe that places can be haunted by spirits, 26.5% believe the living and the dead can communicate with each other, 20.3% believe in alien visitation, and 13.9% believe that astrologers, fortune tellers, and psychics can

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foresee the future. When God is removed from people's thinking, their realization that they do not have a moral or secure guide in their lives leads them to accept alternatives that can be enormously destructive. This is why God warns his people to avoid these things (see Exodus 22:18; Galatians 5:20).

SO WHAT ARE THE REAL ODDS? Our DNA contains instructions for building proteins out of sequences of amino acids. There are 500 or so known amino acids, but life uses only 23. The average protein in a cell is about 450 amino acids long so there are 23^{450} or 10^{613} different proteins our DNA might construct. Life uses about 10 million proteins. If we took those 10^{613} possible proteins and split them into planet-proportioned groups of 10 million each, there would be 10^{606} groups. Astronomers tell us there are 10^{23} habitable planets at a maximum in the creation, so you could spread those groups of proteins over the planets in 10^{583} universes without having a single duplication of a single protein on any two planets. These numbers come from an interesting article by Dr. Jeff Hester in *Astronomy* magazine (September 2016, page 10). Planet Earth and the life on it is special, unique, and not an accident. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1).

—from *Does God Exist*, November/December, 2016