

## **7th Storyworth: What Things Do You Think You Cannot Live Without?**

This week's question is a bit weird, but I suppose I comprehend on some level, as it seeks to understand me at more of a philosophical than a historical level. Those who know me know I love cars, and especially Porsches, so it should take no genius to figure that would be near the top of my list. But I also have an even deeper need for friends with integrity – people upon whom I can depend and who will depend upon me.

Pretty obviously, I WANT my daughter and her family, but if I read the question literally, I am not sure their, nor frankly ANY other person's, disappearance would cause my DEATH. I am a pretty resilient personality, mostly because I find so much in life worth celebrating. But I would ABSOLUTELY be devastated by such tragedy. So I'll presume to state that up front, then we'll assume the question to represent less things like those physical needs such as food, shelter, and clothing which might be common to most of humanity, and instead get to some higher levels in Maslow's hierarchy, specifically around possessions and self-actualization.

Certainly in the latter of those it is hard to contemplate my survival were I to lose my sight, for instance. I have, however, adapted to the loss of much of my hearing, for example, without putting a bullet through my brain. So I interpret that to suggest that I am an adaptive person. I don't suffer fools gladly, but I'd be more likely to simply avoid them than to take more drastic action. And I think the question at hand wants to explore quality of life, as opposed to actual existence as a living organism. So, because I am a thinking person, I believe it would be a safe bet that losing awareness of my being ME would be pretty devastating. I FEAR things like Alzheimers and Dementia, but mostly because they would be things over which I would have no control, and self-control is high on my list of "needs".

Having now seen both sides of the equation, I have learned that money, per se, is only essential at a bare minimum to assure my survival, even though I have never really experienced poverty as all too many on the planet know it. Money may not be the most important thing, but it seems little advantage to not have ANY ;-)  
So it represents something more akin to lubricant in life, simply making most things less difficult. But were I to lose my Porsche, which I almost experienced as part of my divorce and subsequent bankruptcy, I would likely adapt to it, albeit not happily. Having NO personal vehicle would be a LOT more difficult, simply because I associate such with liberty, which is important to me. But I similarly cannot contemplate suicide for the loss of that either, although I can readily see I would certainly become depressed.

It IS correct, I believe, to assume that I need medicines, which is one of the reasons I do not "pine for" being in some earlier eon. Just as I have already observed that my Grandfather's pride in his ability to run a team of horses was based on the advantages during his time of having such skills, which during MY time are far less valuable than, for example, the ability to connect to and work with the rest of the internet economy. If I had less technical understanding of things I know, I would likely be less confident in their presence. But even that I don't see as lethal to my existence. I just understand that I am pretty much at MY optimal point in history.

As well, however, I recall the deep depressive state I was in as my career loss, divorce and bankruptcy became evident, something I dealt with poorly by threatening my health with a VERY slow bullet. I got above 450 lbs, mostly by eating and sleeping and little else. So I do grasp that an ancillary benefit to my knowing Dawn Clark has been her determination to help me become qualified for my hip replacement at 310 lbs, which has improved my quality of life even as Covid has prevented much of our enjoying the liberation that should have created, too. And I appreciate that I found ways to use my talents, which helped me to maintain my sanity throughout, whether by helping friends or the needed activities for arranging for my own residencies in Oswego County. Accordingly, I am appreciative of my technical abilities, without which I could not have afforded much of the existence I HAVE had since I can recall, even as I do miss some of my enjoyment from things which are now beyond my economic reality, such as most travel.

The travel pleasure stemmed from my ability to interact with and meet other cultures and people, and the myriad experiences doing so allowed me, which was a huge part of why my gig with GE as a global SQE was such a fabulous job for me. Interestingly, my IC career choice also enabled me to be there to cheer on my daughter when she was in high school sports, something I know few parents had the luxury of doing, even on a periodic basis. So I was fortunate to see her become a productive adult, and now a parent herself. Priceless ;-)

I like music. And from the moment I went to Clarkson, dragging my full trap drum set to eventually rarely get its use, which led to my deciding to take up guitar because I felt a need to perform for others, which exists to this day, I have observed that my actual use of the guitar has had periodic interruptions. For almost five years around the time of my divorce I neglected it, then picked it up again when I was established in Oswego County, and began finding venues to perform. Sadly, over the past twelve months of Covid, it has languished while other activities have taken precedence. But I recently picked it back up and am determined to become prepared again to provide entertainment services. And recognize that a 12 string requires calluses on my fingers which have disappeared through disuse. Time to build them up again ;-)

And while I mentioned Dawn Clark earlier, I have by no means indicated her real essential nature to my existence. She showed up almost by divine intervention when I had all but given up on finding a woman of substance and integrity with whom to share whatever is to be left of my life, and I have been the fortunate recipient of her love for just under two years now, even as I recall my own difficulties in meeting and eventually establishing a relationship with a new person. I would be very remiss in not acknowledging how important her partnership has become, and I am VERY fortunate we hit it off so well, since we both know that reaching 70 years of age makes adjusting to living with another person perhaps one of the most difficult things one can do. Nobody is perfect, including (perhaps even ESPECIALLY ;-)) me, but her love has been evident and I hope some day to prove myself worthy. However, I am too familiar with statistics to not have some concerns about the natural longevity potential of each of us, and can only hope ;-)

I HAVE come to HATE winter weather in CNY, and Dawn's interest in a place in FL has proven to dovetail well with my own. So I was very pleased when she decided we should have both our names on our property title here, since that provides me as well some sense of residential security, which my economics otherwise could not assure. The odd rules for legal partnerships like marriage potentially would adversely affect us both economically, so is far from likely anytime soon. But I intend to make changes in my will to assure she has as much protection as possible in the event of my "can't live without" somehow coming into play.

Which pretty much sums up my approach to the question as asked; I intend to be the best person I can for those I love, and to hope for their love as well, WHATEVER tomorrow might throw at us. And I am confident that, so long as I have any ability to impact that situation, I will do so in whatever way best benefits those I love as well. Which pretty much make everything else a tradeoff variable, subject to that interest ;-)

Joe Holzer 2/9/2021