

## **37th Storyworth: What Was One Of Your Best Days You Can Remember?**

There have been a lot of them, so picking one will be difficult. It should also be pointed out that few, if any, “Best Days” have been self-evident at the time, and one only recalls them as such because of what happens subsequently which MAKES them that way. Many are often quite unremarkable at the time, and only become memorable in light of those other days which add up to making them so special.

Romantic movies, for example, suggest that women look forward to their wedding days as the most important day of their lives. I certainly hope that future women will have changed on that regard because I know of NO man who would ever describe his wedding day that way. More often, if he associated his “best day” with that relationship at all, he would probably say that had been the day he had first met her, or the day she accepted his proposal, rather than the busy day of the ceremony and everything that entailed. And for my situation, having eventually become divorced, such memories are at best tinged with sadness and a sense of failure, especially if one has integrity enough to actually recall the vows we BOTH made so many years ago.

I can certainly recall with fondness my first day actually meeting Dawn, but mostly because we seem to have become a well matched couple. However, I can also recall some sad days which make that day more painful too. And that is the nature of ongoing reality – it is hard NOT to factor, and having been burned before always wonder what will arrive around the next corner. Perhaps the better day to recall was the day last winter after Dawn decided to add my name to the title on our place in Florida, especially as she has ALSO told me more than once to return to my place in Parish. She had mentioned her sense that I had made no real demonstration of my own commitment to her, despite our agreed approach on things, which seems to have created a feeling of misunderstanding among her children. So, just prior our actual 24 month anniversary, I bought a matching engagement and wedding band set, and gave them to her as our “second anniversary” gift, so she would at least have an outward indicator for others that she was partnered again, having lost her husband to cancer two years before she met me, and she dare not take the financial hit which ACTUAL marriage to me would cause her, because some moron bureaucrat thinks seniors are too stupid to figure that all out. Oh well...

Career-wise days have also been memorable. Like the day I borrowed my sister Barb’s VW Thing to get from Stewart Airport to the Duracell HQ in Bethel CT to present myself as a possible Project Manager for what would ultimately become the basis for my acquiring my second Porsche. But that day only took on significance as each subsequent occurrence happened; success in developing the concept for the dual pak packaging from a single line via retrofit to existing lines, which was made all the more important when I received the call from the Duracell Package Engineering Director Victor on a particularly miserable day working a job with FelPro in Chicago where NOTHING of what was portrayed to me prior my accepting the job was in fact the truth, and my having to sell the Duracell equipment vendor Sencorp on its viability when they doubted they could meet Duracell’s timeline for implementation (they did) of the Ultra free-stand display blisters, and my learning later that J&J Packaging, the Duracell contract packaging vendor, had questioned why Victor would even consider asking any OTHER PM to become involved after I had solved the design concept so well.

I learned that same kind of loyalty from Dick Coffin, who prior to my Duracell work had hired me to work with GE DSO to implement barcoding and RFID technologies into thirteen warehouses, each of which wanted to do things the way they always had, but for which GE had a contract with IBM already in force, without any real deliverables required, when Dick’s PM suddenly left for greener pastures. When I found and renegotiated the errors in the contract, by trading off my personally developing GUIs for each warehouse to handshake with the IBM data handling for the Cobol based MRP system at GE, and Dick found a way to pay me back the income I thought I’d had to lose to get the job because of his fixed budget. The textbook definition of “integrity” ;-)

After the Duracell role had been completed, and I contacted Dick looking for another GE gig, he had hired me for the best job I ever had, as a Sourcing Quality Engineer, which lasted almost five years until the collapse of Enron, then 40% of GE Power's business, inspecting and qualifying vendors for electrical grid equipment worldwide, and traveling on GE's dime. I loved the job, which took me to all of Mexico, Canada, all over the USA, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Great Britain, France, Taiwan, Italy, and Australia. I was in Montreal on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001 and watched the two planes hit the World Trade Center while I was awaiting a setup for a heat run on a transformer test at Hydro-Quebec, and I was stuck there for an extra week while we tried to find a way for me to get back home across a border which was suddenly closed, and flights had been cancelled. I was fortunate to rent a car and drive down, and crossed back into NYS at the Mohawk Reservation, which might have been the ONLY border crossing open at all at the time. I continued to work with GE until the following spring, when they simply could no longer afford to keep me working.

Unfortunately, that coincided with Lynne's completing her NP schooling. And with no immediate prospects for my industrial career, I offered her my services to run her business office while she handled the clinical part. That choice led to the destruction of my marriage, and loss of my home, my credit and my career, because my age and circumstances made me an "untouchable" at precisely the wrong time. So, despite numerous people telling me how valuable my skills and knowledge are, I have yet to find any way to actually turn any of that into money. All of which makes my decision to work with Lynne in 2002 that much more miserable personally, in case anyone cares to know what a "worst day" looks like. Recognizing that, how does one reconcile the days which preceded that, good OR bad?

Of course, one could also describe the day I received my first US Patents, for the Pull Plug and then the entire module used in making the lowest-cost Reverse Osmosis Membranes for individual usage in the market possible, which occurred while I worked with Fastek, a Kodak spinoff. And where I developed the disposable filter cartridge with make-before-break shutoff valves so the process of filter change-out for magnetic media coating need not cause shutdown and hazmat suits, thereby making a much lower cost filter in usage. Those two concepts were the primary value which Fastek brought to their subsequent owner, right after they laid me off as no longer needed because they could do no more developmental work needing engineering like mine.

Or the day I received my patent for the Gaylord Se-Lin Labeler designed to work with a low-cost Epson, or similar rolling platen, dot matrix printer, which was a huge improvement on the prior art which needed cutting into a typewriter platen, and which enabled me to also patent the consumables, which were previously able to be sold by anybody. But those still didn't secure me a job, despite my ALSO developing for Gaylord to sell, specialty software which would scrape data from the OCLC Database to print those Se-Lin labels along with others for Library media labeling. THAT layoff, the final straw as a W-2 employee, led to my becoming an Independent Contractor from 1986 on. Which enabled all of my TRW, Duracell and GE work thereafter. So in one respect at least, that would someday BECOME a terrific day ;-)

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