

Things in Motion ...

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest...you cannot go into the same (river) twice. --Heraclitus (540?-480?)B.C.

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THE EMPTY CHAIR

With age comes added awareness of the passing of time. It behooves each of us to understand that there will come a day when there will be empty chairs at our table, and holes in our lives. We should prepare to suffer loneliness as well as to cause it; life has a final act and playing these scenes are roles for each of us. We can enrich the days of our lives immeasurably by adding to them a greater depth of love and friendship, which in turn will enrich the lives of others. Too often we begin to avoid those who suffer declining health; perhaps we fear their disease; perhaps we dislike so intensely the change that disease has wrought in their life that we shun them. How grossly unfair is such an attitude! Imagine how we would react if we were the victim—and how bitter would the pill of rejection be for us?

Admittedly, there are those who enter into their advanced years as unhappy, resentful, and quarrelsome people-haters—the ones we find repugnant and difficult at best. It is not easy to love such a person, yet these kinds of personalities need love and understanding as much, perhaps more than the rest of us. We pass up an opportunity to add quality to someone's life when we ignore them.

It is a sobering thought to imagine that the familiar face across the breakfast table might not be there some morning; that your bedroom might be empty at bedtime and that you have only an empty chair to share the movie you're watching. How different will be trips in your car with no one occupying the passenger's seat; no one to read maps for you or caution about upcoming exits. And we need to understand the effect on our life partner should we be the absent one. It may be true that time heals all wounds, but for the majority of us, the loss of our constant companion will be traumatic.

Since we cannot change the pattern of our life and alter the inevitable conclusion of it, how can we make the eventual separation less painful? There may be multiple answers which can be condensed to one essential: cherish the people you love and let them know it! Make amends for grief you may have caused someone; write a letter; send a greeting card; make a phone call—little things mean a lot, especially as we grow older. A few kind words can bring sunshine to a stormy day—try it! Should it be your sad lot to face that empty chair during future breakfasts, how comforting will it be to you that the departed one left knowing full well how dearly beloved he or she was to you. I will not let a day pass without making certain that my special one knows she is just that—my darling true love.



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