

# WORDS TO THE WISE

Class of 1957  

*Burlington High School, Burlington, Vermont*

We've been out there 50 years, flooded out,  
taken prisoner, dropped out of airplanes, brought men back  
from the moon, flown airplanes, run submarines, built big buildings  
and cool cars, been elected to public office, faced masked men with  
submachine guns on the Amazon River, cooked some great meals,  
taken some great trips, worked at Folsom Prison, married our  
sweethearts, and been  betrayed, worked hard,  
climbed mountains,  lived in Tonga, had  
fun, been good wives and good husbands,  
raised and smelled some beautiful flowers -  
and are still out there giving it a go.

**We learned a few things some might find useful.**







## Dedicated to Young People Just Starting Out

**T**he 1957 Class at Burlington High School in Burlington, Vermont, created a new kind of reunion memoir for their 50th reunion. They answered thirty questions, telling about their loves and labors, parents and ancestors, what their life-threatening moments were, proud accomplishments, adventures, politics, religion and basic values. They told how they have dealt with the hardships in their lives and what lessons they learned. They have a few words to the wise and tricks of some trades to share with you here on the following pages. They are having fun, yet, if moving more slowly. Many are giving back in one way or another.

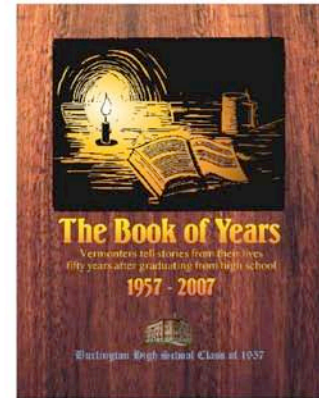
They had a lot to be thankful for. Their parents were hard-working, thrifty, good and unpretentious people. They gave their children some solid Golden Rule values. There was relatively little in the way of overt expressions of racism, class, political or religious prejudice around Burlington besides the outrageous cakewalk at the university. Every family was doing something as their part in pulling together to win the Second World War. Young people were helping tend Victory Gardens, jumping on tin cans to flatten them, becoming extra alert when the scary air raid sirens would go off and the families had to turn the lights out. They grew up with a work ethic.

Some classmates had relatives on the Mayflower, and one class member's ancestor was a major mover of that effort to seek religious freedom in this land. Another classmate's ancestor was the first governor of the independent nation of Vermont, then governor when it became the 14th state. Another was a notorious horse thief and philanderer. Another helped to burn more supposed witches than were killed in Salem. Many of us were the offspring or grandchildren of immigrants who had wanted us to fit into the American culture and leave the problems of the old country behind. Here everyone was in Burlington all on their best behavior and the young ones knew very little about the old countries.

Some couldn't wait to get away after high school – into that big, bustling world out there beyond the farms. Others had the good sense to stay in Vermont, a place that, fifty years later, many people feel is the best place to live in the nation. Many went to college. They all went to work.

They did hundreds of different jobs in dozens of states, helped put a man on the moon, built and staffed submarines and surface ships, fought wars, were frogmen, deck apes, developers and demolition coordinators, engineers, environmentalists and exterminators, a radiologist and a radio announcer, television broadcaster, postal worker, printer, a preacher, teachers and telephone operators, care givers and college professors. They have waved the flag and seen the dark side of the flag, are Republicans and Democrats, religious and atheist, employees and entrepreneurs, medical doctors and – don't you forget it or downplay it, thank you very much: Small Town New England Housewives and Mothers.

To learn more about "The Book of Years," you can go on the Internet to this website: <[www.tomwhitney.net](http://www.tomwhitney.net)>. You can download the whole book, or an article that tells how it was created, if perhaps you would like to create one for your class. "The Book of Years" is Copyright © by Tom Whitney for the Class of 1957 at Burlington High School.








# Advice for a young person just starting out . . .


Don't get into a pissing contest with a skunk. – Jim Bicknell




 Set goals and work hard to meet them. – *Bob Badger*

 You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.


 Follow your dreams and passions, especially if you can find a way to make a living doing it. – *Jim Bicknell*

 Be true to yourself.

 Don't follow someone else's lead.

 Don't be afraid of people (that one took years).


 Love conquers all.


 Be patient.

 Be understanding.


 Do unto others as you would have them unto you is always good.


– *Joyce Wagner Carlin*


 I have learned a lot from friends and others, most of which came from simply observing their “style,” for lack of a better word.


 Don't be forward, overbearing, aggressive or flamboyant in any new situation.


 Lay back and observe until you understand the dynamics. – *Lou Garcia*

 When I was in school I was not going to attend college. So I never realized until later how important English would be.


 When I eventually became a manager and had to write reports I wished I had paid more attention.

 Do not get married at a young age. Wait until about 25 to 27 after all the education is completed or you are or settled in a job field.

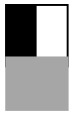
 Get a good education either at college or a good technical school.  
If you go to college, get a degree in something other than liberal arts.

 Also, it is important that you understand that life will not always be good to you. But to get through it well, you have to keep a positive attitude.

– *Bill Chittenden*

 The lesson I learned and passed on to my children is that whining about not being able to find the perfect job is a waste of time and talent. It is better to look for opportunities to try new things and experience life in all its myriad forms. As a result of this life lesson, all of my children are living successful productive lives.

– *Tim Fay*



My father taught that everything was either right or wrong, black or white. One just took a stance and did not budge. There was no middle ground. As I grew older and acquired an education, I came to realize that most of life is middle ground, that gray area between black and white. How would one tell a young man or woman that ambiguity and uncertainty is a wonderful part of the fabric of life?  
– *Layne Prebor*



Generally speaking, in this day and age, a high school education is only a start.  
– *Lynn Dawson Shay*



Best advice I have ever received came from my parents – don't take yourself too seriously!

Rule: if you can't think of something good to say, keep quiet.

Rule: close your mouth so you can open your ears. – *Margo Thomas*



Look beyond your own problems and the world you live in. There is much out there that we never hear about or know about unless we pay attention.



Look for the good in each day, even in the midst of despair, and give thanks.



Each person we meet has a lesson to teach, but we're often too much in a hurry to get on with the next project to wait to hear it.



Don't go into a situation with your mind made up – be open to other people's experiences and opinions.



Don't be afraid to take a risk. – *Lillian Hauke Venner*



I would tell them be true to the way they were raised.



Stick to what they have been taught.



Whatever they want to become they can do it.



Every good thing takes time. – *Theresa Fortin Moore*



You don't know everything and listen, because maybe someone may know a little more than you do. – *Gail Gilmore Charron*



Treat everyone well and make friends.



Treat first encounters as the beginning of a friendship.



Know when to walk away from someone who does not seem to do the right thing.




If you like a girl, approach her and make the pitch, don't be afraid of the consequences.



Step outside yourself and participate in those things around you.



Be as good as you can in everything that you do.

 I think every high school student should be notified that they are not alone in feeling alone with what has happened to them. – *Layne Prebor*



“Go for it!” “Try it!” – *Carl Loveday*



✓ It is essential to listen to diverse points of view. You have to be willing to challenge your own beliefs and learn from real world criticism.

✓ Read the book “Siddhartha,” by Herman Hesse. A more contemporary book is “Passages” by Gail Sheehy. They point to and explain the *stages in adult life* that are very important for us to understand as we age, I now know.

✓ If you can figure out how to do it, visit some other country for an extended stay of at least three weeks before you are thirty. You will learn a less U.S.A.-centered perspective that is simply more mature and smart preparation for living in the world to come. It is better than carrying a view my generation has grown up with that the U.S.A. way is the best way in all things.

✓ It never hurts to ask, once. This applies to fund-raising ideas, planning ideas, possible marriage partners, girlfriends, you name it. You can be sure that if you want something but never ask for it, you will never get it. Ask once. You might be surprised. It is a good strategy for finding jobs also. Pick out a place you would like to work and knock on their door. That worked for me. – *Tom Whitney*



My advice to our grand daughters, nieces and nephews would be and always has been to do your best at anything you decide to do and grow from your experiences.

• Be happy.

• Make sensible choices, but have fun and laugh.

• Always be safe. – *Ellen Morris Goodhue*

• Work hard.

• Try to use common sense.

• Pay attention to your fellow man.

• Learn more from listening than talking.

• Surround yourself with people smarter than you. – *Ray Pecor*



❖ The world is ultimately a secure and loving place and it will support you in your efforts to make your own way.

❖ There are numberless talents hidden inside you that you will discover in time, the secret of life is enjoying the passage of time and following your instincts and trusting in the many powers you cannot see or touch or make money from.



- ❖ The most important person in your life is YOU – if you are unhappy or unfulfilled, you will damage anyone and everyone close to you.
- ❖ Giving away your choices in life, for others to make for you, will shorten it. Learn how to recognize when relationships – job, wife, children, family of origin – become toxic, then decide whether living with the poison is worth the damage; if it is not, terminate the relationships emotionally, geographically, vocationally, whatever works. – *Bradley Butler*

### **Words of Advice?**

One's journey through life is analogous to setting out on a long trip to destinations that are generally not necessarily those that were our goals. Life is full of surprises, some are pleasant and some are not. How does one cope? As we journey along we are faced with choices. The ones we make when we first begin are very important. Why? Our final state in life is a product of all of the important ones we made in our lives. Those choices that are most important are the simplest to express in words from the song my cousin Sue Peterson Tibaud's son Todd Tibaud, a songwriter/ musician, wrote and sang as a eulogy to his grandfather, my uncle Rowland, last year. They were words of advice uncle Rowland had expressed to all of us, to me, his daughters, and, grandchildren. They are words about how to live and to be happy.

***“There are only two things in life I want you to know.***

***The first one is never give up;***

***The second is never grow old. Never grow old 'for the boy that is inside of you is***

***the man you should be. Let your heart guide you and never take more than you need.”*** - *Todd Tibaud, 2006.*

If one thinks about those words, they are like guideposts to lead you through life.

Never give up obviously means to work hard at whatever your choices are and to fulfill them and not to allow setbacks, which will come, to discourage you. Pick yourself up, as you did as a child when you had a spill, and continue on. Always think young. For instance, at the age of forty, I started and completed my education for a Ph.D. in chemistry while holding a full time job. I did not think of how old I was, how long it would take, how tired I would become, or how old I would be when I finished. I never gave up. I let my heart and the boy inside, whose enthusiastic outlook on life was my “little engine that could” be my guides.

Never take more than you need? That means that we should not be greedy or selfish. Always leave something for others. Kindness to others is a result of that advice. You will be rewarded in ways that money cannot buy. You will be a happy person in your life as you journey along to your sunset.

## Get some sleep!

I edited and designed a national magazine when I was in my late twenties and early thirties. When you are young like that you think you have infinite capacity to stay awake. There were times approaching deadline when I would stay up around the clock for *two* days. One brilliant result of that was being at the printer on one Saturday morning and finishing the last page, the back page with an ad to encourage people to subscribe. In 48 point headline type I managed to spell the word wrong: **SUBSCIBE!** Some of the papers got printed that way, then I saw the mistake and corrected it. This was in the early days; we eventually went on to win an award as the best business, government and finance magazine in the western United States. I finally learned that it was *always* better to get *some* sleep every night. If I got three hours sleep I could accomplish in a half an hour what it might take me three hours to do between three and six a.m. You might feel like you are alert at three a.m., but if you let yourself relax you will become restored in energy and clearer thinking after a nap. – Tom Whitney



*This skunk photograph was obtained from and copyrighted © by Istock. In the photograph a black bear cub threatens a striped skunk. The photograph was taken by Holly Kutchera who has an interesting file of over 600 photographs on the site: <http://www.istockphoto.com/>*

*Istock was a pleasant discovery. It is possible to obtain the rights to use over a million photographs for a few dollars each. This one cost \$6: perfect for a budget conscious publisher.*



## Words to the Wise. Tricks of the Trades.

Hard-won lessons we have learned in our journeys through life

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**I learned coconut time when I was in Tonga for four years: when it is ripe and ready the coconut will fall, not before its time or after.**

– *Clare Adams Whitney*





## **The secret to a successful marriage?**

“Yes, dear.” – *Jim Bicknel*

### **Respect**

Treat everybody with unconditional courtesy and respect. This helped me when I was working in prison and was held hostage for a while. I always treated the inmates in that way. – *Margo Hathaway Thomas*

### **Boxing**

Bernie Cummings at the Boys Club taught me how to box. I had to learn to use the left jab. He said you could build up points in a tournament with it, but it was also the very best offense and defense weapon. – *Jim Hale*

### **Dealing with the dying**

The important thing for dealing with the dying is this: it is not so important what you say or do. Your presence there in a non-judgmental way is what is needed. – *Lillian Hauke Venner*

### **Have a relative with mental illness?**

I talk to individuals who are living the experience of having a relative with mental illness and one of my first points is, “You are not to blame for this. This is a physical disorder of the functioning of the brain.” – *Betsy Samuelson Greer*

### **We already know the answer**

I try very hard not to give out words of wisdom - only if I am asked in a particular situation. My take on this is that what I say may or may not matter, but that helping the other person in the conversation understand what they already know to be the decision is more important than my position. – *Clare Adams Whitney*

### **Don't touch an employee no matter how innocent the gesture**

I have been charged with sexual harassment and found not guilty. Lesson: don't touch an employee no matter how innocent the gesture.

I was among those sued by the subject of a series of investigative news stories conducted by my news anchorman (now a New York State Assemblyman). His investigation got ahead of the FBI, SEC, and other investigative bodies. Lesson – don't publish a story until the investigators catch up and make their charges. I and others involved were found not guilty. The truth is a perfect defense) but it was costly, time consuming and painful to gain vindication. – *Carl Loveday*

### **Starting over**

I know one can start over no matter what their age, if the health and desire are there. – *Phyllis Clark Turner*



**Enjoy all you can.** – *Lynn Dawson Shea*

## Losing weight

I worked for Weight Watchers for many years. As long as I worked for the company I stayed at or below the goal weight. But since I retired I've gotten lazy and I'm back up. To be successful you have to be clear in your head and follow a program that's healthy and that you can live with the rest of your life, not just until the weight is off. Everything in moderation and keep the calories below or at 2,000. - Gail Gilmore Charron

### Plenty of wise thoughts from a wise guy

✓ Most important is the fact that **nothing is that important unless it is life threatening**. I spent my whole life making mountains out of molehills.

✓ One of the most important things I have to mention is that **we never stop growing and learning new ways**. Part of growing older is thinking that you know the right way to do something. But so many things have changed.

Whenever I try to make a household repair, I go see the professionals and invariably find out that things are done differently today.

✓ Be careful when things happen: **some blessings are curses, some curses are blessings**. It is our job to try to make all things a blessing but you can't always do it.

When something is a curse for real, try to get out of the situation as soon as you recognize it is not what you want. So many times, I have embraced a bad situation and hung on thinking there were no alternatives. After you reach a certain age you realize that there are *always* other alternatives.

✓ **Almost no problem is insoluble**. It may mean asking a lot of people but there is a solution around the corner. Try to solve every problem using whatever resources are available.

✓ I think there is validity in getting ready for tomorrow's tests. **Never stop learning**,

✓ **Have a financial cushion in case things go south**. But don't destroy your life in the process.

✓ Do the right thing by people. **Accept everyone in a tolerant, open manner. Destroy any stereotypes you might have based on appearance.**

✓ Don't give everyone a pearl without having a reason, but **don't throw pearls before swine.**

✓ In an uncomfortable situation, you have two choices: go with the situation or escape it. **If you are around someone who is transmitting negative signs, leave that person.** If you feel lost or uncertain, don't travel into that canyon alone. The other choice is to let everything happen as it will. I do not think that is good advice.

✓ **As a general rule don't spend money that you do not have.** Don't buy a bunch of CD's using a credit card if you can't pay the bill. Exceptions to this abound. Buying a house and sometimes a new car although the car is one item that could be avoided. So the conversation turns to credit cards. They are good things if used wisely but the best people I know have created years of debt without thinking just by not using credit cards

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wisely. It may seem silly to mention credit cards but so many people have hurt themselves – people I know. – *Layne Prebor*

### **Enjoy every minute of living**

With the passing away of loved ones, especially my son, it made me realize life is short and so I should enjoy the memorable moments of living. – *Ruth Houry Rothenberger*

### **Politics: work with your opponents to hammer out acceptable solutions**

I have come to recognize how essential it is to listen to diverse points of view. You have to be willing to challenge your own beliefs and learn from real world criticism and constructive suggestions. In public situations, if opposing parties can agree on and accept a solution, there is more likelihood that it will last over time. – *Tom Whitney*

### **To save money buying printing**

When getting printing estimates, don't get the usual three estimates: obtain at least five. There is wide variation of costs and quoted prices in the trade. You can save hundreds or thousands of dollars by doing this. Literally a trick of the trade is to seek out "trade" printers who do work for other printers. *In 2006, I helped a person save about \$800 by following that advice.* – *Tom Whitney*

### **I was a post-grad in high school at B.H.S. four years after graduation!**

I had an unconventional high school career. My marks were poor and I was not headed to college. But I wised up and came back to high school after the Navy at the urging of my brother. I took the courses at B.H.S. I needed to go to college, married a great woman named Rita and became an engineer! It took a while, but I am proud of that degree I received from the University of Louisville 19 years after graduating from Burlington High School. Tenacity on a positive course pays dividends. – *Jim Hale*

### **Being a Vermonter**

To me this means being hard working, honest, and not afraid to jump in when help is needed. – *Bill Chittenden*

### **Coconut time**

I learned coconut time when I was in Tonga for four years: when it is ripe and ready the coconut will fall, not before its time or after. – *Clare Adams Whitney*

### **Being the best?**

Life has taught me that being the best is not nearly as important as doing the best that you can. – *Bob McBride*

### **Seeking contributions, either money or in-kind goods or services for a good cause**

You may be nervous, you may be shy, and you may have never done it before: well, steel yourself with words to the wise from a very successful Sacramento public

relations woman (whose name I have forgotten) who told me her secret: **it never hurts to ask, once.** If you never ask, you will never know. – *Tom Whitney*

### **Be all that you can be.**

For those who follow in our footsteps, I offer this sage advice. You only get one chance at going down the road of life. We are all cut out to end up doing different things, some of it by our own making and some of it by the making of others. Whatever direction you end up taking, be all that you can be. And above all, don't just take from life, give something back to your family and to society. Volunteer some of your time and skills. You'll be rewarded in countless ways. – *Jim Viele*

### **Do you have a psychological problem?**

If you do, admit it to yourself and go to a counselor. One of our classmates said it was the best move she ever made. Try a psychologist first or seek out a group. To keep expenses low. Just being able to talk about a problem out loud to other adults is a big help.

When I went to a Transactional Analysis therapy group the idea was if you had a problem, there is no magic bullet to fix it; you needed to change your behavior and try it out to see if it affected the problem. If it didn't work, try something else. – *Tom Whitney*

### **Thinking of running for public office?**

I was very surprised how much assistance I received from the Democratic Party organization. They distributed my flyers district-wide to every voter's house. That was a tremendous help. I had been a registered Democrat: on that basis alone they gave me help. It was that simple. I was elected and my expenses were only about \$1,500. – *Tom Whitney*

### **Cold Turkey**

I gave up cigarettes after numerous false starts. This detox is real and I am so thankful to be free. My nicotine addiction was beyond expression, beyond anything I thought could happen. I decided I wanted to live a long time so I gave up all things like alcohol and other stuff that pulls one into a place of euphoric comatose retirement. I substituted the inverse propositions: exercise, nutritional concerns, proactive approach to new ideas and charitable mind. I feel great and know this high will end but I would love to spend the next 20 years upwardly mobile as a human being.

My addiction was hardcore and cold turkey was the only way. I had tried cutting back, but in the end, my cigarette count was up and I quit, cold turkey. – *Layne Prebor*

### **Stay busy – live longer**

Once I was sleeping over with my Gram, my dad's mom who seemed quite old – probably my current age – and I asked her if she was afraid to die. “No,” she said, “God looks down and if you're busy he leaves you to finish.” It sounded good then and I've lived by her bit of wisdom ever since. – *Joyce Wagner Carlin*



**Join or help create a local coalition of environmental groups. There are not many of them, and they can be very powerful in helping communities become more livable**

The Environmental Council of Sacramento is one of the very few organizations of its kind in the nation. *A group like ECOS is a necessary counter-weight on the scales of public justice for the environment: without it, the scale will lean too far toward what developers want, which can be insensitive to the environment and short change livability factors like better bikeways and more parks and trees and sidewalks and a better variety and mix of home designs and types.*

After a decade as a member I became chair of this organization for a couple of years. The Environmental Council is a 501 (C)(4) nonprofit composed of representatives of virtually all local and national environmental groups in the

## **The Purpose of ECOS**

To protect and preserve the environmental integrity and resources within the Sacramento Region; to educate the public regarding the environmental sensitivity and the need to protect this area through mailings, public forums and discussion groups; and direct communication with public officials concerning policy issues relating to the goals of ECOS.

## **ECOS Priorities**

- Enforcing laws that protect the environment – Clean Air, Clean Water, and the Endangered Species Acts.
- Halting sprawl by advocating for the integration of land use planning with air quality and transportation planning.
- Identifying the true costs of sprawl through sewer and road expansions.
- Supporting efforts to preserve open space.
- Advocating reliable flood protection for Sacramento.
- Promoting regional transportation policies that provide for clean air and social equity.
- Promoting infill development in existing under-utilized areas in the region, such as former railroad corridors that with light rail stations.

*Illustration by  
Bill McGuire*



*This was a 16-page position paper on urban development written by David Mogavero, an architect who was ECOS chair when I became involved. This paper (I designed it) became very influential in Sacramento planning circles as it provided our agenda. It enabled me as a representative of ECOS to be able to advocate for and comment on a wide range of issues without having to constantly be checking back with the whole group.*

*It explained policy ideas that became incorporated into the Sacramento County General Plan and it provided a basis for the re-planning of North Natomas, a 12-square mile area surrounding where the Sacramento Kings NBA team plays.*



Sacramento area, as well as some individual members. Its members are architects, lawyers, ornithologists, engineers, water experts, physicians, low-income housing advocates, chemists, PhDs in one field or another, plain vanilla environmentalists average interested citizens and community organizers. By pooling its specialist professional resources and representing the combined membership of its organizations, numbering about 12,000, the Council is very effective. In existence for 25 years, it has occasionally and carefully sued the City, the County and developers when necessary and usually won. Thus it is granted a grudging and rueful respect by developers and public officials.

I have been surprised to find that there are not such councils all over the nation because the idea makes so much sense.

One of the strengths of ECOS in Sacramento is that many of its members work for the state government. Typically government people hesitate to become involved in advocacy groups like ECOS because they feel it may create conflicts of interest with their jobs. But ECOS members deal with this in a very legal, above-board, way and routine way. When an issue will conflict with a person's job that person will leave the room for the duration of the discussion and vote. Their action is recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

For about thirty years ECOS was an all-volunteer organization. I feel that was one of its strengths. Recently it has hired a person to be the executive director and is now involved in the fund-raising activities necessary to support that person.

You can find out more about ECOS:

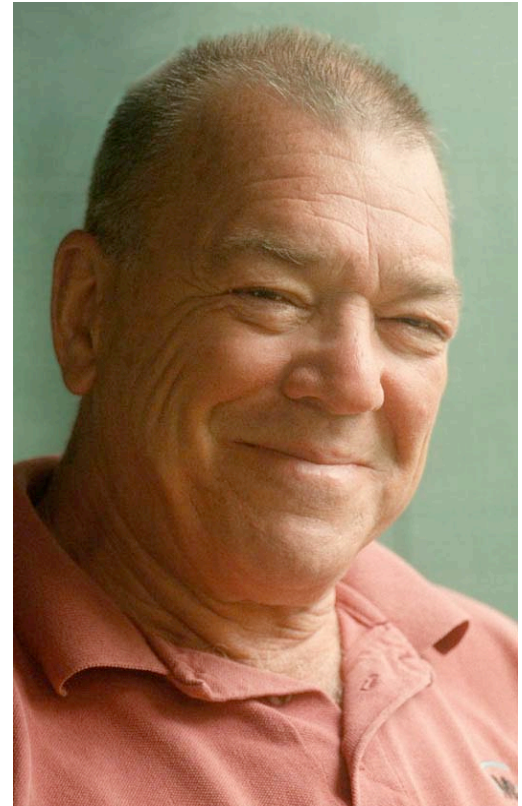
<http://www.ecosacramento.net>. - Tom Whitney

### **Taking a nice portrait of someone**

✎ When taking someone's portrait have someone stand beside you to engage the subject person in serious conversation. Their expressions will be more interesting.

✎ To get one good portrait, figure that you should take at least twenty-four pictures, a whole roll, sometimes snapping them quite quickly as different expressions flit across their faces because of the great conversation going on.

✎ Use natural light, not flash.



*This smiling man is Eric Chittenden, B.H.S.'60, a cousin of Bill Chittenden, Class of '57, photographed as described here. He loves Vermont, but took to the sea like the first Governor Thomas Chittenden. Then he came back and he and Francine established the Cold Hollow Cider Mill in Waterbury, that became the second most visited tourist attraction in Vermont after Ben & Jerry's. They finally sold that business. Now he has gone back to sea and recently passed the battery of tests to become qualified to be captain of the largest ship in the United States merchant marine fleet. He is a great guy and just about anything he says is a word to the wise. - Tom Whitney*

✨ Find a place outside in the shade of a tree near the edge of the shade so you can get a darker background but a nice play of light – but not direct sunlight - on the person’s face. Snap away. – *Tom Whitney*

### **Humor**

My mother always told us that there is humor in every situation no matter how terrible it seems. She also told us that if we lost sight of the humor we should lie down and put a lily in our hands because we had died. They also believed that going to bed angry was a big taboo. – *Margo Hathaway Thomas*

### **Let go and do some forgiving**

We all need to accept whatever comes along good or bad and deal with it and move on. Do not dwell on the past. Let go and do some forgiving and realize that being sad and upset is reality. Remember the good times in sadness. – *Ellen Morris Goodhue*

### **Being the best?**

Life has taught me that being the best is not nearly as important as is doing the best that you can. – *Bob McBride*

### **Hang in there**

I firmly believe that no matter what you go through, you gain something from it. It may take time to realize, but it is a part of the tapestry of your life and it colors, thread by thread, the changes in your personal fabric that eventually occur. – *Joyce Wagner Carlin*

### **Set goals**

My experience has been to always set goals and work hard to meet them. – *Bob Badger*

### **Relating to people with disabilities**

Use “people first language” when talking with and about people with disabilities. My sweetheart is a person who is blind. That she is blind is not important to mention except when her inability to use her eyes has meaning in a conversation. It is not the most significant fact about her. She is a person who happens to be blind.

Many people are surprised to learn that Betsy can cook, that she can dress herself, that she keeps a neat house. Where did all these false ideas come from, that blind people could not do these things?

Betsy is the most organized, efficient, supportive, patient, wise and loveable person I have ever met. In our household, if anything, it is “the blind leading the sighted.”

She says that for her, being blind is an inconvenience, not a “handicap.”

Betsy started Dolphin Press, a business that translates documents into Braille for public agencies, universities, and individuals. She bids for jobs and wins them because her bids are competitive in the national marketplace. Her customers include the State of California Public Utilities Commission, the University of Montana, other universities, restaurants, hotels, teachers, students, and nonprofit organizations in Hawai‘i and other states.

Her staff of three beside herself includes a person with a disability and two senior citizens, including me. Charlene Ota is a person who is blind who lives 250 miles away on another island but regularly communicates by email with Betsy as they share the



*This is the bar at the top of Betsy's web page at <dolphinpress.biz>.*

translation work that is the heart of the business. It is like Charlene is next door.

Dolphin Press receives work primarily over the Internet. Betsy has a Braille display that enables her to read each line we would see on a computer screen (which she does not need, of course). She can also track the information line-by-line with an audio display. Braille is similar to shorthand in that there are many contractions, so there is an editing process that must occur before the work is sent to the Braille printers. She and Charlene share the editing.

It is a business that she runs out of her home on a mountainside in Hawaii, 2,500 miles from the U.S. mainland. Thanks to Federal Express whose trucks pull up to the house a couple of times a week, she can have a package delivered next day on the mainland. *That* is competitive.

Betsy until recently was Chair of the Board of the statewide Hawaii Centers for Independent Living, a three-million-dollar nonprofit organization. She is a member of the Governor-appointed Planning Council for People with Developmental Disabilities. She regularly flies – by herself - to Honolulu for meetings of these boards. She has frequent flyer miles.

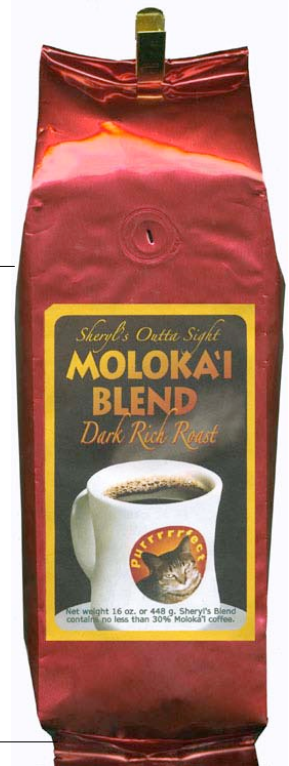
I just told all this to give you an example of a highly functional person who just happens to be blind. Don't treat her or react to her or any other person with a disability any different than you would anyone else.

People have the oddest, and to me infuriating, reactions to people with disabilities. I have learned to “whistle Dixie” when we are at a store. If Betsy and I go to a cashier at

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*Betsy's and my friend Sheryl Nelson is marketing her own "Outta Sight" blend of coffee. Dolphin Press designed her label. Sheryl is a person who is blind, making the most of being "Outta Sight." Her web page is [snelson@aloha.net](mailto:snelson@aloha.net).*

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almost any store, and Betsy pulls out her credit card to pay, usually if the clerk has any questions they will ask me instead of Betsy, referring to Betsy as “she” which is a fine use of the pronoun, but “she” is standing right there: why don’t they ask her directly? Sometimes if they do talk to her they will raise their voices. She can’t see but she is not deaf. Then often when they would want credit slips signed, the clerks would give them to me. If Betsy pulls out cash and hands them a twenty, say, clerks would often attempt to give me the change! So, to avoid these embarrassments, and train the clerks, now when we get to the front of the line, if she is going to pay, I will wander around nearby looking at magazines or displays, clearly not paying attention. We call this “whistling Dixie.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990, yet all these years later many of its provisions have not been implemented. Have you ever gone to an ATM machine and noticed that there are Braille markings next to the buttons you can push? It is window dressing, because the screen that you view usually has no audio component so a person who is blind could know what is on the screen.

I am proud to be graphic designer for the Dolphin Press. I make nice print covers with logos so the sighted people who order the work can feel reassured it is good work and can sort through the Braille documents. And lovely outta sight projects like Sheryl’s come along. And Betsy occasionally helps sighted people publish their books, too, like she did with this one. – *Tom Whitney*

### **Use it well and give it back**

From my grandmother who raised me, somehow, to adulthood, I leaned a value which costs nothing and brings success which is not countable: "Life is Good. Use It Well and Give It Back." I don't recall the words spoken in such an organized manner, but the lesson has carried me throughout life. – *Sam Conant*

### **Smile**

Try to have a smile each day. – *Barbara Willard McDonough*



This is also an Istock © 2007 photograph.  
This one was taken by David Stivers.

# Basic Values



I'm a Golden Rule guy and more honest than most – honest to a fault perhaps. I think I am a pretty traditional guy. I went to college, got a job, got married, raised a family, had a solid career, got to be pretty financially secure and am having a good retirement. – *Steve Berry*



I have always told my children and grands that love was the most important thing of all and the reason I am here and what I would want them to remember.  
– *Joyce Wagner Carlin*



The Golden Rule is probably as good as any, although it is not necessarily easy at all times. I've bent a lot of rules in my day. My current rule is to live the remainder of my life without doing something I regret. – *Lou Garcia*



✿ Wisdom comes with age and you don't have to be as strict as you were when your family was growing up.

✿ You learn some things are not as important as you once thought they were.

✿ Honor the values we grew up with: respect for other people and things.

✿ Learn to be more tolerant and not so quick to judge.

✿ Treat other people as you would want them to treat you.

– *Theresa Fortin Moore*



I have learned from difficulties that I can live on my own. I can survive. I taught my daughters that they too could be independent.

♣ I taught them to have what we used to call a trade, a skill to rely on so we can make our own way in this world if we have to.

♣ I've learned not to judge people by their looks.

♣ We all have our stories to tell.

♣ Sometimes the one you think will always be there won't.

♣ Continue to trust in God that he will be there for you even if it is not in the way you want him too.

♣ The biggest one is to **TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME.** – *Theresa Fortin Moore*

# B

asic values and rules you live by. Rules you used to live by, but gave up? Boy that is a tough one. Let's take this one at a time. At one time, there was a period I believed in success, materialism, and evident success. I know that is not true and realize that success is something else. Something personal. Until quite, quite recently.

At one time, I burned every bridge I crossed. Never saving a memory. Look

at me now, trying to capture experiences of 50 years ago.

I also believed that criminals should be punished severely but realize now that the criminals were themselves void of parents, goal setting, and mentors, drifting alone with no one to step in and provide the direction needed. In truth, many of them are innocent victims of a difficult childhood.

At one time, I believed that might makes right. Not true on a personal level. At one time, I believed in the teachings of Machiavelli but not now. I had a stint with neo-Nazism when introduced to Nietzsche but that didn't last.


At one time, I believed that being cool required a certain posture, a certain dress: how untrue.

At another time, I believed in savings and thrift and that saving money was always a good.

Now I have to lecture my son on the importance of spending money, yes wasting it. There was a stint as a Christian in which I generally held dear the teachings of the church. I never went all the way because I always had misgivings about the church culture.

There are some things I held in high esteem that just had to be given up. "Catcher in the Rye" by J. D. Salinger: at 17, the best novel I had ever read. Read it again at around 21 and began to see flaws in Holden Caulfield's character. The third reading I was about 27 and thought Holden must have been a silly guy, screwing around. I liked J. D. Salinger, but a couple of his later novels were too much like some of Woody Allen's movies; autobiographical creations with vacuous New York City characters in search of an identity. It gets tiresome when one grows up and rereads or views this material.

There is one thing that I am pretty sure works for me and that is to take things slow and easy. It wasn't always that way, sometimes I would run across the collapsing bridge before it fell down. Now, I am a great believer in slow and steady. – *Layne Prebor*

 I do have values, of course, but have given no thought to listing them. – *Lynn Dawson Shay*

I always remained true to my family, my friends, and myself. I followed the path God set for me and even though I am now semi-alone having seen my parents, my sister, and most recently my husband go home to God I still look to him for guidance. I am blessed to have my niece, nephew and their families as well as my stepchildren. – *Margo Thomas*

I try to live my life by the Four Way Test of Rotary International – Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned? It's a simple series of questions that is sometimes very challenging to follow. – *Carl Loveday*



The Four-Way Test  
of things we think,  
say or do

1. Is it the truth?
2. It fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?







We are in charge of our own lives. There's no one to blame, no whining works.

- ☼ If we have a problem, we need to change our behavior and solve it.
- ☼ Respect and treat others the way you want to be respected and treated.
- ☼ Don't go overboard – with drinking, drugs, selfish behavior, spending, or sex.
- ☼ I can accomplish great things. But if I don't attempt them, I won't. Many times when you start something you are starting on a journey that will present you with unanticipated challenges. You need to be flexible and tenacious.
- ☼ By giving, we can receive much. Volunteer to help people and groups working in the public interest. You can learn job skills and maybe get a job or at least try some out.
- ☼ I see a glass as half full rather than half empty. It is the measure of optimism or pessimism.
- ☼ Patient persistence in pursuit of goals will usually pay off.
- ☼ Don't get mad, get even, or transcend the conflict.
- ☼ Good looks are not important; good values are. They will attract good people who, really, are the kind of people you most want to attract. – *Tom Whitney*



Boy Scouts were very good both for learning to appreciate the outdoors and to learn basic life attitudes, for example: be prepared. – *Jim Bicknell*

**I** have always been amazed that during my college days, all emphasis (at 3 different schools attended) was on technical skills such as accounting, marketing, etc. No classes were required relating to human relations or job application skills. This has pretty much changed today. I left college with the “kill or be killed” attitude. This has all changed as a result of changes in the work place where attitude and customer service is paramount to success - and enjoyment of life. – *Bob Badger*

**H**ome? This is a basic value that I have been examining in my life. Is it a place? I always felt like a visitor in Los Angeles. Same in Sacramento, although the downtown looked very much like Burlington of the 1940s and '50s with tall elm trees. There was a pull to go back to Vermont until I connected with Betsy again. I have figured out my home is where my heart is – and that is with my sweetheart in Hilo, Hawai'i. – *Tom Whitney*



I still live by the same rules my folks taught us. Do unto others as you want done unto you. Smile when it may hurt. Help others in any way you can even if you wish not to. – *Ellen Morris Goodhue*

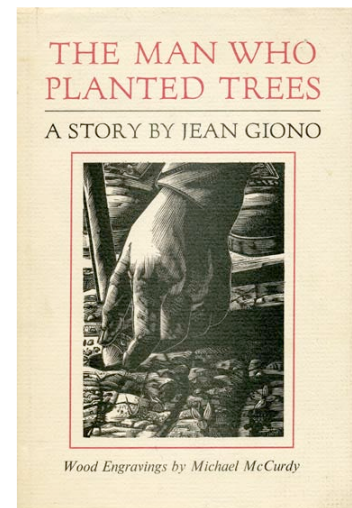
One day in 1981 I noticed a story in the Whole Earth Catalog by the French author Jean Giono who wrote “The Man Who Planted Trees.” I went on to read it. It is about a 55-year old man who started planting 100 acorns a day and kept up a similar tree planting pace for the rest of his life and transformed a blighted region in Southern France. It changed my life. It helped me go from being a spectator in life to an actor. I could do something like that, I thought. Acorns; transformed a region, hmmm. The narrator returns to the area of Elzéard Bouffier’s life work at the end of the book “and the birds were chirping, the streams were flowing, young families were growing.” The land had become productive again.

The opening paragraph of the Giono story provided for me an ethic for behavior that has guided me the rest of my life. I first read it in 1982 when I was 43. It led me to volunteer my services for supporting environmental and other causes on an intensive basis from then on. **“For a human character to reveal truly exceptional qualities, one must have the good fortune to be able to observe its performance over many years. If that performance is devoid of all egoism, if its guiding motive is unparalleled generosity, if it absolutely certain that there is no thought of recompense and that in addition, it has left its visible mark upon the earth, then there can be no mistake.”** – Tom Whitney

So, where am I now and what of all of this is important? My youth was filled with significant male and female people at home and elsewhere whom I continue to recall fondly and to whom I give credit for who I am.

My early adulthood in the Navy provided sufficient and qualified experiences whereby I experienced leadership models, situations in which ethnic and racial diversity were key opportunities for conflict and resolution. I will never forget the friendship experienced with a skipper's Pilipino Steward First Class, "Boss" Venoya. From him, watching and listening as he prepared meals for and served various ship's Commanding Officers and others in his small galley adjacent to the radio shack where I was in charge, I learned there is little or no royalty left in this world and that the very meek can lead in what for many are genuinely meaningful experiences.

"Boss" was, when I knew him, somewhere beyond the highest stage or honor afforded a Mason and Shriner at the highest (32nd Degree) level. And, one evening while the two of us were sitting out on the 02 level looking at a sea-going sunset, Boss Venoya, speaking a very quiet voice, mentioned that President Eisenhower had bowed before him



*The Chelsea Green Publishing Company of Chelsea, Vermont, published this great book. It includes an Afterward by Norma Goodrich, a native Vermonter who became a Professor of French Literature at the Claremont Colleges in California.*

during one of the organization's ritual meetings.

My father, my grandfather and several uncles and friends have been and are Masons and Shriners with one-degree level or another. But, regardless of the meanings of those ever so important folks, I'm writing here that the quiet, almost apologetic statement that the President of the United States, because of his commitment to and belief in the coda of a somewhat secret multi-century and multi-generational organization such as the Masons and Shriners, was required to acknowledge personal and thoughtful subservience to an enlisted Steward First Class in the U.S. Navy meant more to me than any other person's claim of authority and power. More, the fact that the information was shared in confidence, privately and in the loneliness of a sea voyage by two men - each from a very different culture - means more to me today, decades later, than any avowal of commitment and faith represented to me today by most organizations' members.

My military experiences ashore, at sea and in the paddies, rivers and swamps and coastal areas of the world from Cuba and Santo Domingo, Lebanon and Iran, Central America, the Congo and in Southeast Asia provided learning opportunities about what is really important for humans in this world. I am one of the most fortunate humans in the world, and am grateful to have arrived at this point in my life with a fairly intact sense of the realities of war from WWII to the present. – *Sam Conant*



I value respect for good manners. – *Barbara Willard McDonough*

### **The book was a labor of love.**

This project is my and our class's way of giving back to the younger generation coming up. We have attempted to do it in an interesting and readable way.

It was very much fun doing this project and helping to document my classmate's stories. It was like a treasure hunt. Many people felt that they had nothing much to share: I found their stories to be fascinating. I asked them for pictures and more details. I became closer friends with many people I only knew very superficially way back then.

I am hoping to get many people involved in doing this kind of history of how the average citizens we never hear about have lived their lives.

### **What did I learn from the process?**

\* History used to be taught as something outside our experience. Learning about the experiences and background of my classmates and my own family history, I realized that many of us were involved in history through their genes. If this immediacy had been brought home during school, I think it would have made learning about history so much more vivid than it was. If I had known that



my Great Grandfather fought in the Civil War in some of the big battles, I would have paid more attention during high school.

- \* I learned that "America" is a land of immigrants who learned to live together.
- \* I was the grandson of Finnish immigrants and therefore know nothing of the country they emigrated from! They wanted their daughter, my mother, to learn English and become American.
- \* I learned that people I grew up with and was only casually acquainted with could become good friends later in life.
- \* As you grow older, you learn that big catastrophes usually do not happen; things smooth out; you do not have to move out of the country if a particular person is elected.

#### Memorable things learned from my classmates:

- \* I learned from Lillian Hauke how to act when you are around somebody who is dying: "Your presence there in a non-threatening way is what is needed." Do what ever needs doing."
- \* I learned a lot of history: about Thomas Chittenden, Vermont's first governor; about witch burnings (not in Vermont) more severe than happened in Salem; about the Civil War; the relatives of my classmates who came over on the Mayflower; the massive immigration into this nation; about the many families who lost loved ones in World War II; about L.L. McAllister, the old photographer who was a member of a big group of Spiritualists who lived in Queen City Park. I dedicated our book to a man who wrote a book that is credited as the "fountainhead of the conservation movement in the United States" by Lewis Mumford. That is very impressive to me. He was talking about "Man and Nature," written by George Perkins Marsh, who lived in Burlington in the mid-1800s and walked the same streets I had.
- \* Claire English Rae has donated 25 pints of blood. Ruth Rothenberger creates amazing three-dimensional award-winning crochet pieces and raises fantastic flowers. Carl Benvenuto takes fine photographs. Ray Pecor likes to walk across countries. Steve Berry loves to climb mountains. Claire Adams Whitney wandered the world for 18 years before settling in Denver. Lillian and her husband build homes with Habitat for Humanity. Those are all impressive accomplishments, as were so many more.

- \* The Cinderella story still lives – a unique version of it did anyway in Joyce Wagner's life. (You will have to read the book to find out why.)
- \* I was recently reminded as I turned seventy of Joyce Wagner's grandmother saying the God is watching over us and if you are busy, he gives you time to continue working on it.
- \* I learned what many classmates thought about politics and religion, topics it is always a good idea not to talk about in public because they generate so many arguments. Many of our classmates described themselves as agnostics and atheists, so I asked Joyce to describe her strong religious faith, and how she prays, (a mystery to agnostic me) which she graciously obliged, and then outdid herself when she was done, writing that "I feel as if I dipped a feather into my faith and painted a very tiny picture for you – it would take an angel's wing and the colors of the rainbow to do it justice."
- \* There was Jim and Rita Hale's triumphant series of great stories about how a kid from a rough neighborhood learned to fight and pulled himself up to go back to high school for a post graduate year after four years in the Navy, then seventeen years later graduated from college and became a manager at General Electric.
- \* I recall Bill Chittenden's humble and solid definition of a Vermonter: "Being a Vermonter to me means being hard working, honest, and not afraid to jump in when help is needed." That has been my life.

I have a good feeling about being part of a group of people who learned some great values from their parents and the community around them and did pretty good in the world.

*Tom Whitney*

P.S.: The whole 375-page book can be downloaded free on my website: [www.tomwhitney.net](http://www.tomwhitney.net). Also on the site is a shorter piece telling about the creation of the book, including the questions, for those who might want to do a similar project.