



## MOMENTS ... JUST MOMENTS

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Have you ever had a MOMENT? You know, a MOMENT when time stood still and everything was as it should be ... everything was RIGHT and GOOD and WHOLE and WONDERFUL. A MOMENT when we were in the RIGHT PLACE at the RIGHT TIME and LIFE WAS GOOD. Did you ever have a MOMENT like that?

Did you ever have a moment when the sun danced across the windowpane and made a rainbow through the glass? Did you ever have a moment when the breeze caught the fragrance of roses and sent it drifting past your nose and for a moment you remembered the PROM and your first corsage? Did you ever have a moment when the world sang in harmony and everyone knew the words?

I did, but I have forgotten most of those magical moments when time stood still and life was caught in memory. I seem now only to keep count of the empty moments that are left in my life. I seem to keep track of all the things I will never have and keep mental lists of the things I have missed along the way. Death, it seems, has given me a new way of thinking and viewing the world. And moments seem to have changed from wondrous to horrendous. I wonder what happened?

I found myself counting the moments the other day until the light turned green. My mind wandered, and as I searched my memory banks, I began to recall

moments. As the light stayed red, my mind drifted back across the scrapbook of my life and I began to turn the pages.

I remembered a summer's day drive, long ago, when we were headed nowhere, just cruising the country road, in search of nothing. We passed a barn, one of those old, faded, barns that might have been red once. It was leaning to the west ... well, actually, it was SIGHING to the west

and it looked as though it would simply lean into the ground at any moment. We stopped and just looked at that barn. It seemed symbolic of our struggles at the moment ... just barely hanging on,



yet, still drawing strength from its foundation and structure. That is how we survived our son's battle with cancer ... just barely hanging on, yet sustained by some mysterious inner force.

We stood still and drank in the symbolism of that barn and drew courage from its message of HANG ON. I found myself remembering that moment of long ago.

Other moments came to me, as I sat there in traffic and I let my mind continue to drift. There were moments of sheer terror, so many of them that they drown out the sun. I pushed them away and searched for something more. I needed to find a moment to refresh me, to recharge me, to tell me to HANG ON some more.

I found that moment as I remembered a picnic in the mountains, taken only a few weeks before his death. We found a moment of peace as we spread our quilt at the edge of a tiny mountain lake. Surrounded by snow capped peaks and autumn tinged aspen, we found the solitude and calmness we had been seeking.



We basked in the sun and let the breeze caress us. We ate sandwiches and apples and sang camp songs and played silly finger games. We made up stories and looked for elves that might live beneath the fallen leaves. It only lasted a short time, but it was a reprieve from the real world and we needed the peace of those moments. Those memories now sustain us in our sorrow. I am grateful for those moments.

Do you have moments to cherish? Do you have moments that revive and replenish you or are you so busy hurrying through this day, that there is no time to gather in moments? We are often so intent on surviving the day that we fail to find the magic in the moments that are our life. In grief, so many of our hours and days and weeks and months are filled with pain and sorrow that we forget moments.

We are seeking the end of the pain, the end of the sadness, the end of the sorrow. We are so busy seeking, that we often become blind ... to the moments when it doesn't hurt quite so intensely. We may not pay attention to the moments when a happiness starts to float past our memory, but as we recognize it, we wipe it away with tears and bitterness that we will never have any more moments like that one.

And that is true. The moments we have shared with our cherished ones are gone and we will not accumulate any more on this earthly plane. But must we lose the ones we have simply because we are too busy or too tired or too afraid to embrace them?

The next time you are overwhelmed or lost or empty or hurting, try to clear your mind and let your heart go searching for a moment. See if you can let your

eyes see what is really visible, instead of seeing what is no longer within hug's reach. Try taking a moment to:

Watch an autumn leaf spiral downward from its branch to the ground.

Catch a sunbeam as it sparkles across an arc of water from a sprinkler.

Notice how leaves shimmer in a breeze.

Gaze into the coals of a campfire and watch the smoke curl upward into the night.

Take your cap off and let the breeze ruffle your hair.

Let a lemon drop stay on your tongue and feel the tartness send crinkles to the corner of your eyes.

Watch clouds make pictures across an afternoon sky.

Let music find its path to your heart.

Share a warm cookie with a friend, each trying to let the other have the last bite.

Feel a stream tickle your bare toes.

Breathe in moonbeams and try to catch a falling star.

Dance to your own music and sing in harmony to your own rhythms.

Make a game out of your TO DO LIST and finish it tomorrow.

Laugh or at least try.

Pet a puppy.

Follow a bird on its flight and wonder where it is going.

Sit in the grass and make flower rings.

Walk on an old path and kick leaves.

Count to ten and then do it again.



Remember a moment and let it become a lifetime.

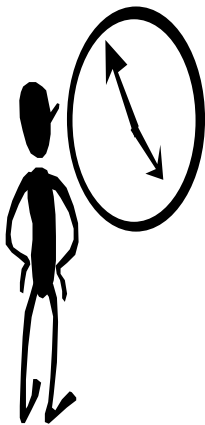
Let the tears come if they do and let them trickle down your face.

Find a safe place to scream and do it ... if only in your mind.

Wave at every other driver and smile at the rest.

Give thanks for the traffic jam ... it gives you more moments to explore.

Don't be in such a hurry ... tomorrow will come eventually.



Give up and hide in the closet ... for a moment.

Run away and join the circus ... for an hour.

Plug in the coffee pot and watch it perk.

Listen to the copy machine and wonder what it thinks about all day.

Close your eyes and let your fingers tap out a soul message on the keyboard.

Listen to your heart and follow it.

Wallow in your grief.

Wander in your despair.

Pull the covers over your head and remember making a tent out of the bedspread.

Tell a secret to yourself.

Forgive yourself for living.

Just for a moment ... don't look for anything. Just BE.

The secret to surviving is in the quiet moments of your own thoughts. The secret to surviving grief is not how you face the day or even how you battle the emotions of grief, but in how you chose to spend the moments. Life is nothing but moments, moment after moment, all piled on top of another, jumbled together, tumbled and tossed and lived and let go. We laugh in the moment. We sing, we

dance, we weep, we live and we die in a moment. Some moments are awful and some are magical, but all ARE.

Learn to look for moments. You will not forget a single moment of your life. They are all stored somewhere in the recesses of your mind. But we can chose which ones come forward to support us or defeat us. Let your moments caress you as the breeze caresses the leaves as they float downward, spinning towards whatever lies ahead. Do they know they are destined for the leaf pile or are they on some mystical adventure that only will be revealed in the moment?

We don't know and that's exactly right ... we don't know. We can only guess or fear or embrace. Go forward into your moments and let them come to you, to fill you, to recharge you, to comfort you. The awful ones weren't any longer than the wonderful ones ... you chose which ones to remember.

And the next time you find yourself waiting in traffic or stuck in a place you don't want to be, remember the magic of the moment and learn to cherish the ones you have ... find something to notice and embrace. Savor the moment ... it is yours.

