

ADVICE TO CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN

You're in charge of your life. Nobody else. Don't let anybody fool you, and many will try. - Bill Reynolds

Bill wants his children and grandchildren (and those of others) to find their own purpose in life. In 2019, he shared his philosophy with the Longs Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America who presented him with a ***Boulder Distinguished Citizen*** award. Bill was asked to give a speech that he had carefully prepared ahead of time:

Thank you for that kind introduction. My father would have appreciated it, and my mother would have believed it. I'm going to talk to the Scouts here tonight...and my grandkids...not you old farts that have pretty much set your sails in life...wouldn't buy in anyway. My observations come from 80 years of life experiences, some good and a number not so much fun, but invaluable.

Aristotle wrote many years ago that the purpose of life was HAPPINESS. He defined it as "not a state, but an activity." It seems a simple concept, but don't be fooled. It's not as simplistic as it sounds...and properly pursued, it's damn hard, and it is never-ending.

Our Founding Fathers set forth in writing the blueprint for America's success in the U. S. Constitution. By following these wise men's writing, we have become the greatest, most generous, and powerful country in history. Recall the words, "endowed with inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Inalienable rights are rights that "cannot be taken away."

I interpret happiness in life as a never-ending pursuit. In order to be successful in this pursuit, you must be in control. That is control of your life. Control is the cornerstone of the foundation upon which you will build a successful life...and a happy one.

Let me tie this control theory to happiness with an example. What makes an Eagle Scout? Out of 2.5 million scouts today, only 4% of Scouts make the effort to earn 21 or more merit badges. An Eagle Scout made choices and sacrifices to obtain this most meritorious of awards. These Scouts chose this journey by controlling their life decisions, sacrificing many other opportunities along the way.

What did they get for all this work? Stand up, Eagle Scouts! How did you feel? This is earned success. This success gives you a feeling of accomplishment that is life-long. It brings lasting satisfaction of accomplishment. Let's contrast this earned success – this Eagle Scout honor, this thrilling satisfaction and happiness, with temporary happiness of receiving Christmas and birthday gifts. Do you remember what they were? Well, maybe my first pair of skis with steel edges. Now let's talk about control

of your decisions. Many, many people, some well-meaning, others not, will try and wrest this control from you. How so? Prevalent today is victimology. Don't allow others to cast you as a victim. Don't play the victim's role, even if you have been victimized. Why?

Because if you feel sorry for yourself, "poor me," then you abdicate control to the other party.

Having been preaching about loss of control, I am not able to control a personal one involving my haberdashery decisions.....that is what I wear out in public. Jane makes those decisions, often over much grumbling from me. Most recently I ordered a pair of peach-colored slacks for a trip to Florida. When they arrived, I was pleased with their color...that is until Jane saw them and blurted out that "those colors are only worn by shriveled, little old men!" Anybody want some peach-colored slacks? Size 38 x 30 – cheap!

Let me give you another example. Who watched the referee blow the call that put the L. A. Rams in the Super Bowl over the New Orleans Saints? People make mistakes, and the Ref made a whopper in front of a national audience! What did some Saints fans do? They boycotted the Super Bowl. Who did that hurt? Not the Rams. Who controlled that decision? Not the victim, but the Rams, again. If you can't get over this bad call, the victimization continues and continues.

My father had dreamed of me coming back from the service to Boulder to work with him. He was an attorney that bought some Real Estate. I did go to work for him. His background, having lived through the Depression, was so controlling over a young, inexperienced son that I was miserable. So, what do you do when you are in a relationship that is not working?

There are always the same 4 choices:

- A. Change the system
- B. Change yourself
- C. Suffer
- D. Leave – my choice

Remember, if you let yourself be a victim, you seed control to the other party. A victim is always dependent on the other party. When I was unwilling to follow my father's directions and tired of suffering, I took control by leaving his firm to sell houses for Moore Realty.

Who else wants desperately to control you? Your politicians and your government. They do it in insidious ways, casting many of us as victims and bribing us to support them with our own money. There is No Free Lunch! Beware! Unearned

rewards do not bestow happiness. All you should want is a fair shot based on your merits.

Our Founding Fathers have bestowed upon us this inalienable right to pursue happiness. So, get to work on your life plans. Remember that you must be in control. Use the Eagle Scouts' meritorious example that is to earn a lifetime of earned success moments. Then you will be pursuing happiness. I have a favorite saying that helps me to stay in focus on this theory: "If it is to be, it is up to me." (Repeat) I never earned a merit badge, but I've made one up for all of you.