

For Young People



By Anna Von Reitz

One of the watershed moments of my life and career came this week. I received a thank you note and a one dollar donation from a child. That is astonishing, but even more astonishing, the accompanying note made it clear that they knew what they were supporting: their government, their country.

Good job, Mom and Dad!

When I am home, I wake up every morning staring at a portrait of me when I was seventeen. I have gotten better looking as I've aged. It's not a flattering picture: my nose soars above the flat oval of my face like a granite ridge, and my expression, though sweet, is also supremely calculating and intense. I am considering something..... considering it very carefully.

What would I say to her, this much younger version of myself? What would I tell her about the road ahead? ---Even knowing that she wouldn't believe any of it?

Oh, yes, you are going to finish school and roam the world and end up after years of knocking about, in Alaska, and you are going to marry an accomplished artist, yes, an oil painter.....

And I wondered this morning, can I give back something to my child donor, from the life I have led? Some bit of insight to help them navigate besides --- "Keep a close eye on the government!"

How have I gotten through Life with my heart and Shinola Sensors intact?

Of course, there's The Ten Commandments. I learned those early and well, thanks to my parents carefully and repeatedly finding occasion to discuss each one of them. As I look back, adopting them as a basic Life Code has saved me (and others) no end of misery, so yes, remember The Ten Commandments, and not just by rote.

You have to internalize these commandments, so that they become part of you and your responses to Life. To the extent that The Ten Commandments enter your life, to that same exact extent, you will be spared misery and doubt and shame in your relationship with the True God and in your relationships with other people.

The Ten Commandments taught me to live a life of justice, and if you will listen, they will do the same thing for you. It may not make sense right now, but by the time you are my age you will look back and know how many, many times these simple rules made all the difference.

I recommend that children start with The Ten Commandments, because the Commands of Jesus, though supremely wise, are more subtle, and require a much greater understanding of self and greater life experience.

The Golden Rule to love others as ourselves, doesn't make much sense until we arrive at the point of really knowing ourselves and being at peace with ourselves so that we can love ourselves and so, create the standard we are supposed to observe in dealing with others.

The same thing applies to the command to "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your...." Before you can do that, you have to have had enough life experience to be aware of the Presence of God, to know God, and have a relationship with God.

To know God is to love God; so that part is easy as falling off a log. That part is natural. The hard part is developing the discernment to become truly aware of God, and that takes time and attention.

We are talking about connecting to an invisible and mysterious and benevolent Being, that is our source of life and the natural compass of our hearts. To do this is not easy for people who are focused 95% of the time on external sensory data.

Many people never get this far. The Ten Commandments are hard enough.

But to my children, and to yours, I can give no better advice than to spend the time seeking to know yourself and love yourself and make the effort to know the True God who is the Author and Sustaining Power of Life

Observe him at work in the world around you and in the small miracles of every day.

These Higher Commandments bear the wealth of the Spirit and do far more than keep us out of trouble or spare us the miseries and embarrassments of committing crimes and gaffs we regret.

These Two High Commandments of Jesus, when mastered, give us peace and gladness. These are the ones that make life so much easier to bear, and which fill life with joy.

So begin with The Ten Commandments, but don't stop there. Pursue the Higher Commandments, knowing that it will take years before you truly know yourself and years before you can joke with God and recognize his hand on your shoulder.

The best things in life take time and effort, and the struggle to truly know and love yourself and to know and love the True God go hand-in-hand. Both are a matter of closely observing the unfolding revelation which is your own life.

If you pay attention and ask for guidance, you won't be disappointed. As the years go on, you will feel the years accruing ever-greater richness and meaning. While your heart will be hard toward the evil in the world, it will remain soft toward all that matters and all that is good.

In this way, you will protect yourself and those you love from harm, and come to rest in your own place in the great scheme of things, at peace with who you are, knowing and being content that you are part of All That Is.

Beyond these spiritual quests and standards, there a few other things I can offer simply as a matter of life observations:

I am the kind of Grandma who does her own dishes, and when she gets to the end of a bottle of dish soap, she rinses it out to get the last drops. If I am somewhere where I can recycle, I toss the empty dish soap bottle in the plastic recycling bin.

I am thrifty and make it my aim not to waste anything. There is a reason for that. Think about it. Why would you waste, what you struggle to earn? You had to work and pay for that soap. Get the most out of it.

As for recycling, that makes sense, too. When the bottle is done being a dish soap bottle, it can be remolded into many other useful things. Would you throw away bricks and lumber needed to build a house? So why throw away plastic and paper, either?

I am also the sort of grandma who does all the unpleasant chores. I de-scale the coffee pot. I de-frost the refrigerator. I scrub the cat food dish. I dust the ceiling fixtures. I clean the toilet bowl --- up under The Rim. Don't try to avoid the unpleasant little tasks of life. Face them head on. Make each one a conquest.

Yesterday my youngest son asked me about the fine points of toilet bowl cleaning. I showed him. Then, curious, I asked why the sudden interest?

When he gets married, he doesn't want his wife to have to clean the toilet bowl.

Girls? Hear that? The line forms to the rear....

I quirked and raised an eyebrow.... "Oh, you don't want your wife to clean The Bowl, but it's okay for your Mother to have to do it?"

The look on his face was priceless, but I smiled. It's okay. Learning to be honest and accepting what's true is also important.

This Grandma has also known what it is to be poor. Very poor. She worked and learned and didn't stay that way, but she isn't afraid of being poor and neither should you be.

Being poor teaches you things you could never learn any other way. It has a wisdom of its own, and though it isn't exactly "pleasant" to be broke or nearly so, it forces you to realize what you truly need and what you merely want.

These are good lessons, not bad. Seeing what you can do with almost nothing is a worthy creative challenge, too. When you have nothing, the world becomes a world of endless opportunity.

Someday, if I live long enough, I am going to write The Starving Artist's Cookbook and share the tricks of the trade. Because my husband has been successful as an artist we often have young people who aspire to be artists asking for advice.

They want to be artists or writers or musicians, but they are afraid of being poor. Their parents and friends have told them its not practical, not possible, they'll starve, they'll sail over the edge of the horizon and not come back. Sure, other people have done it, but no, it's not possible for you.....

Follow your passion. Don't be afraid of being poor. There's always a way forward when you are honoring the truth, and equally, there is no way to be happy or content if you are not honoring what is inside of you.

So make up your mind to live life on your terms come what may, and learn to look for the doors and windows that open for you.

Another place where young people need advice is simply this: take care of your body. Many young people are careless or reckless or just plain ignorant when it comes to taking care of their bodies.

Your body has to last you a lifetime. You have, for example, only two knees. What happens if you blow one out doing something stupid? You've got 32 teeth for this long journey; why aren't you brushing and flossing?

I know a great many people who are half my age who are in worse physical shape than I am. I know, because I regularly out-perform them doing tasks as simple as shopping for groceries.

It's not an accident and its not the result of having good genes that I am healthy and energetic at my age. I didn't let myself sit in a chair and get obese. I am a little overweight, but not grossly so. I get

exercise every day doing honest work around the house and yard, which benefits me and benefits my family.

There's always something to do, if you want to do it. If you don't have any chores of your own, go borrow some. Help out your neighbors. There are always elders in need of an extra set of hands, dogs to walk, toddlers to chase.

Work, and you will soon learn to enjoy working. You will see how it is part of the joy of living and being powerful, being able to make a difference.

People who sit around on their thumbs are missing the boat.

I chose not to put noxious chemicals into my body. I chose not to drink bad water. I chose not to eat horrible processed food and bread akin to marshmallows. I chose not to smoke, do drugs, or drink too much alcohol.

These choices add up to better health, more strength, greater agility, less stress, less expense ---and the dividends pay forward, just like a pension plan.

Make good choices for your body, beginning now, and you will remain powerful and competent in your old age. Pay attention to what you eat and drink. Learn about good nutrition and follow what you learn. You won't be sorry.

Never pass up an opportunity to learn a skill. I don't care what it is. If someone offers to teach you, learn. Maybe it's knitting or car repair or fence building. Learn. Learn. Learn. You never know when the skills you pick up along the way are going to come in handy, save you money, or even save your life.

More often than I can count, skills that I have learned have helped and saved other people, too. My friends and my family have all benefited from things I have learned and skills I have developed.

Don't let yourself get stuck in a dead end job. I know many people who have led miserable lives because when they entered the work force, they were adrift and just took whatever work they could get--- and then stayed in that job because it was secure and they developed family responsibilities that kept them plodding away year after year like hamsters in a treadmill.

Employers like to get good steady people to perform at a specific job and the nastier the job is, the more relieved they are to find someone competent to fill it. That's wonderful for them, but if you are not happy, its not so wonderful for you.

Here's a typical example --- a younger man I know went to work for a grocery store chain and worked his way up to be manager of a store. He wasn't married, so they tagged him to go to a remote store location where they had all sorts of problems --- logistical problems, personnel problems, store maintenance problems.

He solved all those problems, and then, guess what? The managers wanted him to stay there forever, in this remote, inhospitable, difficult place-- and they didn't want to give him a raise or any special support. They just wanted him to be a store manager like any other store manager in their chain forever and ever.

They were very happy with his performance, and he was happy that he showed what he could do, but also surprised when performing all those miracles got him nowhere but stuck in a place he never wanted to be in the first place.

He can plow his way out, and find a different job with a more enlightened company---which he will do, and that is the whole point. Don't let yourself get stuck in a job you don't like, even if you can do it well, even if it is secure, even if the bosses love you.

Finally, and this is the Real Biggie: don't have children until you are ready for them. I know more people than I can count who made the mistake of rushing in and having children before they were ready, and both they and the kids have suffered.

The timing of being ready for a family of your own varies widely, and yes, it involves many factors. Having a loving relationship with the right mate is Number One.

Being emotionally fulfilled and mentally stable and ready to settle down is Number Two. Some people are ready at seventeen. Some won't be ready for a family at seventy. You have to know yourself well enough to know when you are ready, and if the answer is no, let it be no --- for your sake and everyone else's.

Other people are always ready to make your commitments for you. Don't let them.

There is a general time clock and schedule to life. You bloom, you go to seed, and you die. But not everyone follows the same time clock. Many young people feel pressured to fulfill expectations related to a pre-ordained template: graduate high school at 18, graduate college at 22, go on to graduate school or, get a job and get married.... or, maybe where you live, the template is to drop out of high school in your Junior year and go to work at the local steel mill.

Whatever the template is for your time and place and community, there is a template by which people seem to schedule their lives, whether it really fits them or not.

Whatever the expectations are, don't just accept them. And don't let your decision to start a family be dictated by them, either. It's going to be your family. Your responsibility. Your life.

Having a child of your own is the most wonderful, but also the most demanding experience you will ever have. Prepare yourself for it, like you'd prepare to climb a mountain. Think deeply about not only taking care of yourself, but taking care of and providing for a mate and a child.

Or two, or three, or.....

And I am saying this to women as well as men. Many women assume that they are going to get married and their husband is going to take care of supporting them and any children they have. That's not a safe assumption. Most men make an honest effort for their families, but men are not gods. Men get sick. Men have accidents. Men lose jobs. Men, like women, and for whatever reasons---- fail. And then what?

Then Mom has to step up to the plate, and she'd better be prepared to do so.

You may find yourself having to take care of a disabled spouse and children. Be aware of that fact. It happens. Prepare, so that if you ever face such a dire circumstance, you're ready to go on loving and shoving, because that's what it takes.

Yes, from your own experiences growing up, you will have some idea of what it takes to be a parent and even some opinions about what it takes to be a good parent, but this is one of those things that you can't fathom until it happens to you, and nobody including me can quite describe it.

So be aware and be serious-minded enough to know that of all the decisions you make in your life, choosing a mate and choosing when to have a family, are the two biggest decisions most of us ever make, and are they are the decisions that have the most impact on what kind of life we live, and the satisfaction we have in living.

As I write this, forty percent of babies in America are being born without Fathers in evidence. Part of this is people avoiding medical costs, because the State will pick up the maternity care and birthing costs for unwed mothers, and part of it is men avoiding responsibility. Either way, this is having a terrible impact on our whole country and on the world we live in. Children need their Fathers and men need to be men.

There is an aspect of self-respect and self-worth involved here. As tough as it can be to stand tall and deal with life, there is a glory in it, too.

And the alternative is to be a slave to the State, which is how we got into this whole discussion in the first place,

Sometimes we all get into situation that are beyond us, that we can't help, that we can't change, that we can't deal with. Know that. It's part of the way life is, that there are times when we all fall down and can't get up without some help. That's to keep us honest.

But we can do our best to know ourselves and plan ahead and make good decisions for ourselves and for the babies we bring into the world. We owe that to ourselves and to them.

May God bless you and keep you safe in the crook of his arm; may you never feel alone and never forget to count your blessings. Keep your Shinola Sensors turned on "High" and a smile on your face. When sadness comes to you, remember that it will pass. When challenges come, know that it is for your betterment.

And never, ever, despair about anything. Ever.

Love, Granna.

See this article and over 1900 others on Anna's website here: www.annavonreitz.com

To support this work look for the PayPal buttons on this website.