

The Eleven Most Important Life Lessons I Learned From Loss

By JoAnne Funch

After losing my mother and then my husband within one month of one another I ended that year with the following thoughts I made into a holiday card. I've added some questions for you to consider after each thought.

1. I know that we should spend as much time as possible with family and friends and get to know them more deeply everyday because it is in these people that our lives are framed and our innermost feelings are shared. *When was the last time you shared deeply with someone you treasure so much in your life? I suggest you share with them something they may not know about you.*
2. I know with certainty that your best friends will always be there in your time of sorrow as well as your times of joy, you don't have to ask them because they will always show up either to hold your hand or to have fun with you, sometimes it's both. *Four longtime friends got on an airplane and showed up at my door after my husband passed, they held my hand, cried with me and jumped in to help. Do you tell your dearest friends how much they matter in your life?*
3. I know that we should rejoice in the certainty that we are or have been loved by those who have shared the biggest part of our life and what a gift that is. *I smile every time I think of being loved by my mom and my husband ... Do you rejoice knowing you are or have been loved or do you take that for granted?*
4. I know how to say yes when people reach out to help, I know how to say No without guilt. *Have you learned this lesson? Do you realize that NO is a sentence?*
5. I know that each day has triumphs large or small. *I still revel in daily triumphs such as completing a goal or even stopping to connect with a friend. What are you feeling triumphant about today?*
6. I know that I will always use the good dishes, buy the better bottle of wine and order whatever I want at a restaurant and not wait for any special occasion, everyday that I am alive is a special occasion. *Do you really know each day is a gift and that you are worthy of enjoying special things everyday?*
7. I know that picking up the telephone and connecting with someone is better than sending an email. *When was the last time you stopped and decided to call instead of sending an email?*
8. I know that I am not skilled at fixing sprinkler heads, swimming pools and anything electronic and it's best to ask for help or downsize. *I totally believe in outsourcing to simplify my life - who do you outsource to?*
9. I know that planning trips that I only just talked about are important, taking them is icing on the cake. *Last year I got on a plane and visited three different people, how many people or places will you make a priority to visit this year?*
10. I know that making a life is more important than making a living and once I got that, the making a living part got easier. *I do what I love with the certainty that I will be provided with all I need - opportunities, money and love. I challenge you to make your life more important than making your living.*
11. And, lastly I know for sure I won't put off things until tomorrow, because tomorrow may never come and that broken hearts will mend if you let God, family and friends comfort and guide you to better days. *What things do you put off assuming you will have plenty of time for later, and who are those people that form a circle of strength to comfort you in your times of need?*