

Florida

The weather has been wonderful. The visit with my daughter's family delightful. The first meeting between grandpa and granddaughter fantastic.

There haven't been any trips to major theme parks. Nothing special planned. Days come and go just like at home. I am enjoying my visit. I get to spend time with my family.

That was written back in August, during my visit with the Florida family. It has been almost a month since those words have been thought of. I really enjoyed my trip, and I miss everyone I saw when I was down there. I know my little granddaughter is growing quickly, it is usually a given for babies. The other grandchildren have slowed there growing pace, but they will be different the next time I see them. Families grow, change and develop at their own pace. A new pathway in life is open to them.

Here in NW Ohio, the changes in life usually happen at a slower pace. My children are grown, they have their lives, and I have been set in my ways for many years.

I've recently have written about change. Those who know me realize that I was taking a reflective approach to the changes occurring in my life. I've written about love and relationships. Those again, were posts reflecting things going on in my life. And here I am today, focused on changes that have occurred and will continue to occur. Today life is good, and the future is full of promise. In my opinion, it is good to be me. I haven't said that often recently, but today I can say it. I'm looking forward to what life has in store for me.

Just remember this is from someone who really likes hot sauces...

My little girl in Florida (along with her husband of course) got me the most wonderful present. It could have been for Father's Day or maybe my birthday. They hadn't shipped it, and I was last there at Christmas and I didn't get it then. But anyway, this present was a wonderful collection of hot sauces. All well up on the scale of things hot and spicy. My son-in-law had to sign a waiver to buy them, good stuff that. I think I will try them out in different foods to determine which one I like best...

Hot Sauce Death Pack

First one in the package was Dave's Insanity Sauce. My little family knows about this sauce, I've had it before and it is quite potent. I add a drop or so to my bowl of chili, just to liven things up a bit. I will write more on that one later.

Today I tried "Smack my ass and call me Sally" hot sauce. The bottle comes with a warning label on it.

***WARNING**This sauce is extremely hot. Keep away from children. Do not use if you have heart or respiratory problems. Wash hands after use.*

I tried this in Florida on a cracker or something like that. Just one drop and it is VERY hot. I added some to my quick dinner tonight and found it extremely pleasant (for something that could very well light my lips on fire ☹) One or two drops does not seem to affect the flavor of the dish all that much, but it does increase the fire power. I imagine I could use this sauce on anything I wanted a bit of a kick with. 3

drops in a cup of chicken soup is about my limit of enjoyable heat. I think I could take more, but even for me there comes a point when the heat just doesn't add anything to the dish. I will admit that there is even a point when I go. DANG that is just too spicy. I haven't hit that one often, but I think I could with this sauce.

When all is said and done...

it was a good day.

I was able to talk to a very special lady today, even though we were not able to see each other. For me, just saying I was talking to someone special is a good thing. I guess that is the special part. ☐

Then I had a long talk with my little sister. We haven't had a chance to talk for a while, so it was nice to reconnect. Idle chitchat about things happening in our lives, a search for a wandering grumpy dog, talk of flip top noses, getting old, and new things in our lives. A nice time.

Then I did a chore I despise more than any other. I did laundry. Not having a working machine at home means a trip to the laundry mat. Usually a boring time, but as luck would have it I ran into another friend and we had wonderful conversation.

After that I talked to my youngest for just a bit, but it was nice to hear her voice on the phone.

Throw in a couple of quick updates on Facebook, and a Detroit tiger win tonight, yes it was a good day

Trips to Florida and vehicle problems

I just returned from a wonderful visit to Florida. I enjoyed my time with my family, and got to meet the newest member of said family. Even though I've only been gone a few days, I miss them all.

I would like to know why I always seem to have problems with my truck on the way home. It seems like every time I've travelled that road something bad happens to my truck. Stones hitting the windshield, battery going bad, problems with the driver's side window and finally some engine problems. This coincidence just about doubles the cost of each trip.

This trip it was a problem with acceleration. I had hoped that it was only bad gasoline, but that was not the cause. Final cost on this has yet to be realized, since they still have my truck in the shop. It seems like I'm waiting for parts again.

I guess I really shouldn't complain too much. That truck and I have been through a lot together. After almost 7 years and 196000 miles, I still like that truck. As far as vehicles go, it has been one of my better investments. I should be able to get at least another 50,000 or so on it. I sure hope so.

Anyway, back to the thoughts on my trip. I was able to spend some time with my family both in Florida and in South Carolina. I am fortunate that my sister lives halfway between Florida and Ohio. This gives me an opportunity to visit my big sister a little more often than I usually would. Family is very important to me and any time I can spend with sisters, children and grandchildren is a big plus in my book.

Bittersweet

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure.

That is one of the definitions of this word and the topic of this post.

In June, my life started heading in a new direction. A lot has happened in the past few weeks. Most of the events were extremely pleasant, but there is a touch of sadness involved.

I am now in the middle of a growing relationship. The wonderful time learning how two people can fit their lives together has been occupying a good portion of my days. I must admit that the start of the journey is most enjoyable. I am looking forward the continuation of the time we have had. But other things took me away from the experience.

I had a trip partially planned for quite some time. A daughter and her husband were expecting their first child together. After the birth, my departure to the sunny south was a certainty. I made this trip alone. The preceding sentence is filled with sadness. I could not take any of my children, or another special someone with me.

I got to Florida and was able to hold my newest granddaughter for the first time. As with all of my grandchildren, it was love at first sight. The only difference is that with this little girl, I was able to see her weeks after her birth, not the years needed for my daughters to meet their husbands and the children that came with them. My thought as I held her was how sad it was that her maternal grandmother could not be here to see her. Another bittersweet moment.

I've been spending time with my family, and the older two grandchildren went to spend the weekend with their birth mother. Time for them to bond with another parent, sometimes life can be so complicated for our young. There will be a few days without their smiles in the morning. I am grateful for any time I spend with them.

In a few short days I will again be on the road. I will be leaving behind a family that I love dearly, and going back to the rest of my family that I love with equal passion. I am torn with leaving, but I am looking forward to seeing the others again.

I am also looking forward to spending more time getting to know someone new in my life. We have grown quite fond of each others company. It is a very good feeling. That is tinged with another bittersweet feeling. The history of our lives and why we were able to meet and start a relationship has some sadness and pain. There were difficult times in the past, and these experiences will influence our futures. It will be a journey of learning for both of us.

Bittersweet: Producing or expressing a mixture of pain and pleasure... A taste that is both bitter and sweet...

As long as the bitter and the sweet do not overwhelm the senses, this feeling or taste can be a fulfilling experience. Our lives are filled with these types of feelings. We must learn to take everything we can from these situations. They are part of life and they make it worth living.

Grumpy dog

Currently on my blog page, there is a picture of my little corgi. He is an old grumpy little dog. In the past, when I have to leave town for any length of time, I tried to take him with me, or in the care of family. If that was not an option, I would board him in a kennel, with some trepidation. I never liked the kennels, because the little guy always seemed to be a bit nervous there.

I'm in Florida now, and the grumpy pup is staying with friends. I've heard he is still being a bit grumpy, but I've also heard that he is getting some love and attention. This has allowed me to relax just a bit on this vacation. It is a welcome relief.

Mere words can never express the gratitude I feel. This is coming from the same person who threw a fit when the dog arrived in the house 12 years ago. He wasn't really my dog until recently. He always preferred the oldest female in the house. I let that oldest female take care of him. But with my youngest daughter being out of the house, he became my dog.

No, I really don't have the words right now. My heart felt thanks are fully given. He is, after all, a very special grumpy old dog.

Official?

Well, I saw it on facebook. Doesn't that make it true? OK, you don't believe that line, good. Not every thing you see on Facebook is true or, real. Same goes for most of the Internet. I like to make sure I let people know important things face to

face or at least on the phone.

Important news should be delivered to those it affects. As you go farther from the center the news does not need to be direct, but where and when does Facebook become an acceptable way of spreading the news.

I've delivered some important news to those that needed to know. After that the news was placed on Facebook. Yes, I guess that made it official. I never thought that I would be placing important information on any social network. I never dreamt of putting it in this type of information in my blog.

I guess important news can be shared in this type of format if that is the only way it can be shared.

I just noticed that I spent a good portion of this post writing about important news. I have shared that news (slightly) in an earlier post, but in my own obtuse way. People who know me, knew what I was talking about. I guess I should, at some point, I should state this in a bit more extensive format. Then again, I won't be doing that now.

□

Bathing a dog

If you've met Colin, my little corgi, you will know that he can be a grumpy little dog. He is older and set in his ways. If he doesn't like it, he will grump, growl and grumble until you are done. I was sure that would be the ordeal I would face when I gave him a bath this morning. He has been shedding a lot during this last hot spell, so I thought getting his undercoat cleaned up and thatched would help him be a little

cooler. And of course I wanted him neat and clean when he goes on his vacation this week.

Well I was a bit surprised after I got him wet. He grumbled on his way there, he grumbled as the water ran, but when I started scrubbing him down, he just relaxed. I think getting all that fur wet helped cool the little guy down. After the bath was finished, I was 'allowed' to give him a good brushing. He even rolled over and got a good belly rub. That hasn't happened in a few years or more. "Check Paws" or "Rub the belly" were commands used to have him roll on his back. The thought was to make it easier for general grooming. After my dear wife died, those commands seemed to mean hide behind the couch. Today, rub the belly got the expected result. Hmm, maybe he needs more bath, or not...

All said and done, it was a good way to start my day.

Packing for a trip...

I'm almost ready to go on a vacation. I've done as much laundry as possible. I have things ready to go. A few odds and ends to take care of, but I guess I'm ready.

Of course it won't be a good trip unless I forget something. For some reason I always forget an item or two, but that makes the trip right. It has happened for almost every trip as long as I can remember planning them. It adds to the excitement and adventure.

In just a few short days, I will be holding my newest granddaughter. I will be showering the other grandkids with hugs and love. I get to spend time with the family I see the least. That sounds like a good time doesn't it?

And yet, as with most of these trips, there is a little darkness in a corner. There are those I leave behind to be missed. There are those who will never experience this greeting of new life and missed family. I will admit that the feelings of joy and happiness out weigh those little gray clouds; the cloud still seem to linger.

I guess that is life. Ever moving forward, and onward. Only momentary glimpses into the past. Dwelling on past events and futures that might or could have been are left for other times. Looking forward to good times...

Expanding on a thought

Just a few weeks ago, I wrote about knowing if it is love. One response, and further conversation pushed me to write more on the subject.

I'm really only going to expand on the romantic love. Love of friends, parents, children seems to be easier to define and feel. I will also leave off the agape or spiritual love off this expansion. While that is an interesting subject, it is beyond the scope of my interest at present.

What I was curious about was a very simple statement that you "just knew" you had a true love. While I have most certainly felt that way in the past, I was surprised when what I thought was true love just sort of ended. In my "old" age, I'm a bit more pragmatic. It is love, true love, as long as the people involved keep working at it.

Yes, I did just say work at it. A little bit of work on a relationship goes a very long way. What kind of work? Normally just little things that you would do for someone you care

about. Sharing chore duties, without being asked. A neck massage after someone has a hard day. An offer of a cold drink on a hot day. Little things to reaffirm the feelings that you share.

Do you think of your partner first? Does doing something just for them make you feel good? Does your partner consider themselves spoiled, or one of the luckiest people alive? If so, you are well on your way to doing the work needed.

The feelings involved will be many and complex. When two people get together in a romantic love, there should be some physical chemistry. This chemistry can and often does lead to intimate expressions of love. Where this goes beyond lust and falls into love is up for debate, but it does happen. It may be something you "just know", or you may make a more deliberate decision. I don't know if I have enough knowledge to speak on that subject as much as it really deserves.

Then there are the feelings of caring. You feel a need or desire for the well being of another. Their health is important to you. When does this occur? Who knows.

One more thing that I think is very important, is a feeling of connection. You feel better with a person. You feel better if you know you will see them in a short time. Knowing that you are being thought of can also raise your spirits. I won't say it is a completion, I feel that was an overworked phrase from a common place movie, but more like an extension or addition. You become more, because you work together.

So, I've rambled on a bit. Rehashing thoughts I've written before. More for my benefit than anything else. But I will leave you with another thought. How can you know you are in love, if the feelings and emotions involved are something you've never experienced. I've been there, I know (as far as a person can) what love should and can be. But over the years I've forgotten what it was like not to "know". I based my

feelings on my limited experience and what I observed in others. If I had no good examples, if my experience was less than what it was, how could I ever “know”. I never really thought about it in that way before. But I guess I’m thinking of it now...