

Words of Life

As I live life, talk with friends, watch movies, or live theater, I come across words that in some way touch my life. That touch may only be for a second or two, but the results can be extraordinary.

Last night, I was humbled. People came down after the show to express their gratitude for our acting. My little performance received high praise from many people. As I said, I was humbled. This is a role, as late early this week, I did not feel was my best effort. I am very glad it pleased the audience. Those short "thank yous" meant a lot to me.

Over the course of my life, I've been fascinated with words and our ability to communicate many things with those words and how we say them. Written communication can never compete with the vocal/visual combination, but they do have some effect on the way I view things. If they didn't, I don't think I would be writing a blog.

Being able to communicate well is helpful in most situations. There are times that I wish my skills in this area were better, but I will take what I have. Of course I want to share the words that have touched my life in some way or another.

Around in the winter of 1983 and 1984 I started hearing the words "Hi Daddy" from a precocious 2 year old. Those two words changed my life. In her eyes, I was daddy from the time those words were uttered. According to the State, it took until 1985. I was able to hear those words from 3 other lovely young ladies over the past years too. Sometimes I wonder what I did to be able to hear those words with the love that is evident every time they say them.

Of course, other words from my family have also deeply touched me. Words like: "Father of the Bride", "Husband and Wife", "I love you." There have been sad words too. "I'm sorry we

couldn't do more.", "We need to go to the hospital (or emergency room).", "We don't know.", "It was a heart attack.", "It was cancer."

And with my family there were also many movie quotes that are used in our daily lives. Here are a few that I think are special.

This is my family. I found it, all on my own. Is little, and broken, but still good. Yeah, still good.

I always have a wonderful time, wherever I am, whomever I'm with.

No matter what happens tomorrow, or the rest of my life, I'm happy now because I love you.

Years ago my mother used to say to me, she'd say, "In this world, Elwood, you must be" – she always called me Elwood – "In this world, Elwood, you must be oh so smart or oh so pleasant." Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant. You may quote me.

I'll give you a winter prediction: It's gonna be cold, it's gonna be grey, and it's gonna last you for the rest of your life.

I know. You know I know. I know you know I know. We know Henry knows. And Henry knows we know it. We're a knowledgeable family.

Words and how they are said make a difference. That is one reason I am careful with the words that come from my mouth, pen or keyboard.

There Comes a Time

When we heed a certain call

When the world must come together as one.

Twenty-five years ago, a group of the best-known pop, country, and r&b artists gathered at a recording studio following the American Music Awards to record a song that would raise money to help the millions of needy people in Africa. Singers like Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie, Bruce Springsteen, Ray Charles, Kenny Rogers, Harry Belafonte, Willie Nelson, and stars like Dan Aykroyd in all 43 superstars from numerous genres were part of U.S.A for Africa.

Recently, a large group of today's artists and some who have been around for a bit, gathered at the same recording studio to record an updated version of ["We are the World"](#) (including a hip-hop bit) to benefit the relief efforts of the devastation caused by the Haitian earthquakes. I don't see many repeaters aside from Janet, Tito, and Randy Jackson. Janet will be performing the solo parts recorded by her late brother. Today's pop stars like Miley Cyrus, the Jonas Brothers, Celine Dion, and Rob Thomas joined with Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Harry Connick, Jr., Josh Groban plus Faith Evans, Gladys Knight and Vince Vaughn? An astonishing 78 artists on one recording... the ego in the studio must have been great. Hopefully not only will the recording be successful artistically but also help the relief effort in Haiti.

For those of you too young to remember the original or for those of us who have not seen the once (now twice) in a lifetime gathering here it is. The new version is set to be

released during the Olympics on NBC.

A night off

I'm sitting here doing a lot of nothing. No rehearsal, no lines to memorize, chores that can be put off for a day or two. All of that is good, because I'm in desperate need to rest my throat a bit. I have one part in the show that I really have to force my voice a bit. Every rehearsal, I need some liquid to help sooth my throat. Part of this is the voice I use, and the other is my winter sinus problems. If it was just one of the two, my throat would be fine. So tonight I relax and maybe drink some hot tea.

Not much more to say. Life is boring, and for tonight that is good. ☐

:)

Wow – that last post was such a downer that I decided to write a little follow-up – I'm feeling better! I took forever in the shower, and my son is still napping! And the two girls have been playing together... funny how the house calms down when a certain little Kindergartner is at school. Coincidence or instigator? You tell me ☐

My little parakeet JJ likes the sound of running water, so my shower music today was supplied by a happy little bird – that was a mood lifter! I've been reaching into his cage as part of training to get him used to me, and he's been letting me touch him! So today I was touching his belly, and he started to close his eyes, and it occurred to me that we didn't have

to just do training – I could pet him! So today, I would say that JJ became a REAL pet – he enjoyed my company, let me pet him, and he cheered me up!

And now I get to sit here at the computer for a few minutes, and I actually get to have my glass of water next to me since there is no one to come drop things into it (one of my son's favorite activities is the put things in water, you'd think he'd appreciate his baths more than he does). And I treated myself to a piece of chocolate. Ah, a long hot shower, chocolate, and peace and quiet... what more could I want? Sorry about the grumpy post I made before ☐

My Job Is To Make People Miserable

My husband works from 9:30 to 5 on weekdays, which leaves me the job of holding down the fort. My kids are generally good kids, and they are adorable, so it should be a fun job. But I'm not having fun today. I've had 3 kids crying literally constantly today from 9-12:30. Taylor is 10, and she's home sick from school. She's the only one being good, but I can't give the poor kid a break because her sisters and brother are acting so crazy!! This is the 2nd Wednesday in a row that the kids have acted up – what is up with that?!? I have 5 minutes of peace right now because we got Sammie to Kindergarten and the baby is napping. I just need to blog about it because I feel like I'm going to explode!! The baby is getting over being sick, so if he's not being held, he's crying. I don't know what the deal is with 3-year-old Disney, she's usually pretty good, but today she is screaming about *everything*. And she has this loud, shrill, ear-splitting scream like you

wouldn't believe. In the meantime, Sammie was provoking everyone and starting fights with all 3 of her siblings; I was trying to referee, hold the baby, clean up his messes, change dirty diapers, and make lunch all at the same time. Now that I have some "peace", I feel worse – Disney has asked me 6 questions just in the short time it's taken me to write this. I'm trying not to snap at her, but I'm in a really bad mood. It would really help if I had my dog to snuggle, but she died in December and my other dog is too smelly to snuggle. I feel like I work really hard all day, and all I do is make people miserable. How can my husband get any work done with all the screaming in the house? It adds pressure to me to try to keep a suitable work environment for him. I am looking forward to a relaxing evening. No, wait. It's youth group night, which I normally enjoy, but to go try to teach a bunch of preteens after a day like today seems daunting. Not to mention that I have an extra group tonight since a fellow teacher had back surgery yesterday. I hope it went well for her...

I would cry but then I'll get another nosebleed – my nose has been bleeding a lot lately, stress maybe? I sure wish I could figure out a fun way to wind down to give me something to look forward to tonight, but my kids have been refusing to go to bed lately, and the little guy has been waking up all night with his illness.

Ok, that's my vent, sorry to be such a downer, but I thought writing about it would help. Dunno yet if I was right... Time to make the most of the baby's nap and get the garbage out and lunch cleaned up. If I'm lucky and he sleeps long enough, I just might get a nice long hot shower – but that's probably too much to ask.

LOST!

What seems like ages ago, I was a big fan of Lost. I didn't watch the first season when it aired, but all the buzz about it got me curious, so my husband and I gave the first season dvd's a try – and really liked it! But then the second season of Lost wasn't as good, mainly because there were way too many questions and loose ends brought about – we couldn't figure out why they weren't concluding some of the mysteries instead of adding tons of new questions each week! When production was temporarily halted because of the writer's strike a few years ago, things on Lost really went downhill. But we had invested the time in watching it, and because the show's creators announced a definitive end date for Lost – this is the last season – we decided to stick it out.

So last night's highly anticipated last Lost season premiere was... eh. Only so-so, I would say. First, the show opened with really cheap-looking computer animation showing the island underwater, what was that? And there was a recap episode before the premiere, thank goodness for that, but between the 2 episodes, we saw the same climatic scene 3 times in 12 minutes! And the recap episode didn't help as much as I would have hoped – 12 minutes into the new Lost, and I was officially lost. My husband tells me that there are now two sets of each character, but I somehow missed that. If it's true, I don't like it.

Ugh... I like the concept of seeing flight 815 before it crashed, but all the actors look 6+ years older! Especially Boone!

The end of the episode was breathtaking, although I remain confused... were any of these people aware of what had happened? The time travel throughout the various decades?

I guess I have to watch the premiere again; I feel like I'm

missing something... actually I'm missing a lot of things. The show is still entertaining, but I am so glad it's almost over! It really require more thought and more of a time commitment than I have to give to tv right now!

Maybe it is coming together

We have one more dress rehearsal tomorrow night. Tonight was the first night I really felt comfortable in my role. I had flashes of comfort in the past week or so, but tonight felt good. Few things that I would like to improve on, but that is a never ending quest.

I haven't written much about this show, partly because of how I was feeling about my character. Another point was an actor dropped out. The sickness and then death of someone close to him prevented him from doing the play. That situation did not help the feelings I was having.

Our director stepped in to take the role and had the part memorized in under a week. That made me feel bad, since I had my role for a month before that and I was still trying to get the lines down. It took me some time, but I eventually got there.

The of course there were the problems of getting the entire cast there on time and on the same day. That is three plays (that I have been involved with) in a row. What is happening. I remember more than one show that it was odd for a person to miss a rehearsal. Hmm.

Anyway, today's show fell together nicely. We lost a cast member or two because of their work schedules, but we were able to work around that. Tonight was funny and in some parts

very touching.

So to put it in a very few words: We have a show. ☐

My New Doctor

How funny is it that I had this email forward waiting for me in my inbox when I returned from the doctor this morning?

MY NEW DOCTOR



Q: Doctor, I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life. Is this true?

A: Heart only good for so many beats, and that it... Don't waste on exercise. Everything wear out eventually. Speed up heart not make live longer; that like say you can extend life of car by driving faster. Want live longer? Take nap.

Q: Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

A: You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does cow eat? Hay and corn. What are these? Vegetables. So, steak nothing

more than efficient mechanism of delivering vegetables to system. Need grain? Eat chicken. Beef also good source of field grass (green leafy vegetable). And pork chop give 100% recommended daily allowance of vegetable products.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: No, not at all. Wine made from fruit. Brandy is distilled wine. That means they take water out of fruity bit; get even more goodness that way. Beer also made out of grain. Bottoms up!

Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

A: If you have body and you have fat, ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, ratio is two to one, etc.

Q: What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise program?

A: Cannot think of single one, sorry. My philosophy: No Pain...GOOD!

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: YOU NOT LISTEN!!! ... Foods fried in vegetable oil.. How getting more vegetables bad for you?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Definitely not! When you exercise muscle, it get bigger. You should only do sit-ups if want bigger stomach.

Q: Is chocolate bad for me?

A: You crazy? HELLO .. Cocoa bean! Vegetable!!! Cocoa bean best feel-good food around!

Q: Is swimming good for your figure?

A: If swimming good for figure, explain whale.

Q: Is getting in-shape important for my lifestyle?

A: Hey! 'Round' is shape!

Well, I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may

have had about food and diets.

AND....

For those of you who watch what you eat, here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting nutritional studies:

1. The Japanese eat very little fat

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

3. The Chinese drink very little red wine

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

4 The Italians drink a lot of red wine

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

5. The Germans drink a lot of beers and eat lots of sausages and fats

And suffer fewer heart attacks than Americans.

CONCLUSION....

Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you!

Double Doctor Duty

This morning was our appointment with the pediatrician. The "our" refers to my little 18-month-old boy and I. It seems strange for a 31-year-old to have an appointment with the pediatrician, but as I've said before, he is also our resident sleep expert. Since I never feel rested no matter how much sleep I get, I was trying to get to the bottom of it and even got a sleep study done.

First and most importantly, my little boy is growing exactly in accordance with the growth chart at the pediatrician's

office! There was an intern doctor he was training this morning, and he noted to her that it was very rare to have a baby grow so normally – so I will take that as a good thing. My little guy **hated** being poked and prodded, but at least he got the A-ok! He weighs 24 lb 2 oz and is 32 7/8" long.

As for me... nothing doing, really. My heart was fine during the sleep study, so that's a good thing. But according to the doctor, I slept for 7 hours of the 7.6 hours I was being studied (could have fooled me). My oxygen levels went a little bit low, but nothing that needs any fixing, I guess. He said that because of my "structure" (I have one huge tonsil), I will have to get this sleep study done every few years to make sure that things don't get worse, but I disagree – that is not going to happen. All in all, it was a waste of time I would say. I'm a little frustrated because the sleep study was kind of an unpleasant experience, especially to have nothing to show for it. And for the past week, my sleepiness has gotten even worse – I feel like I've been bordering on narcoleptic! I've stopped sleeping with the tv on, something I've done and loved doing since I was about 6 years old. I've been going to bed earlier, as much as I hate missing out on 'me and Hubby' time – I even got a nap in on Sunday! But even after making all these efforts, I've still fallen asleep at the movies, at home while watching movies; and (I hate to admit it), but I was struggling at church and I also dozed during a class we're taking. And it's not like I'm bored – I love to learn, and I really like church and look forward to it! I was really disappointed that I missed some of last week's message! Why can't I stay awake?!? Back to square one, I guess... whatever that is. Time to stock up on coffee and energy drinks, I suppose, there seems to be no other hope for me.

And The Nominees Are...

This morning, the Academy Award nominations were announced. The big news this year: the expansion of the Best Picture Category from 5 nods to 10. As the list proves, this was done in order to pay homage to not only the “good” films but also to the popular films that everyday joes are likely to have seen. There is also another first among the nominees which I will get to.

And AWAAAAAY We Go

Best Actress In A Supporting Role:

- Penelope Cruz (*Nine*)
- Vera Farmiga (*Up in the Air*)
- Maggie Gyllenhaal (*Crazy Heart*)
- Anna Kendrick (*Up in the Air*)
- Mo’Nique (*Precious: Based on the Novel ‘Push’ by Sapphire*)

Best Actor In A Supporting Role:

- Matt Damon (*Invictus*)
- Woody Harrelson (*The Messenger* not for the other big WH movie of the year: *Zombieland*)
- Christopher Plummer (*The Last Station*)
- Stanley Tucci (*The Lovely Bones*)
- Christoph Waltz (*Inglourious Basterds*)

Best Actress In A Leading Role:

- Sandra Bullock (*The Blind Side... the sweetheart of this year’s list*)
- Helen Mirren (*The Last Station*)
- Carey Mulligan (*An Education*)
- Gabourey Sidibe (*Precious... the Dark horse in this race*)
- Meryl Streep (*Julie/Julia... enough said*)

Best Actor In A Leading Role:

- Jeff Bridges (*Crazy Heart*)
- George Clooney (*Up in the Air*... speculation of a Bridges/Clooney battle)
- Colin Firth (*A Single Man*)
- Morgan Freeman (*Invictus*... portrayals of historical figures, hmm)
- Jeremy Renner (*The Hurt Locker*)

Best Animated Feature:

- *Coraline* (Henry Selick, director)
- *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (Wes Anderson)
- *The Princess and the Frog* (John Musker and Ron Clements... Disney's first classic animation feature since the Pixar revolution)
- *The Secret of Kells* (Tomm Moore)
- *Up* (Pete Docter... Disney/Pixar's best to date)

Best Director:

- James Cameron (*Avatar*)
- Kathryn Bigelow (*The Hurt Locker*... Mr. Cameron's ex-wife the first time a former couple has ever been nominated for the award... she could also come off as the first female Best Director winner)
- Quentin Tarantino (*Inglourious Basterds*)
- Lee Daniels (*Precious*...)
- Jason Reitman (*Up in the Air*)

Best Picture:

- *Avatar* (James Cameron and Jon Landau, Producers)
- *The Blind Side* (Nominees to be determined? Don't we know who produced it?)
- *District 9* (Peter Jackson and Carolynne Cunningham, Producers)
- *An Education* (Finola Dwyer and Amanda Posey, Producers)

- *The Hurt Locker* (Nominees to be determined?)
- *Inglourious Basterds* (Lawrence Bender, Producer)
- *Precious...* (Lee Daniels, Sarah Siegel-Magness, and Gary Magness, Producers)
- *A Serious Man* (Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, Producers)
- *Up* (Jonas Rivera, Producer)
- *Up in the Air* (Daniel Dubiecki, Ivan Reitman, and Jason Reitman, Producers)

There you have them. The MAJOR nominees for this years Oscar parties. Grab your ballots, make your choices, and watch ABC on March 7th when Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin co-host the 81st (or is it 82nd... conflicting details) Annual Academy Awards. Co-hosts? For the rest of the nominees, check them out at abc.com

Final Tally:

- *Avatar* and *The Hurt Locker* tied with 9 nods apiece
- *Inglourious Basterds* with 8
- *Precious* and *Up in the Air* with 6
- *Up* received 4 nominations