



Loving *Life* Fully

A FEW THOUGHTS FROM DR. HERB SENNETT

RESPONDING PROPERLY

CONFESSIONS OF A FORMER REACTOR

Advice about how to live life can be found as near as your spouse who will have all the answers. But I found out recently that one of the places most people go to is Google. Some of the most popular requests are: "How should I live my life? What makes life good?"

I'm thinking, "This has got to be insane."

So, out of curiosity, I started looking at what other people say about what constitutes a good life. And I found a couple of them that really stuck with me. The first was from Dennis Kimbro. He's a successful business man. He's been senior executive at several different corporations. He has been quoted as saying that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react. I think he's got a point there.

Life is not about what happens or what people say but rather how we react to things, events, and the people around us that make us who we are. Even the American humorist Mark Twain had a lot to say about life in general. But one of his sayings I love the best is, "The two most important days in our life are the day we are born and then the day we find out why."

Too many people in this world seem to walk around having no clue why they are even alive. I think I may have spent some time wondering that same thing. But I have looked back and found two people who said and did things with me, and even to me in one case. These two people allowed me to respond in such a way that those two people are responsible for much of who I am today. Not because of what they did, but rather because of how I responded to them.

I like using the word responding rather than what Mr. Kimbro said about reacting. I think too many people just react and don't respond. Responding means to think about and understand why the other person said or did what they did.

I'd like to share with you how I responded to two people in my life. Two people who left perhaps as what Oprah Winfrey once said, "Those people that really love you are the ones who leave footprints on your heart." The first was Ralph Sennett. He was not a close relation, he was my dad's youngest first cousin. When I was growing up in Norfolk, Virginia, he was stationed nearby at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He came up several times to visit us. And every time he came in, I was just astounded.

He would walk in his uniform. He was so tall and slender and well built. I thought he was the perfect idea of an Army soldier. And I would think, "Oh wow!" I would listen to him tell his stories about what he had done, and the things he had been involved with. And I was just amazed. I'd think, "This man knows so much and has been to so many places." And you know what? I think he showed me what the military meant for him. He had learned self-discipline and how to follow orders.

Please understand that when I was in high school, I had a lot of problems following orders. So my response to him actually ended up being a 28-year career in the military. And I think, very successfully. I'm very proud of the time I spent in the military. I guess that like Ralph, I also wanted to dedicate myself to being there for others and serving my country.

Then the second person was my mother, Betty Sennett. She took time to teach me how to dream, and then how to accomplish my dreams. And she showed me what I could do with a little love and understanding. She also encouraged me to read and learn new things. She helped me to love learning and gaining knowledge.

My response to her was I earned several university degrees, including two Doctoral degrees. And I did that even when people told me I wasn't smart enough to go to college. I can attest absolutely that my mother's influence was strong. My two brothers, my sister, and I earned a total of 13 college and university degrees among the four of us. And that includes three doctorates.

By the way, I spent a five-year career as a high school teacher, then 30 years as a college professor. Please, I didn't do this because I felt, "God's calling me to do this or that." No, it just flowed out of the influences that these two people (and lots of others) had on my life. And it was my responses to what was happening with those people around me.

I guess Mae West put it best: "You only live once; and if you do it right, once is enough."