

# A Male's View Of Life

By Jules Perrin

I once heard life compared to a toilet roll: The closer you get to the end the faster it goes. How true this is! Look at me! I've been on this earth for over sixty years. That's, let me see, 420 dog years, which is a bloody long time. I was married for over 30 years and that's not dog years. 36 real blood, sweat and tears years yet in the end our lives can be so capricious.

I didn't know what capricious meant till I read it in a book and had to look it up. But the word describes life so well. No matter how much we try and plan what we do and when we do it, something comes along to stuff it all up and divert us off our intended course. Don't get me wrong. Lots of good things happen to all of us and many of these happened when we least expected.

Forrest Gump said that life is like a box of chocolates. **Crap!!!** A real life is like a box of chocolates left in the sun and ends up a blob of mixed flavours, textures, colours and tastes.

Take me for example. I am sure it was only yesterday that I joined the workforce and now I'm in retirement. I used to recall the pleasures of our impetuous youth and recall the goals we strenuously and vehemently aspired.

In recalling our past somewhere good and some not so good but all make us what we are.

- The liberty and poverty of our youth
- Planning to do better than our first lonely sexual experience
- The freedom of throwing off the shackles of your parents
- Experimenting with alcohol down the pub
- That first fleeting passionate moment with a girl in the dark

As we all approach the possible confines and so called prosperity of our mature years, we can settle into a comfortable but defined rut and before we know it the years have flown by. Sometimes the changes are so subtle and insidious that we don't realise when we've gone from vitality and activity to dormancy and boredom.

The poor average male wakes up one day, more than likely while having an epiphany after many alcoholic beverages are consumed, and thinks, "Shit, what happened to me?" Therein lies the origin of the "*midlife crisis*".

So what does the poor self-doubting male do?

- Buy a motor bike. Got one.
- Buy a sports car. Nup
- Draw up a Bucket list. To final for me.
- Get a younger bride. No thanks once is enough.

- Have an affair. Nice but there has to be more to life than a bit of nude horizontal dancing.

Here in lies the dilemma. All these possibilities and this is where the advertising industry thrives. Everything advertised is aimed at making you, younger, smarter or happier. And we all know they don't but for that fleeting moment, while the ad is on, they do work.

So really how does one measure their life

- By dollars
- By friends
- By experiences
- By achievements
- By our kids
- Or by the way they have influenced others in a good way

Life however does teach us all some lessons. Lessons we wish we could instil in our kids but unfortunately they have to learn the hard way. The same way we did.

Some important lessons I learnt over life and would like to pass on to the younger ones.

- Get it in writing. A person's word doesn't count anymore. It's a sad less trusting society today.
- Alcohol doesn't make you as agile as you'd like to be. I tried and failed abysmally while playing with young grand kids. (Another story)
- Turn the power off before fixing the washing machine. Shocking experience.

That was my life until the change. We all know what the big **C** is, however mine was the big **D** for divorce. I was resigned to the fact that my youth would not return and life would not be as I once planned. Then my life changed. This change was more like a slap around the head.

But in my case, that diversion was the most personally beneficial excursion I have experienced in many years.

I found a new partner with a zest for life and fresh approach to living.

Now my life is great and I am looking forward to an eventful future. I now realise there are three important lessons I learnt late in life.

- We all need to leave this earth a little better, however small a change, than when we entered.
- Don't take yourself too seriously, no one else does.
- **Have fun.**