

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND

Live in the Moment!

2012

I woke up this Sunday morning with a purpose which, I must say, is quite unusual for me. My brain normally doesn't shift into gear this quickly and it was nice to experience a surge of mental awareness so early in the day for a change.

The sun was already up, the birds were chirping and the little green frogs were croaking their hearts out. I needed not much convincing to go out and join them. So, after pouring myself a hot cup of tea, I headed out their way and sat on our backyard swing. This is my favorite spot. From here I get this amazing view of what used to be a gorgeous lake years ago. As unfortunate as it may seem, not having water in the lake is not a big deal for my husband and me. The view of our 'prairie' as we call it, is awesome. Plus, we don't have to deal with the noisy jet skis and motor boats, especially on weekends when we love to sit out here. Mind you, having water would be nice, but we can't miss what we never had... So, I was basking in the beauty of God's nature, sipping on my tea, when I saw my dear husband, coffee mug in hand, walking toward me.

"Hi my love!" I said, as he sat beside me. "Gorgeous day isn't it? We should take advantage of it and go to the beach. Feel like it?"

He yawned, his brain still foggy from his sleep. "Yeah... we could do that... But let me first finish my coffee... and have a bite to eat."

"Of course! I wasn't planning on leaving on an empty stomach either. Let's take our time. No rush, my love." I assured him.

Following a scrumptious breakfast, we packed our bags and headed to our usual spot in Crescent Beach. We parked our car at the Mary Street access ramp, gathered our gear and started walking along the shore in search of a peaceful place to anchor down for a few hours. Bingo!... We were happy to find one close by so we didn't have to carry our belongings for too long. We opened up the beach umbrella we had bought at Sam's Club the previous week, set up our chairs underneath it, applied sunscreen lotion and sat down, ready to relax and breathe the fresh salty air the ocean breeze sent our way.

"This is great, isn't it?" remarked my husband as he retrieved a bottle of water from the cooler.

"It sure is..." I replied, looking at a couple of kids build some kind of a castle in the sand. Kids and sand certainly go hand in hand. As I watched them, I thought of our grandkids and the huge sandbox their dad had built for them in their screened porch. I would venture to say this is one of their favorite hangouts. Their mom, bless her heart, ended up with the short end of the stick having to pick up sand everywhere despite the rule to wipe up their feet before coming back inside. But, as she puts it: *'While they're busy playing out there, it's nice and quiet in the house! We can't have it all...'* Just the thought of it made me smile and my husband noticed.

"What are you smiling about?" he asked.

"Oh...I was just thinking of our grandkids and their sandbox, and how they're so blessed to have a mom and a dad like they have..."

"That's true. And we're also very blessed to have them all in our lives," he added.

“No doubt... Well, I don’t know about you, but I’m ready for a little stroll. Will you be joining me?”

“Sure. Let me grab my hat. I need it. I don’t have much hair on top, as you probably noticed by now,” he said jokingly.

“Good idea!” I added, lovingly rubbing his bald spot with my hand, and kissing him on the cheek.

The water licking at our feet was way too cold for us Floridians to venture all in, but perfect for the tourists or ‘snowbirds’ – as we like to call them - coming down south to take advantage of our sunny climate. Clusters of people in different shapes and sizes either lied down on towels or sat on chairs, their skin entirely covered with suntan lotion, shining like new pennies under the sun. *I’m sure they’ll make the ‘white skins’ jealous when they return home!* I thought. But, seriously, what’s this infatuation some people develop for a great tan? Don’t they know about the risks of skin cancer? In my youth I was one of those sun adulators, but I didn’t know any better back then, which is a good excuse for my stupidity! But, come on..., these people should know better nowadays!

As we passed by a woman presumably asleep, a smell of coconut oil tickled my nostrils. Her skin had turned the color of a lobster cooked to perfection, and I felt the urge to warn her. *Oh, lady, you should lay off the roasting for a while, or you’ll live to regret it!..* But I didn’t act on it, afraid she would say to mind my own business. In hindsight, I should have done it. It could have saved her a couple of days of burning pain.

In front of us, kids frolicked in the shallow water as a little sandpiper quickly walked by them in search for food. Brown pelicans flew overhead in gracious formation while on the beach, hungry seagulls gathered around kids to catch food they were playfully throwing at them. In the ocean, surfers patiently waiting for the next big wave to carry them ashore seemed to enjoy every minute of it. That wouldn’t be my cup o’ tea but for a fan, it must be quite a thrill riding on the forward face of a wave. On the horizon, a sailboat slowly and graciously moved along to its destination. *Where is she heading?* I asked myself.

The waves kept washing ashore in a rhythmic fashion while the ocean brought its distinctive aromatic smell that I love so much. I like to attribute this keen sense of smell for the ocean to my now deceased mother who was born and raised by the banks of the St. Lawrence River in the Gaspésie area, located northeast of Montreal in the Province of Quebec. Her parents were fishermen, so their lives revolved mainly around the ocean and the food it provides. Unfortunately, I can’t say that my taste for fish and seafood is as keen. I must confess, however, that lately I have been enjoying mild flavored fish sautéed in butter or olive oil. *My mom would be very proud of me!* I thought, as I impulsively lifted my head up and looked at the immensity of the clear blue sky stretching far beyond the horizon.

My husband who had been quiet all this time suddenly turned toward me and asked: “Hey honey, shouldn’t we turn around? We’ve been walking far enough, don’t you think?”

As we walked back, I focused my attention on the sand unrolling under my feet when I recognized my own footprints coming from the other direction. They were easy to spot since I have a high arch and a small heel, thus leaving a very distinctive footprint behind them. There’s nothing remarkable about this discovery, but for some strange reason it triggered a thought process and I had to share it with someone. I turned around looking for my husband who was busy picking up shells just a few feet away.

I joined him and began without preamble: “My love, do you realize we were *here... in this very same spot... moments ago?*... Look at my footprints!” I said with excitement as if I had just discovered diamonds in the sand. I paused for a second, and as I looked at his puzzled face, I went on: “This point in time is already gone, you know... And we can *never* retrieve it even if we’d like to...” I emphasized. “Can you also fathom this, or am I the only weird one here?” I asked, perplexed.

He pondered for a moment, then wrapped his arm around my shoulders and said teasingly: “Honey!... Everything’s gonna be aaaallll right...”

I sighed. “Oh..., you’re turning this into some kind of a joke...”

But having lived with this man for over forty years and knowing how practical and rational he is, I should have expected this kind of a goofy response from him. In hindsight, I must admit that I probably overly reacted. But all I want to say here is that on that special day, as I walked barefoot on the beach and looked at my footprints from moments ago, I was clearly reminded of a truth so old and so obvious, and that is *to live each day as if it were my last*. I can’t retrieve the past...and I don’t hold the future either.

© My Walks With God

You may reproduce part of the content of this website for non-commercial purposes only. May not be reproduced or featured on any other websites without permission of My Walks With God. For additional information or to obtain permissions, contact: mywalkswithgod@gmail.com