

My Life--Joe Tembrock

INTRODUCTION

I am writing this for three reasons:

- My growth. To objectively declare what and why I am. To test this with my self and others and to learn from this (I plan to make this a continuous process).
- To share. Especially with Judy, Becky, Mary, Amy and Joey. I am unique. I want to share what makes me Joe Tembrock. I have learned a few things in my life and I know that if I don't sort my life out, write it down, and setup a time to share this with my family, I will be old and dead and not have shared.
- For posterity. Future generations (my grandchildren) can get some insight into who Joe Tembrock was and what he believed and why. I would very much have liked something like this from my parents and grandparents.

I have thought about doing this for several years. Some of the basis of this comes from notes I put together in 1980 called "Ideals". I would take each kid (Becky, Mary and Amy) out to lunch once a and year and I would go over my "Ideals" from the notes I had written. Some sessions were beautiful and some seemed boring for the kids. I only did this for a couple of years (got too busy, I guess). Our three older kids won't be living with us much longer and I want to one last time share my "Ideals".

Two recent events have impacted me very significantly and have given me the incentive to actually take the time to write this. Both events clearly showed me how fragile life is and if I intend to write about my life I had better do it now. In March of this year I visited my younger sister, Marilyn, who spent most of a year very ill in a hospital in Texas with back surgery and many infections. To see my younger and always vivacious sister (the sister who taught me to polka at our cottage on White Earth Lake) near death really impacted me. The other event is that I am recently a member of a group called "Beyond War". I spend at least one evening a week going to meetings with this group. It has become very obvious to me that we live on a very fragile planet. It is becoming more fragile rapidly as we continue to arm ourselves with nuclear weapons for war and our planet has a very consistent history of always using its most powerful weapons in war. To me life is both beautiful and very fragile and I can't rely on having lots of time to state my ideals or to accomplish them.

Ideas for this have come from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran. I frequently read The Prophet when I am searching for insight. I am writing my thoughts first and then reading The Prophet to get insight.

PREFACE

I have some topics that I am not sure where to put them. I will initially put them in the preface and see what happens.

Luck/Bragging. Out of the 5 billion people on this Earth, I consider myself to be one of the 10,000 most fortunate (or put another way, I consider myself to be one out of 500,000 most fortunate people on the planet Earth). I have faith (the love of God), my wife and family, Church, health, work, community and wealth (Santa Clara Valley real estate has been good). I consider most of this luck, but I am concerned in writing this that the tone come out as a bragger. That is not my intent. I have been given much and I feel much is expected from me as is told in the Lord's parable of the talents.

Inheritance. Reflecting back on my childhood the following are significant: being the first born of five (more attention and freedom); gentleness from my Grandma Krier; organization, caring, and appreciation of hard work from my Mom; appreciation of hard work, fairness and love of people (sometimes very disguised) from my Dad. My parents passed on their love of God and Church. They provided security and were very generous in sharing their wealth by providing me a free college education and our house. They also gave me freedom to learn. My Dad trusted me with all the repairs on his Bank, our cottage and our home.

Vision. I am always thinking. I am aware of and interested in what I was 40 years ago and where my ancestors came from, what they were like and why. I am very aware of the now. The most important resource I have is my time. Basically I set my now priorities on how I use my time. I am always thinking ahead, even out 40 years. It is obvious to me what I do now provides the direction and paths that my life will take. There is a moment in the future when my eternity will begin. I believe the way I live my life will determine my eternity with God.

Sex. I think I was born horny. Sex is not a "ho-hum" urge. From the second or third grade on I have been very aware that girls were different and that sex was a very strong drive for me. I am enjoying the most fulfilling time of my life now (with Judy). The attraction of a woman is very strong for me and I suspect the reason I have never strayed is my spiritual/intellectual awareness and concern for what is right.

Booze. I enjoy both the taste and feeling I get from alcohol. I grew up in a family that worked hard and partied hard. My Dad wasn't able to communicate easily and he enjoyed our coming home and having a party and talking and drinking all night. I know health wise that too much alcohol is very dangerous. It also can limit my potential by dulling my senses and it can be dangerous when driving. I find that it helps me to relax after a busy, detailed filled day. Also when I go to Hollister to play in the country, I relax and drink some wine and review my vision and life plan.

There is something outside of normal experience that makes sense out of life. That something is God.

-Through faith (a gift) I believe in God; His Son and my brother, Jesus; and His Spirit who is alive in Christianity.

-My belief of the Catholic Church is based on the following:

-The God who created and sustains the universe is personal and cares for me

-That Jesus became one of us; that He enjoyed life; suffered for us; died; came back to life and exists for eternity

-Life is precious; all people are important (the unborn as well as the elderly & incontinent)

-There is life after death, it is beautiful and it is based on how I live now

-The greatest commandment is to love one another as He loves us. That means loving and helping non Catholics and non Christians.

-I love the Catholic Church. My parents were close to our parish priests and we knew them well and realized they were human. With my parents example, I attended daily Mass from early grade school through 2 years of army life.

-All three of my brothers were priesthood students at the college I attended (St. John's at Collegeville, Minnesota). My fondest memory of St. John's is the daily Vespers liturgy with the brothers (how beautiful it was to be together in song and prayer).

-I have always been active in the Church as a Mass server, lecturer, teacher, Eucharistic minister and Outreach.

-The church is a human organization and has faults. I believe the Catholic Church is the best and prime avenue for the fulfillment of life now and for gaining eternal life. I realize that I am the Church. It pains me to see such emphasis on rules in the Church. Our only rule should be to love God and to love our neighbor as our self. I believe the Church should be small - a dozen families - with a priest and the liturgy. This small, personal community would be part of the local and world church.

-My goal is to love and to be a saint.

LOVE

Doing something and not expecting anything in return. Love is other centered. Love is Jesus.

- Keeping the details of our complex family life going.
- Helping and supporting Judy to start and increase her photography business.
- Being in touch with our families. Being available to listen, learn, share and help.
- Starting and nurturing our parish Outreach and Cupertino Community Services.
- Helping Mary go to CEBAS at the last minute (CEBAS helped her to sort out her life and to grow so much).
- Getting whiny Outreach calls, listening and trying to help.
- Knowing there is a God of love that loves me all the time.

MARRIAGE

Building and sharing dreams, yet living our now to the fullest. Knowing that deep down we are very different, not trying to change each other and enjoying the differences. Allowing and helping each other to grow. Maintaining a balance between responsibility and fun.

- My commitment is to love Judy forever.
- The fruits of our marriage: Becky, Mary, Amy and Joey.
- Our annual weekend to Pacific Grove, Point Lobos and loving.
- Holding each other and praying together every morning and night (even though we are very busy and tired).
- Sex is the bonding element in our marriage. The excitement of our loving at Mammoth; of giving Judy a "goose" birthday card at White Earth Lake.
- Communication is the key to marriage. I intellectually learned that Judy and I are very different by taking a course at HP called MIR (Managing Interpersonal Relations). I also benefited from a hard, but beautiful weekend on a Marriage Encounter with Judy.

CHILDREN

A gift of the Lord. Each child is totally unique and totally different from us. Trust them (even though they fail as they are learning); enjoy them (for they leave so soon); be available (you never know when you're really needed); be patient (some take longer); and expect them to do their best.

- We trust our children. They have no curfews, but we are very interested in who they are with and what they are doing. We try and influence our kids to choose good friends (the many Church groups they are in helps).

- Example is the most important teacher. That's my responsibility. Their participation with me in Outreach activities gives them exposure to other kinds of people (old, sick and misfits) that they normally don't see in Cupertino.
- Going on family vacations that we all enjoy is the way to build family and enjoy children (eg., Mammoth, Lake Tahoe and Minnesota).
- Try and recognize what is special in each child and help them develop.
- My advice to my kids:
 - Go out with groups and do not go steady (have friends and not exclusive commitments).
 - Don't consider marriage until 26. Choose your partner carefully, you will marry someone you date.
 - Boys have high active sex drives.
 - No car until you're basically through school or you pay for school.
- We have been very fortunate that Judy didn't have to work when our kids were young. I was able to earn enough at my job and our house payments were low so Judy was able to spend lots of time helping our children to learn and grow.
- "Make me an offer" is my way of relating to our children as they get older. I'm enjoying our children more and more as they get older. There is just this constant challenge to keep some order in our house and I am sometimes taken advantage of. It seems everyone is frequently too busy to do their share of keeping the house in order. I always regroup and start another scheme to make our home livable.

TIME/WORK

The day has 24 hours. So many options and opportunities. Work is an opportunity to create; to make life better.

- Time is a gift. If I live until my youngest (Joey) is 13, I consider having had a great opportunity of time.
- My hopper is always very full of things to do. I can keep track of lots of things and I rarely give up on something I think is worthwhile.
- I love to do projects (to plan, organize, build or fix) with my own effort. I hardly ever hire anything I can do myself. I like the joy of accomplishing a task (eg., Becky, Mary, Joey and I painted our Hollister rental over a long weekend. It turned out beautiful and I loved it).

-Big company work is OK. I am primarily a doer and not an organization person. Big companies have advantages in that the company is not totally dependent on me and we both know that. Thus I have freedom to balance my time over many activities. Hewlett-Packard is an excellent company to work for and has allowed me much freedom. I have also worked hard and made contributions to HP. I got fired from a high management position at HP without notice. I was upset for months. In retrospect it was the best work thing that ever happened as I was putting all my effort into that job, not succeeding, and losing my perspective of family, Church, community, etc.

-I've always kept a mental list of how I spend my time and periodically I review this list and change my focus (I do this reviewing when I am in the country). I just formalized this process as I have written down (using a word processor) how many hours a month I spend on major tasks and looking out over the next six months whether I plan to change my time in a certain category.

MATERIAL
THINGS

We have so much we don't realize it. The luxuries of past generations have gradually become our necessities.

-When my grandparents, especially John and Sophie Krier, started their married life, they had very little. They lived in a sod house for several years near Callaway, Minnesota. During the depression they spent almost no money as they raised their own or bartered for all material things. Margaret Krier Tembrock (my mom) was born in a granary as Grandpa Krier built the granary before the house.

-20791 Scofield Drive has over 75 motors that we expect to work all the time (I also maintain 3 rentals). I am the sole doer that keeps all these material things working. I enjoy doing this and am very good at it.

-Those of us that bought real estate in Silicon Valley 20 years ago are in a special category relative to material things. Our challenge is to keep perspective for ourselves and our children (who will not be in this very special situation when they leave our home). As a perspective, real estate went up 8 times in 20 years.

-I enjoy my land in the country. Ogema, Minnesota (my origin) is a town of 200 people in the country and it is in my blood. As Cupertino becomes a big city (now 40,000), I feel more constrained. My wish is to keep my land at Hollister or something like it for my kids and future generations (like I hope to keep White Earth Lake available for future generations). Beautiful land is scarce and will continue to get more scarce.

-I am careful with resources and spend money only for things I consider of value (children, family activities, gifts and investments; and not clothes and cars). For very little extra time and effort I have made my own noon lunch and driven a bike to work every day for 20 years (I also get excellent exercise from riding a bike). At \$10 a week saved for lunch and \$50 a week saved by not owning and driving a second car to work I have saved \$95,230 over 20 years at 5% interest. That doesn't mean I have that money in the bank (I don't), but I was able not to borrow to do other things or to have money available for real estate investments. Small amounts invested and not spent over long periods grow very rapidly (this is how my dad, Ray Tembrock, made his fortune).

FRIENDS

Someone to share life, the dreams, joys, sorrows and details of of living.

-One of my greatest joys is our community of friends from St. Joseph's. We are spreading apart as some are retiring and moving. I plan to make an extra effort to keep us together. One tradition we have is wreath making and Christmas carols at our house each year.

-In work, community organizations or my rentals, I try and not separate position from friendship. Positions come and go but friendships are enduring.

ENVIRONMENT

Our planet is very fragile and finite.

-I am conscious of our finite planet and recycle glass & cans, ride my bike when possible, insulate our houses, have a garden (I love to grow things) and in general not waste.

-I actively support environmental groups.

-It pains me to see our precious fertile farm land wasted by cities and country farmers (I'm guilty with our land in Hollister). We need long range plans to maintain our most precious resources of land, water and air.

-I am active in an organization called Beyond War. Nuclear war could destroy our beautiful planet and our way of life. We are trying to build a way of life where conflict is not resolved by violence and war (the next war may be the last war).

HEALTH

Physical and mental health are the means to reaching our potential.

- I took a rigorous nutrition course at our local junior college about 5 years ago. I learned something very obvious: my body is like a machine that operates under physical laws. It became especially obvious about weight gain and loss. What I eat and how much I exercise is the key to my health. My metabolism is decreasing at 1% a year as I age. I either have to eat less or exercise more to stay at a constant weight.
- I have climbed Half Dome in Yosemite in my 20's, 30's and 40's. I have a goal of climbing at age 80 (God willing. I also don't plan to go up and down the same day then).
- I am fortunate to have excellent physical health. I have been sick and not able to work about 2 weeks out of 21 years at HP (4 days of that was food poisoning).
- I think I have excellent mental health (it's hard to be objective with ones self). I am not aware of any fears or neurosis. I think this is a gift from my Mom. When I get in a stressful or difficult situation I tend to philosophize and go to a different level of life. I do not enjoy big city activity. I don't know if this is a phobia or a desire for the pace of my home town, Ogema.

LEARNING

We are constantly changing and so is our environment. Learning is a life long process.

- My parents gave me two gifts of learning: they taught me how to work and that work is good; they sent me to a liberal arts college that helped open me to life long learning and the appreciation of all of life.
- I love to read and to learn. At this point in my life I'm only reading one or so books a year when I'm on an inactive vacation (eg., Mammoth in the Sierras). When I read I am always testing my philosophy with the material I'm reading. My routine reading is : the daily newspaper; The Bible; Time, Sunset, National Geographic, Smithsonian and God's Word Today magazines.
- Periodically I take formal courses. At 40 I got the equivalent of a programming degree at our local community college. I have taken courses in auto mechanics (to fix our old cars), photography (to learn about Judy's business), taxes (to understand our complex tax laws and to be able to get and understand tax advice) and real estate (to minimize mistakes with my rentals).
- I'm looking forward to courses in cooking, winemaking, history, philosophy and religion when I'm not quite so busy.

PERSPECTIVE My long term goal (when I'm not working for a big company) is
 to spend my time and energy in the following categories:

-God/Church	[20%]
-Family	[20%]
-Work (rentals, Judy's business, household tasks & house repairing)	[20%]
-Commuunity	[20%]
-Recreation/personal	[20%]

