

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it[®]

Idaho Common Sense[®]



Craig L. Bosley, MD

"Things"

August 23, 2010

In the movie "Parenthood," the family's grandmother offered advice to her son who was distraught; he quit his job and his wife was pregnant. Of life she said, "You know, it was just so interesting to me that the roller coaster could make me so frightened, so scared, so sick, so excited and so thrilled all together! Some didn't like it. They went on the merry-go-round. That just goes around. Nothing. I like the roller coaster. You get more out of it." Steve Martin looked at her like she was nuts, but was she trying to tell him something important, something that more than 90 years of life taught her?

The current poor economy has affected most of us to some extent. There are things we used to do that we no longer do. There are things we used to buy that we now postpone. Looking at a potential purchase, my son told me that he and his wife ask if it is a want or if it is a need; they only buy needs. I tried it. I don't like it. How was I to know that a new fly rod is a want rather than a need?

The economy changed the rules. What was affordable a few years ago is not so affordable now. My 14-year-old vehicle with 130,000 miles is good for another 100,000 miles. And the fly rod? Well, maybe it was a want rather than a need. But does that mean the new Colt 45 is also a want rather than a need?

How many things do we need for happiness? How many toys

must we buy to find it? Which new thing will be the one that gives it to us? What catalog sells it? What store stocks it? Didn't we work hard? Don't we deserve it? Just tell me how much it costs.

When the economy was good, did we give up times of happiness for more time working so we could buy what we thought we needed for happiness? Sounds a bit odd, but could it be true? Is it possible to find happiness without seeing every new movie as soon as it is released? Is it possible to find happiness without a new fly rod or a new gun? How often do we need a new car? How many times a month do we need to eat out? How big a home? How many toys? How many things?

What did we do before we learned about the things we needed to be happy? Was I happy when I lived on Kraft macaroni and cheese? Was I happy selling "my stuff" to pay for tuition and books? Maybe fly rods, guns and other things are not the source of happiness. Art Buchwald suggested, "The best things in life aren't things." Is he right? Could it be that simple?

Maybe happiness is in my backyard having lunch with my wife. Maybe it is a Sunday afternoon picnic in the park followed by holding hands while walking through the zoo, no schedules. Maybe it is getting a hot dog from the vendor who is sometimes across the street from the courthouse, eating it while

sitting on the grass watching traffic.

Maybe it is an early morning mountain bike ride, seeing a moose along the way. Maybe it is a standing date with my wife to go to a movie on any "dollar" Tuesday I am not working.

Was grandma right? Do we want the merry-go-round when the real fun in life is on the roller coaster? Do we need to spend more time together and less time buying things together? There is a difference.

My wife and I do carry over a tradition from the "hard" times. On Mother's Day, we go to church, get a hotdog at Home Depot for lunch and go to a movie. Am I cheap? Probably, but could this be the happiness we are trying to find with the "things" we buy? You decide.