

Who will be crying at your funeral?

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Who will be crying at your funeral? Patrick Morley, author of “The Man in the Mirror”, has challenged people with that question. Morley and his wife were successful business people involved in a lot of different business and civic activities. They also had young children at home who needed their attention. One evening, as they reviewed their time consuming responsibilities, the thought came, “Why not prioritize everything we do on the basis of who will be crying at our funeral?” The results, they claim, saved their family. Morley questioned, “Why should you and I give ourselves to people who don’t love us at the expense of those who do?”

I had some initial problems with the Morley’s statements. Does this mean I should only minister to those who care about me? Is it not the others who need ministering to the most?

From my experience at funerals, some are celebrations and some are tear fests. When my time comes, I don’t want tears, I want celebration! Let those who loved me celebrate my life and let those who might not have liked me so much celebrate my going. Let everyone party!

Regardless, the more meaningful remembrances shared at funerals tend to come from time the dearly departed spent with people rather than the time spent in work or accomplishments. I have come to realize that who I am might be more important than what I do for a living. As Ralph Waldo Emerson stated, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

Considering this, I came to the understanding that when Morley asked us to consider who would be crying at our funeral, he was challenging us to look at our priorities. When program and work take priority over people, people often suffer. Powerful thought. It’s a question of putting first things first. It’s a question of taking charge of our time.

Are we good stewards of our time? It’s a question we might want to ask ourselves. One study estimated that the average American would have been exposed to at least 20,000 hours of television by the time they reached twenty, and continues with at least 1,000 hours a year after that. What if we used just half of those yearly hours and applied them to doing something else? That would work out to over ten work weeks worth of time we could use each year to connect with others or to do some project. Just imagine how much we might accomplish!

Our time is as valuable as any material treasure we might have and it behooves us to embrace its preciousness. Someone put it like this:

To realize the value of one year: Ask a student who has failed his final exam.

To realize the value of one month: Ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of one week: Ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of one day: Ask a daily wage laborer who has 10 kids to feed.

To realize the value of one hour: Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of one minute: Ask a person who has missed the train, the bus or the plane.

To realize the value of one second: Ask a person who has survived an accident.

To realize the value of one millisecond: Ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

And to all this we might add: To realize the value of a lifetime: Let us ask ourselves who will be crying at our funeral.