

## WHAT MATTERS IN LIFE

*By Fred Hobbs*

What a daunting task! To write about “What Matters in Life”. There is no scarcity of opinions or approaches to that topic. None of them are absolute or universal. Each of us gets to choose what seems to work in our scheme as life’s pathway is charted.

But, believe it or not, a guy by the name of Donald Latumanina has come up with a list of what he calls “37 Lessons to Help You Live a Life That Matters.” Donald doesn’t tell us his qualifications for developing his lesson plan. Most of the three dozen plus-one “lessons” are platitudes or have labels such as “Redefine Success.” Number one on his list is “Discover What Matters for You.”

Duh! You think?

But some items on the list have merit in the process of pondering what truly does matter in life. Two that stand out are intriguing: “Worry More About What You Love” and a corollary, “Be Sure You Do What You Love”. Too many people lead lives of what is termed “quiet desperation.” Others work at jobs they hate or for bosses they can’t stand. It’s more common than not for couples to stay in relationships that are unpleasant or even toxic. Had they been resolute in sticking to what they love, it’s certain they would have been happier and most likely more successful.

For seniors, Donald’s list offers this advice: “Never Retire From What You Love.” In the world of work, company regulations may mandate a date certain for retirement, but a person who loves his or her line of work or other interest often can find ways to remain involved. Volunteering or part-time work or engaging in related activities are options.

Among the 37 lessons are a few “don’ts” that “don’t” necessarily make much sense. For example, “Don’t Chase Money and Recognition”. That needs to be tempered by common sense. Of course, it matters to have sufficient resources to live comfortably. The money question is more a matter of quantity than quality and shouldn’t be used as a vague and overly dogmatic point. As to recognition, everyone needs and deserves to be recognized for positive achievements in life, but they needn’t be flaunted.

The list offers this counter-intuitive advice: “Make Failure Your Friend.” That’s a pretty hard precept to swallow, and yet there is some truth to the notion. Experience has shown in many cases that getting fired from a job, while commonly thought of as failure, often leads to new and better opportunities. Flunking a course in high school or college may turn a student in a new direction toward a different life’s work. Just so it doesn’t get to be a habit!

Another piece of advice on the “lessons” list, easier said than done, is to “Surround Yourself With ‘A’ Players.” Presumably these are the pretty people, the movers and shakers, the big shots. Just how this truly helps you live a life that matters is never made clear and is dubious advice at best.

Like many pop-culture self-styled experts, Donald Latumanina has come up with a key word to cap his 37-point scenario. The word is “builders”, described as “enduringly successful people.” Builders, he says are “willing to do something for free, for its own sake.”

They sound like good models for what matters in life.