

Since I am by nature a pragmatist, this is not an easy subject. Practicality dictates solid values in terms of substantial touchable things. However "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." So we have to abandon this standard. Every human sees their evaluation in their personal terms. Here we have the practical and ephemeral to deal with. What values are more important? Which ones have more meaning to each individual?

In thinking about the title each word is significant on it's own. Life, infers a time span of many years, that is something long lasting. Riches are insubstantial fleeting, something you can own and lose, so be without. In thinking of a lifetime and the years involved a thought came to mind.

My parents had something that they valued greatly. My mother and father were actually in love their entire life. Not only while courting. My father wrote my mother love letters as long as she was alive. It was not unusual for the mailman to leave a letter addressed to "Yetta Harris" and when one showed up a sparkle came to her eye and color in her cheeks, the transformation was very visible. Long after my mother passed away these letters would show up in places - in the pages of a book, in the bottom of a drawer, always neatly folded with signs of it having been read more than once.

We did not have material wealth, but the home had a harmony and peace that I have never found anywhere else. It goes this was their riches. In the midst of all the daily problems and visisitudes this aura was felt in our home.

It made my growing up years a search for the same thing very hard to duplicate. As you all know from my past writing I became large earner early in my growing years. When my mother decided that she would no longer put up with my lack of following her rules, she gave me my suitcase and kicked me out.

On my own, I gravitated to a life style a little unusual for a twenty year old. Most of my new acquaintances were men in their forties and fifties, who were making the same kind of money as I. Also I found materialistic values that had nothing to do with the kind of love that existed between my parents, I went with flow.

Uncle Sam interrupted fortunately the road down which I was traveling. Yes I had learned a few things on the way. I had become practical in my making decisions. I also evaluated social contacts a little jaundiced, copied from the older men with whom I associated. At twenty six I no longer became enamored by a new acquaintance of the opposite sex. I had a rather jaded view of life, I had given up of ever duplicating my parents good fortune. Three and half years later, while still in the service I got a real jolt! One of the older gents of my former circle named me executor of his will. The Army gave me a week leave to accomadate me, and when I returned To New York from Coffeerville Kansas, I got a real shock. He had been living with his co-mate for eight years [unmarried] she kept hoping and he kept putting off. One day he came home from work and out of the clear blue sky said "lets get married" Thelma his co-mate thinking he was teasing, didn't even turn from the stove and replied "I wouldn't marry you if you were the only man in the world" "If you wont marry me I'm walking out of the window" she answered "go walk" and he did from the tenth floor of the apartment building. I settled everything on Thelma and returned to Coffeerville Kansas. Suddenly shaken and upset, there but for the grace of GOD was I. That was the life I style I was contemplating on my discharge. NO WAY! There must be more to marriage that I seem to have forgotten. I thought back to my parent's marriage which I had given up on ever duplicating. Maybe a second effort is worth a try. They sure had something special.