

## Precious Possessions or Not?

*By Sharon Buchan*

I have learned the precious things in life are nothing we can possess. I have learned you are not what you have, but what you have to give.

I believe the lowest level of spirituality is when things are more important than people. For instance, "I would love to lend you my car, but it's new."

"Please don't wear your shoes on the new carpet," and "We don't allow any food to be eaten in the front room either."

"I would let you lie on the bed, but I have a handmade quilt on the bed."

"You can't eat on those dishes they are only for special occasions."

I remember friends brought back a beautiful glass pitcher from Europe and their daughter slipped on the floor and broke it while trying to get a glass of milk. She was in stocking feet. I already loved the fact that it was being used for milk and not in a china hutch somewhere to be viewed from a distance. Her parents said not a word about the broken pitcher. And then they talked about the fact that maybe it was not wise to walk on the floor while in stocking feet. What a beautiful lesson that little girl learned about her value compared to things. Now, I broke a few things around the old homestead and no one ever said, "Are you hurt?"

The next lowest level of spirituality is when animals are more important than people. I remember helping a friend drive a very valuable racehorse to the San Bernardino race track. He was driving about twenty miles an hour down the Interstate.

I looked over and his face was red, his teeth were clenched and he was grasping the steering wheel so tight that his knuckles were white. When I asked him what was wrong he said, "I have never had anything so valuable in my car before." I looked at him in wonder and said, "That is a horse back there. I am sitting next to you. Do you mean if there were not a horse back there we would be doing eighty miles an hour and weaving in and out of traffic?" And to my amazement he said, "Yes, if it would get us there sooner and it would help us get a parking place."

However this does not mean I have not had animals I loved more than some people in my life.

I think the highest level of spirituality is when we realize people are more important than things. Try talking to your Wedgewood Plate when you are in emotional pain. Try cuddling up to your new carpet on a cold night when you just want to be held.

That does not mean I have not collected things. My daughter has my Hummel collection. My son has my crystal collection and I am slowly giving away the favorite pieces of pottery that I have made.

Whenever I can give something away to someone or to ARC I breathe a sigh of relief. It is truly like getting the monkey off your back.

But do let me tell you what my favorite possession was.

I once had a modest house and barn on three acres of land in Washington State. This was on Orcas Island about 100 miles north of Seattle.

I love to garden and was able to bring in Bog Soil. Very rich in Nutrients. I grew both Vegetables and flowers. One acre was in lawn. This is what I have learned about owning land: Like the Native American Indians so wisely say, "We don't own the land it owns us." I fertilized, watered and then cut grass. All to throw it away.

Honeysuckle vines draped the windows. Champaign roses lined handpicked stone walkways. Cedar trees surrounded the property. How wonderful it was to be owned by that little piece of heaven.