



## now's the time to 'seize the day' and make a difference

I had the opportunity last month to spend a couple of days in Ye Olde London. Hopped on a big red double-decker bus with my wife and did the touristy thing. Watched the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. Wandered around places with names that seemed oh-so-familiar (some of them reminding me of the countless games of *Monopoly* my kids used to make me play): Trafalgar Square ... Piccadilly Circus ... Fleet Street ... Tower Bridge ... Westminster Abbey ... Big Ben ...

**W**e had the time of our lives. Great fun. But, while we were busy on all this good stuff, other people were busy doing bad stuff that we were blissfully unaware of (and only found out later): *two terrorist car-bombs were being planted right there in those very same streets on that very same day!*

When we went back next morning, several city blocks around Piccadilly Circus were closed off – emergency tape strung across roads and intersections, police cars and cops and flashing lights everywhere.

It was kind-of exciting, being there on the spot as the news was leaking out. But it was also kind-of sobering. Because, had those bombs exploded as intended (they failed to detonate, thank God), my wife and I (and who knows how many other tourists and pedestrians) could've been blown into very small pieces!

The end.

Finito.

All over, Rover.

Goodbye and goodnight.

**I**t got me thinking, I must admit. About violence and hatred and our beautiful, dangerous planet. About Grapevine, and what we've got coming up, and all the things I still want to do but haven't yet got around to. About family and friends – yes, mostly about family and friends – and especially my grown-up kids and my growing-up grandkids.

We take so much for granted, don't we? The years of our lives. The days and weeks and months of our years. Each moment by moment by moment that fills up our days.

If you're an optimist (like I am) you just assume you're going to live forever ... invincible, unstoppable, bullet-proof, bomb-proof!

But in the sobering aftermath of our close-call in London, I couldn't help reflecting on my own mortality ...

**W**e have a pretty fragile hold on this thing called life, don't we. Yes, my faith reassures me that I'm in God's good hands (in the here-&-now and in the here-after). But, truth is, I've got few guarantees about the future. A terrorist blast ... a plane crash ... a killer disease ... a drunk at the wheel ... a heart-attack ... an earthquake ... a sudden stroke ... a rogue tsunami – any number of different things can (and do) take people out.

And one of those people could easily be ME!

However, that's always been the case, eh. It's not like anything's changed. As some bright spark once observed: *"We shouldn't take life too seriously – after all, no one gets out of it alive!"*

Which sounds depressing – right? – but it's really just stating a fact. As another bright spark wrote: *"If you live each day as if it was your last, some day you'll be right!"*

What counts in the end, I guess, is not the years of our life – but the life in our years. And my London wake-up call left me more determined than ever to "seize the day" ...

to make the most of each new moment ... to love fully, give freely, and live in the 'now'.

How many years have I got left? I wouldn't have a clue. Another 30 ... maybe 40 ... who knows? But I don't want them to dribble out half-used. I've got lots more dreams and schemes – for me, for my nearest-&-dearest, for Grapevine. And I want to spend each year well. In the words of George Bernard Shaw: *"I want to be thoroughly used up when I die!"*

**S**peaking of Grapevine, we've got plenty to rejoice over – don't you agree? We've made encouraging progress in this new millennium. We've fine-tuned Street Sponsorship ... we can now deliver down any street in any Kiwi town, city or rural area ... we're creating a helpful, high quality family resource ... which is now accessible online.

And, in that questionnaire we sent you a couple of months ago, you agreed: **"Grapevine is needed more than ever" – especially in the troubled, hurting households we keep hearing about.**

But there's still some unfinished business. There's a job that's far from done. And there's no way we can do it without your help.

- Grapevine's circulation has grown slowly but steadily – we're now reaching nearly 160,000 homes and families on a regular basis. That's one BIG pile of magazines, I can tell you, and a not-to-be-sneezed-at achievement.

**But it's only 10% of the 1.6 MILLION households in New Zealand. The other 90% are missing out:**

- 90% of Kiwi mums and dads aren't reading our down-to-earth articles and interviews about kids and parents and teens
- 90% of Kiwi couples don't receive the helpful relationship tips and insights that are present in every edition
- 90% of Kiwi families can't enjoy the fun,

encouragement and inspiration that's always been Grapevine's trademark

- 90% of Kiwi households won't get the brilliant new mag that we're working on right now – featuring (i) ***'RAISING GIRLS'*** and (ii) ***'RIDING THE MONEY-GO-ROUND'***.

**D**o you share my dream of making a difference? **Well, imagine the difference we, together, could make if Grapevine was reaching EVERY HOME IN NEW ZEALAND?** Perhaps you can understand why I keep saying, *"We've only just begun!"* ... and perhaps you can understand why I keep asking for your generous, whole-hearted, over-the-top support?

Here at Grapequarters, this 'unfinished business' challenges us constantly. And we'll soon be announcing a long-term programme that will eventually allow us to make a serious dent in that 90% – and put Grapevine into many homes that have so far missed out.

But in the meantime ... in the short-term ... your generous, whole-hearted, over-the-top August donation will help send this next magazine to new streets and letterboxes – with love.

**Whether it's \$50 you can just afford or \$5000 you'd like to invest, please believe me when I say: every dollar makes a difference.**

So thank you, in anticipation ... on behalf of all those families who once-each-quarter are being given a welcome, much-needed 'Grapevine LIFT' ...



## HAPPINESS IS THE ROAD ...

Ever notice how we convince ourselves that life will be better once we're married, have a baby, then another? Then we get frustrated because our kids are too young, and we hope things will change when they're older. Then we feel frustrated because they reach adolescence and we have to cope. Surely we'll be happier once they've grown out of their teens.

We tell ourselves that life will improve when our spouse gets his/her act together, when we have a nicer car, when we can travel, when we finally retire.

But the truth is, there's no better time to be happy than right now. If not, then WHEN?

We dream that life is soon going to start. REAL life. But there's always some obstacle along the way, some ordeal to get through, some work to be finished, some time to be given, some bill to be paid. Maybe then life will start? If only we could understand that those obstacles ARE life.

There isn't any road to happiness. Happiness IS the road. And we should enjoy every moment.

Let's stop waiting for school to end, for work to begin, to lose 10 kilos, to get married, for Friday evening, for Sunday morning. Let's stop waiting for a new car, for our mortgage to be paid off, for spring, for summer, for autumn, for winter. Let's stop waiting for the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month, for our song to be played on the radio, to die, to be reborn ... before deciding to be happy.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination. And there's no better time to be happy than now.

*(Author unknown)*



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