

Life is a Buffet

By Rob McKelvey

Have you ever been to a buffet meal? Some people call it a smorgasbord. What ever you call it, it is a humungous assortment of food. An embarrassing amount of food, and wastage, in some people's eyes...but that is a different topic. There are various selections to choose from as starters or appetisers, main courses, desserts or sweets. Some times beverages are included as well. Choices that can make the mind boggle. And the beauty of a buffet is that you do not have to eat or select the things that you don't want or like. And even more satisfying is that you can go back for more of the food that you do want and like or enjoy. As a child at the buffet your parents may have selected food items for you. Perhaps to get you to try new things or maybe to keep you on a fixed diet of what they thought was good for you. But as you grew older you got to choose.

Where is all this leading I hear you ask. Well, life is just like a buffet. It is full of a wide, varied, exciting, and sometimes unpleasant, selection of choices. Some of them look interesting and some not so interesting. Some you are not too sure of at all and, just like at the buffet, you may steer clear of them.

As a child we were guided in life by our parents and/or other authority figures such as teachers, grandparents, religious figures, etc. But mainly we were guided by our parents and their belief of what was right for us. They may have selected where we went to school, what friends we had, what activities we could and could not do, and possibly they had career aspirations for us as well. There is any number of things that they took responsibility for in our childhood...things that, in their mind, and perhaps in fact, we were not mature or old enough to make decisions about on our own.

But as we grew older we became able to make choices on, and of, our own. Some of us took to this opportunity with great gusto and devoured it. We tried new things at the buffet of life. Some of us had less of an appetite for the varieties out in the world and stuck with the diet prescribed to us in childhood. My question to you is "Are you living the life of your choice?" or "Are you eating what has been selected for you?" What ever the answer to these questions is, we have chosen to live that way...whether consciously or unconsciously. And life is not just work. It includes work, career, and relationships. It can also include beliefs about self esteem, money, family, spirituality, and health.

In some cases we lead a life that is not of our own choosing. We lead lives that were, in fact, subconsciously chosen for us. Or lives that we believe we should be leading based on some external force or in the belief that we need to please someone else. It is actually quite understandable how this happens when you think about it. We all had role models as we were growing up. These were the authority figures mentioned above. They exerted influence upon us whether they realised it or not. Sadly some of us thought that their view was the only way to go and how we should be, rather than options of how we could be.

A possible useful way to determine if you chose correctly, for yourself, the life you lead is to ask, and answer honestly, the following questions. The questions may appear similar in some cases but they are actually subtly different and will have their own meaning for you.

- Am I getting what I need and want from my life?
- Am I happy in my life?
- Am I happy in my work or career?
- Am I happy in my relationship with family, friends, and loved ones?
- Do I have a healthy love and respect for myself?
- Do I lead a healthy life?
- Do I have a purpose to my life?
- Do I have adventure in my life?
- Am I comfortable with who I am?
- Am I doing what I feel that I should be doing with my life?

If you answered NO to any of these questions perhaps it could be worth your while to delve into the reason you answered no.

And finally:

- What would need to change for me to have a more fulfilled life?

As children we may not have been able to make appropriate choices from the buffet for a number of reasons, but as an adult we can make choices appropriate to our needs and wants and desires. We can make our own choices from the buffet.

Life is about choice. Your choice!!