

So today is the last day. After today, there will be no more dreary faces on Monday mornings... no more perky 'It's Friday' every time you say 'how ya doin'?' on Friday mornings. No more living anxiously as your worth is measured by activities completed, phone calls made, money brought in. No more frustration in having a compassionate heart competing with a corporate business mentality.

When I wake up tomorrow, I will simply be a retired Andy Smith.

The good news about retirement is that you've had so many experiences in life and understand how this all works. Life is not a time line of on-going experiences. Life has many chapters that have a beginning and an end. You understand that you need to close one chapter before you can fully embrace the next.

To me preparing for retirement is being able to close that chapter of life labeled adult with a good measure of peace. That's not hard for me, because I'm a guy who never wanted to be an adult in the first place. I likely became a great Dad because I never had a desire to be the stern, responsible fatherly figure type. If I had a choice on any given day, I probably would have chosen to spend the day at the beach hanging out, surfing and living a life without responsibilities. I just never understood the attraction to becoming a responsible adult. So closing the book on this chapter called 'Adult Andy Smith' is not hard for me. I'm happy to do so, frankly. But it's not that easy.

The most important ingredient needed to close this chapter of my life and move forward is inner peace. It's not important what my successes and failures were; it's important that I have an inner peace about my successes and failures.

It would be fair to say that I have had many more failures than successes. I've been divorced twice, evicted and homeless. I have never been an employee of the month or received a promotion. I tried to make it as a writer and honestly didn't really come close. If I was keeping score, I probably had more days of frustration and heartache than peace and joy. I'm guessing I have had more phone calls from bill collectors than from friendly voices calling to say hi.

That's not a very impressive resume of adulthood. In fact, the word pathetic comes to mind as I laughingly read this resume before realizing 'oh wait, that's me' ... YIKES!

But I have learned as an adult to appreciate what Jesus said when he told us that God judges us by our hearts. If it's good enough for God, then it's good enough for me.

I can close this chapter of my adult life because I have complete peace in my heart about my life. I know on paper it looks pretty pathetic, but I was as good a husband as I was a Dad. I was as good a co-worker as I was a Dad. I was as good a writer as I was a Dad. And I was a GREAT Dad!

As I move forward into retirement, I understand that my world will become much more quiet and self-centered. There will not be a lot of interactions with co-workers and customers. There will be much more 'me' time. That's only exciting if you truly have peace with who 'Me' is.

I have complete peace with being Andy Smith.

I go into retirement in peace not because I have built a resume full of successes, but because I have built a heart full of love and self respect, knowing that I have always given my best. Win or lose, I have always stayed true to who I am and have enjoyed and appreciated how I approached whatever life threw my way.

Truth is that I'm only retiring from job. My passion has always been Tracy, Kelly and Rosemary and I will never retire from being their Dad. If my resume of life only states that I was the Dad of Tracy, Kelly and Rosemary then I have total peace about my life, what I contributed to the world and how the world perceives me.

I'll be good at retirement ... I have a good heart. A heart with a lot of peace.

Peace to you as well!

Just A Thought