

The Choice Is Yours

As I stumble out of bed and head to the kitchen to get my coffee brewing, I am sluggish and not very aware of anything other than today is my day off, so I am in no need to rush for anything this morning. I am blinking profusely trying to generate some moisture in my eyes as I bounce off of walls guiding me to the kitchen. As I pour the water into my coffee machine and push the on button, I look outside to a dark, early morning and chuckle at how I can't even sleep in on my day off.

Being old sucks. You're always tired, your body always hurts and yet your brain has been programmed for years to get up before the Sun regardless.

Like a cup of cold water being hurled in my face, I am quickly brought to full-throttle alertness as I notice my guardian angel, Chris, quietly sitting in my recliner smiling at me.

"CHRIS! My lord, you scared the hell out of me! What are you doing here?" I say, as I panic and scramble to get my breathing back.

"Andy, my boy, good to see you. Though scaring the hell out of humans is a perk of being an angel, I assure you that I come in peace, my friend."

"Yea, well I'm pretty sure that there is language in your angel manual that clearly states you can not just appear whenever you want. Some of us humans have weak hearts, ya know. Besides, I haven't written anything lately that you need to concern yourself with." I say with a tone of sarcasm. Chris is notorious for 'dropping in on me' whenever I finish a book to argue with me the benefits of publishing my book as non-fiction, when clearly I just made the story up and must publish it as fiction.

"I'm not here to talk about your writing, and I must remind you that, as your guardian angel, I have nothing to do with the physical condition of your heart. An angel only serves the spiritual condition of your heart, which is why I am here."

I pause and glare at my guardian angel as I draw some soothing revitalization from my cup of coffee. I hesitate because I've been down this road with Chris enough to know not to jump into a debate with him and it would be a wise move to hear him out first, before I say anything further that would only come back to bite me later.

"You're here to talk about my spiritual heart?" I say cautiously.

"Well of course, my friend. The spiritual heart is priority number one in the guardian

angel program, and I have come to make you an offer that is very special and, if I may say so myself, not the kind of offer a guardian angel gets to make to their humans very often.” Chris says with a good dose of pride.

“Okayyyyy” I draw out with a hesitancy that reflects that even though my guardian angel seems genuinely excited about this offer, I have dealt with him enough to know that many times his perception and my perception of an offer can create two very different reactions.

“I know you’ve been in a bit of a funk lately. I can sense the sadness in your heart. You feel worn out, old, unappreciated. Life just isn’t working for you of late. So I talked to God and he agreed that I could come down and give you the choice of coming over to the other side with me, or you can choose to stay here and work through your funk.” he says with that annoying big smile. “You get to choose.”

I stare at Chris as I draw another sip from my coffee cup.

“You came to kill me?”

Chris nearly falls out of my recliner as he scrambles, “Oh, good heavens, Andy, that is so not appropriate. I did not come to kill you, I am giving you a chance to choose. Very few humans have had this opportunity. God seldom supports any pre-determined time of death, but when I talked it over with him, he agreed to let you choose. If you really feel you have nothing more to offer this life, you are welcome to come over to your next life.”

“So you’re saying you want me to commit suicide?”

Chris takes a deep breath of frustration as he glares at me.

This is never a good sign for me.

“Look, Andy, it’s a simple offer. God does not like to interfere with the death of humans. He created a free will world for you all and it will never work if he has to decide who lives and who dies on any given day. God’s will would be for everyone to die of old age after a long, productive, positive life. Though God gets way too much credit for the demise of many, the bottom line is that he gave you a free will to create the world you want. But with that free will, there are consequences. God will never interfere with those consequences, because if he does, then there is no longer a free will.”

“But with me, I guess he’s saying it doesn’t matter? Oh, he ain’t doing much now anyways, so whether he lives or dies isn’t gonna impact the world much, so let him have the

choice?” As soon as the last word escapes my lips, I regret saying this, as Chris just stares at me with “YOU’RE AN IDIOT” screaming from his expression.

“Listen, Andy. You’re over seventy years old. You’re at an age where no matter what the circumstances are, when you die, be it today, tomorrow or twenty years from now, most people will shrug their shoulders and say ‘Well he was over seventy, ya know.’ with a few who will say, ‘I’m surprised he lasted that long.’”

I nearly spit my coffee out as, for the first time, Chris has said something I find hilarious. Chris waits for me to gather my composure with that annoying grin.

“It’s a simple choice, Andy, that you have been given that very few have been given. But don’t kid yourself, my friend. This is not an easy choice.”

“So, you’re say’n that, if I want, I can say I’m done and just head to the hereafter with you now, or I could say thanks, but no thanks, and stay here to continue on as a grumpy, tired old man?”

Chris smiles, “I knew you’d understand. Yes, you are welcome to come with me now, or stay here and continue on. Your choice.”

I think about it. “So what happens to me if I say yes and go with you? Do I just disappear from this life?”

Chris chuckles, “No, you don’t just vanish. Your body remains here because your body was created for a life on this planet. Your spirit is what goes to the next world.”

“So my body just drops dead right here? It could be days before anyone finds me. That could be pretty offensive to my neighbors, ya know.”

“Oh, Andy, that’s how it has to work. Listen, God made it real clear that if you choose to come with me, it must not involve any other people. It must be quick with a cause of death being a heart attack and off we go.”

I think about this. I’m not real comfortable with my body just drop dead, but the thought of heading to my own hereafter right now is intriguing for sure.

“Can I have some time to think about it a little? Maybe get a few things in order first and maybe stage my exit in a public place so my neighbors don’t have to deal with a rotting body in my apartment?”

“No sir. God was very clear that there is no staging, no getting affairs in order first. If you

want to go, we would love to have you come over. “

I’m thinking.

“Can’t you give me a little preview of what it is I’m going to first? How can I make a decision when I have no idea what I’m deciding for? That’s not fair.”

“No sir. God does not allow humans to have any preview of the afterlife.”

“Oh, so you’re saying all those stories about people having near death experiences are not true? I’m thinking some of them are pretty convincing, ya know.”

Chris shakes his head, “Let me tell you, friend, God is none too happy when those stories come out and you can be assured that those guardian angels not only get an ear full from God, but in most cases, they get some pretty nasty reassignments.”

Chris pauses and looks at me with a strong dose of compassion, “Listen, Andy, I understand this is not an easy choice for you, but I think you really need to focus on God and all those conversations we’ve had about your books. There’s a reason God wanted you to publish those stories as non-fiction. God loves the way you present him in every one of those stories. I can’t show you what it’s like on the other side, but I can tell you that God created it for you. That same God you so warmly presented in your stories is the same God that created your heaven. It’s all yours if you want it today, or twenty years from now. That’s your choice.”

Wow! Chris always knows how to put a bow on a conversation. It doesn’t make my choice any easier, but it does get me focused on the issue more than the conversation.

I think about my daughter, Tracy, and all my family that have made their journey to the other side. What a reunion that would be.

I think about Kelly and Rosemary who keep me inspired in my life here.

My grandchildren and the times I spend with them.

They would have to move on without me.

I would have to move on without them.

I look at Chris who annoys me many times, but always has my best interest in his conversations with me.

“I think I’m ready.” I say, knowing I am doing the right thing for me.

“Okay”

“I think I’m going to.....