

## Our Golden Years

I was on 21<sup>st</sup> street driving west to Countryside Meadows to see Jeane when suddenly the words "Life is a Gift" subjectively defined my feelings. Here-to-fore this gift was an objective entity that I had heard about and casually affirmed.



At this time I had been dealing with my feelings on a yo-yo, both lamenting Jeane's condition and my own health problems, contemplating her gradual decline and anguishing over her confining residence, and commiserating because of my love for her.

My condition is tentative and I often wonder how long both our lives will last, after all we are both eighty-eight years. I have always looked forward to doing things and now I am playing an end game; trying to do all the healthy things and making sure Jeane is getting proper care too.

Early visitations seeing Jeane were challenging, as she desperately wanted to go back home, begging with tears in her eyes running down her cheeks. Her telephone calls were the same. "Can I just visit and come right back, I want to see my kitchen and my kitty, take me home, I want to leave this place, I want to go home please, please, please."

It was very hard each time seeing her in such desperation and anguish. She had memories of home that she cherished and begged to be back in the life that was so comforting, pleasant, familiar and secure.

But she was in the best place. They were doing what Paul and I couldn't do. She was out of control. So it was really tough love, and difficult. We pondered how we could possibly ease her through this period with the least pain. Outside counsel explained that being that she was so cogent she was a problem within herself.

I live in a home where she has lived for over 25 years and all the elements of her presence are at hand. Her choice of dishes, knick-knacks, curtains, recipes, jewelry, clothing, magazines, quilts, and diaries surround me. Reality hits me in the face at times and a wave of sadness sweeps over me and takes me into my darkness.

Talking on the phone with her is comforting and a delight. This leads me in to a time of introspection, and this has affirmed the depth of my love for her. Because of this I try to provide as many things as I can so her memories she has will be happy ones. I send her cards daily and surround her with beautiful things.

Things have truly eased the last few weeks. Many have visited her, including her boy dog; Thor. We have taken her on short trips, and she has adjusted, she has made friends with other residents. She is a lot happier. Her humor is spontaneous and quite appropriate for all listening. I told her the other day she had a good sense of humor and she replied: "Well I might as well use it."

Visiting her now is warm and fulfilling for me and her. Now we can talk and share events and have our intimate time holding hands, hugging and kissing. On occasion she sings the old hymns and her face lights up with joy. This is so precious and it deeply warms my heart.

Everyone knows life has given us our share of grief; with the loss of both our parents, Joyce our beloved Daughter and Ben our precious Grandson.



Looking back on it all, we have had a great life. We have been blessed with a fabulous loving extended family, we still have our health and the extraordinary gifts God has given us.



We have arrived at a plateau of our Golden Years. Our relationship has transformed much like the larvae into a butterfly, and I plan on enjoying it because I know this time will pass.

We wish the best to you and your family and with our love,  
Jeane and Richard.