

LL17-What Really Matters In Life?

I'm Alvean Lyons,
And I'm Doug Weiss, and this is love life.

And this week on love life we're taking on yet another really difficult topic. We talked in the last few weeks about infidelity, this week we're going in a somewhat different direction we're going to talk about what really matters in life.

And I'm going to turn to Alvean for a change and say, Alvean, what really matters?

Wow, well I would say there are three primary things in my life that I even raised my kids on in terms of our core Values, and every child who's ever visited our home, every person who's ever spent any real time with us is very familiar with those three things: it's God family and education.

God first, because you have to believe. Just me personally, not a judgment on anybody else. Whether they choose to believe or not, for me you have to believe in something bigger than what you can see. We live in a time in our nation that there is so much going on, a lot of pain and discomfort, concerns, the list goes on and on. If we were to exist only believing that this is as good as it ever gets, that is just depressing at a level that I could not access, and so having the notion that there is something greater than all of this, that this is part of a divine plan, gives the best of us the opportunity to be incredible and the worst of us the opportunity to see goodness and maybe that can be a spark to create something new and beautiful and different. I think it is essential to our existence and our psychological and emotional health.

For me then when it comes to family, family is everything, when it is all said and done. Whether it's the family you've created... because I consider my friends to be part of my family. I don't just mean your biological family. I have family of choice, I have family of love that are just as important to me as family that I share blood with, and to know that I have built those relationships, and sustain those relationships, and invested and given and taken and given more than I've taken, hopefully, there's a richness in that that really matters to me.

And then finally, education. I think that we are the best of who we are when we're always looking for new ways in which we can grow as people that we begin dying the minute we decide to stop growing. An education affords us the ability, in both traditional and non traditional ways to expand our boundaries. That make us more in our buckets or pictures of life, that give us more to pour out to those who deserve to receive, so for me it is God, family and education. Douglas how about you?

I'm thinking about the great gift that were given when we come into this world. Regardless of our circumstance, rich, poor, talented in some particular way: intelligence or music or spoken word or whatever it may be, we are born with enormous potential. And it's up to us to decide what we're going to do with that potential. We can approach life in a very negative way and say, here's what I don't have, here's what I didn't get, or we can approach life and say look at these this bounty of gifts that I've been given, all the possibilities that exist for me. And for me I'm not offering this up as necessarily a prescription for everyone, but for me what really matters is trying to make the most of those gifts. Not for any potential gain, but simply as an end unto itself, because I did nothing to earn them. I did nothing to justify them, they were just given to me, so if I have the capacity to write I should write. If I have the capacity to sing, I should sing, if I have a capacity to love I should love. Whatever my capacities are, whatever those gifts are that I've been given. Then my job my purpose in life is not what I do for a living, but my purpose in life is to do those things as well as I possibly can. And not to be pollyannish about this, but quite literally to push myself as hard as I can. To do the most with what I've got, and to be critical.... not harshly critical, realistically critical when I let myself down, when I don't do the best I can with what I've been given. So for me, that's what I want to accomplish. To use what those gifts are, to use those talents as best I can.

There's a question here that's buried underneath, which is how do we know what our gifts are? How do you figure that out?

Well for me I always tell people.... because I get that question a lot actually....focus on what makes you feel alive.

Generally the things that we are gifted to do are connected deeply to our respective passions. When do you feel most proud of yourself, when do you feel the best version of yourself? Even when you find that, just little tiny things are often very indicative, almost crumbs on a path.

I love it when I can just have a good conversation with someone. That makes me feel alive, while most television hosts and radio hosts would tell you if that it all began with some great conversation and great conversation turned into a fabulous career which turned into a clearer purpose which turned into making a difference in this world in some way. Whether it's just about bringing a little bit of light and sunshine into somebody's world, whether it's about educating them on things that are often unseen, unnoticed or whether it's about just teaching people how to do things that they didn't know how to do before. The fact is, all of that began with just enjoying the exchange with another human being which may seem nothing significant but is wonderful in the direction of who and what we're designed to do. We were all created for a reason. None of us are necessary, and our passions are often pointing to our purpose.

I don't want to take this in a morbid turn but there is an expression, that we begin dying the moment we're born. That our lives are finite, at least in this plane of existence, and if we lived our lives with that actuality, from the present, in our minds, that we have a finite duration here, what's that legacy going to look like? What do we hope will have happened in this world as a result of our having lived? Then I think we would live our lives very differently. I wish I could say I had always done that. As I am approaching the last... I hope.. third of my life, he said optimistically, I'm much more conscious of that than I was in my first third. And I think that's true for most people. But when we live our lives with that kind of intentionality, when we live with that consciousness that our lives are finite... and not to foreshadow a future topic... but when you've been through pain, when you've lost someone for example, when that life is short and finite you tend to live differently. You tend to live with that intentionality. Then I think it changes you in a very fundamental way. Then, you start thinking about that legacy. You start thinking about that not in terms of ego gratification, but what you hope to have accomplished with your time in this world.

I love that you said that, because we used to call that living backwards. If you decide what you want to be said at the celebration of your life we'll call it, that rather than a funeral. The celebration of your existence. If you figure out who you want to be there, what you want people to say, if you want to ensure the people don't have to lie on that day in order to say great things about you, how would you need to live today for those things to be said about you on that day? If we lived backwards from that place with the wisdom of the end at the beginning, you're absolutely right we would live very different kinds of lives. I want them to have to shut the whole city down when I leave this earth because I have loved so hard, so big, that it matters that I'm gone.

It means that I have to do a good job in my relationships each day, right now, while we're trying to practice our gifts and sharing with you. And we hope that you'll share with us by writing to us when you can. Do that by sending an e mail to alvean@lovelife.digital, or doug@lovelife.digital

And on behalf of Alvean and myself and Barbara Hamm Lee, our producer, and Todd Washburn our recording Engineer, the love life family, we want to thank you for listening to us and we hope that you'll listen to us next week when we will be talking about another one of these topics. We've enjoyed being with you and look forward to being with you again next week until then, bye.