

LESSON IN LIVING

ANTICIPATION VS REALIZATION

Elena Allen Milano

My grandfather Allen used to quote: "*Anticipation is sweeter than realization.*" Isn't that true? Think about the fate of the Christmas toys by New Years. Here is another quote: "*Familiarity breeds contempt.*" How many times do we yearn for a possession and then take it for granted too quickly after we acquire it? Grandpa also said that getting married was like a man running to catch a train; once he's seated and enjoying the trip, he forgets all about how hard he had to run to catch a ride. Remember how we first yearned to be able to drive and shortly after this was accomplished, we couldn't wait to have our own vehicle?

It seems to be human nature to always want more and more! Satisfaction is difficult to achieve. If we are constantly dissatisfied and wanting more, what will it take to find true contentment? How about relationships? After all, they don't usually cost money and storage space is generally not a factor. They do require care, they do require thought, they do require time. But, they can also provide great happiness; there is nothing to compare with the joy of loving and caring for others.

During my lecturing years, I was speaking at a men's service club one day on the subject of children having too much, too soon, too easily. A man raised his hand and shared an experience with us: it seems his son expressed a desire for a bicycle, so he bought a beautiful, new bike, and placed it under the Christmas tree. At first, the boy was thrilled, but soon, he began neglecting it and leaving it out at nights. Finally, as expected, it was stolen, so the boy asked his dad for another one. The father told him he would have to earn his own money and buy it himself. The boy did so, and the dad remarked on how much better the son took care of the tattered used one he had acquired with his own money. It reminded me of how much easier it was to get my children to eat a food after they helped me prepare it. It was even easier when they assisted in growing it.

One of my favorite cartoons shows a young man perspiring, with his tongue hanging out in anticipation, as he churns away making his own ice cream. Don't you think he was more appreciative than he would have been had he rushed out and bought it at a nearby store? How our forefathers did relish their handmade items after they were completed, and what a peaceful picture it is to see a grandmother stitching away her declining years.

In my life, I have often fasted. I abstain from food and water and pray for a specific blessing. Usually, I pray for a person; other times, I give thanks for what I already enjoy. Though it is difficult, it turns out to be a blessing because it helps me be humble and realize that "*anticipation is indeed sweeter than realization!*"

This was written in 2006 when Elma was 86-years-old The entire series is on lintonmilano.com.