



Reflection: A Life Well Lived - Part I

Recently, I started a new project, which has been on my mind with the passing of my mother eight years ago. In essence, I decided to purge my life of excess wares. **But, first, I realize it's a journey just thinking about all we've accumulated, not only in possessions, but also in memories.**

Over the last few months, I have been sorting through my basement, trying to organize everything I own. Donate, toss, keep, give away. What an interesting process! From Christmas decorations to boxes of mother's beloved cookie jars to boxes and boxes of family pictures, as well as loads of old toys, and even an old antique phone - the list of items goes on, and on.

Yet, in an odd way, I feel like I'm organizing for the day I'm not here (not to sound morbid). I feel as though it may be time to let go of some things and, at the same time, have what is left be more organized for those who follow me. After all, it is amazing to realize how much we really accumulate over the generations, over the years, and especially from our childhoods.

One of my biggest challenges I feel are ALL the pictures I have. I have boxes and boxes of actual photos from pre-2000, along with literally tens of thousands of pictures from our new digital era. What do we do with all these snapshots of our life? Do those who follow us really want to sort through years' worth of moments, translating to thousands of pictures and selfies? Do they really all land in the trash, or, even worse, in a digital wasteland somewhere? It's one thing when they were printed and we could hold them and put them in an album, or, thankfully, throw the bad ones away. But, now in the digital world, every click is recorded and no processing is required - let alone our phones' memory keeps growing with each new model, creating yet more space in our library of memories.

Yes, too many questions with too many piles of pictures in front of me! So, I decided to be proactive. The plan became to create a book for my girls, Elli and Luca. My vision quickly turned into organizing pictures from different periods of my life encapsulating my experiences and even notating them. I started by categorizing my life into decades: Pre-20's, 20-30, 30-40, and now 40, on. Then, more inspiration started: What mistakes have I made? What celebrations have I had? Who did I share my special moments with? Where in the world did I travel? And, most of all, what decisions did I make forever changing my course? All of these questions are overwhelming, and mostly for another day.

Instead, my new project has now turned into part autobiography, part memoir, part journal, part reflection - and a lot of healing. I realize it is important to me to be able to tell the story, in my words and through my eyes. This is a project I know will take me many months, if not years to accomplish and my hope is that Elli and Luca will have a record of their Dad's past, my past, and all of it. While I am not proud of some of my decisions, it matters they will see me, on my terms. In reality (and in many ways), the project is even more for me. **To reflect, to remember, to celebrate, to move forward, to find peace, to feel gratitude.**

Already on my trip down memory lane, I have laughed hard, cried, smiled, plus shared many of these pictures with old friends and past relationships. **All in all, through my roller coaster ride of emotions, I have been able to reminisce on a life already well lived.** In fact, it feels really good to realize I am able to embrace a whole new fortune...far beyond any material goods.