

Now to whittle my thoughts for future generations down to one page they just might read...

(Steven Allan Long – as of December 18, 2013)

Here are some suggestions (not in priority order necessarily)

- Consider doing the Christian Playbook (<http://christian-playbook.wikidot.com/>) – it's a great way to start the day!
- "Make a suitable number of mistakes!" Be edgy at times, risking a bit more than might be comfortable for the sake of excitement and more growth (experiments are frequently good even when they don't work, since you've gained wisdom from the experience!) NOTE: When you're about to embark on efforts that could result in MAJOR negative consequences, do a little extra thinking/praying prior to proceeding ☺
- "Peace is just a smile (and wave) away." (Mother Theresa's quote with my parenthetical addition) Smile, laugh and wave more often – it's good for you and the community!!!!
- Don't procrastinate on big issues. One of my biggest failings has been to not address important topics for so long that they fester with me plus doesn't have as much positive potential impact for the other person/people involved. You can rationalize procrastination for many reasons: actions may be hurtful (to you/them), the person will recognize the issue and work it out without your help, etc.. Usually it still ultimately needs to be addressed, so why not just do it?
- Connect proactively with family regularly. This provides perspective on the similarities and differences that we embrace as unique members of the human race and also helps keep us connected to our roots. Remember the message of the song "Cats in the Cradle" (find ways to actively participate with the ones you're with NOW!)
- Practice "altruistic egoism." Actively help others in whatever ways are comfortable – and sometimes uncomfortable – for you. One fringe benefit of the action is that you feel even better about yourself and your world
- Find hobbies to "lose yourself in." Such efforts will serve you well for a lifetime of fun. The Longs tend to have excellent musical abilities so those hopefully will continue as hobbies (as my guitar has been for me)
- Look for the possibilities rather than the certainties. Besides death, very little is certain for humans. Let your faith in God allow you to live with possibilities rather than requiring absolute answers
- When writing notes (or speaking) in anger, put them away for a while before sending. Abraham Lincoln and so many others have shown us that this principle works to help limit hurtful correspondence
- Pray more frequently when making big decisions. The book *My Stroke of Insight* mentions waiting 90 seconds to let the limbic system regenerate – maybe prayer can be part of that time?
- Don't be judgmental – "listen for" and "walk in another's shoes" before making too many conclusions. You can almost never go wrong by getting to know people better
- Friends and family make this world a better place to live – spend time with them and make sure they know how much you value them!
- Keep reading! In our bookshelves are some great books you may want to read, including *The Bible*; *The Three Boxes of Life*; *Halftime*; *Man's Search for Meaning*; *Transitions*; *The Elements of Style*; *The Abundant Community*; *Fierce Conversations*; *The Four Things That Matter Most*. *There are dozens more I hope to read so maybe we'll add to this list?*
- It's worth paying for experiences. Support the arts (enjoying films, theatre and concerts); travel to locations/cultures you want to experience; and buy good equipment (musical instruments, hiking shoes, kayaks, bikes,...) Get out there and experience life
- "Nature proves to be a great place when you just need space." Hike, kayak, bike or ???

Above all, my advice is to continuously assess who you are (individually and as a family member) and who you want to be. My monthly introspection time is wonderful and provides me the opportunity to examine the dimensions of my "Wheel of Life" in terms of 1) current satisfaction levels, 2) what's next plus 3) who is keeping me accountable. *(In case you're interested in seeing the format, my efforts are on my computer in the Introspection folder called "...Activities based on Wheel Priorities.")*