

Whittling thoughts down to one page future generations just might read (an “ethical will” of sorts...)

(Steven Allan Long – started in December 2013, updated most recently in December 2024)

Here are some suggestions (not necessarily in priority order)

- A. **Find a person to love (and ideally marry,) sharing a commitment that you will be there for one another forever and ever** (in spite of the fact that you will be experiencing changes over a lifetime)
- B. **“Make a suitable number of mistakes!”** Be edgy at times, risking a bit more than might be comfortable, for the sake of excitement and incremental 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 ☺
- C. **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. This goes hand-in-hand with a favorite of Grama Long’s heard frequently during my childhood: **“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”** (Luke 6:30). This wisdom serves us all well as we live our days
- D. **“Peace is just a smile (and a wave) away.”** This is Mother Theresa’s quote with my parenthetical addition. Smile and wave most everywhere – it’s contagious, with substantial benefits for you and the community!
- E. **Give to charitable causes.** Consider making this at least 10% of income (including any “place of worship” giving)
- F. **Don’t procrastinate on big issues.** A big failing for me has been not addressing important topics sooner; delaying allows it to fester with me, fouling my mood, plus slowing positive potential impact for me and the other(s) involved. It’s easy to rationalize procrastination: actions may be hurtful (to you/them); the other(s) will recognize the issue and work it out without your help; etc.. Usually it ultimately needs to be addressed, so why not just do it?
- G. **Connect proactively with family on a regular basis.** Getting/sharing perspective on similarities and differences we embrace as unique members of the human race helps keep us connected to our roots. Remember the message of the song Cats in the Cradle: find ways to actively participate with important family members NOW!
- H. **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-playing and singing has been for me)
- I. **Look for the possibilities rather than the certainties.** Besides death, very little is certain for humans. Allow your faith in a Creator God to provide you a life of embracing possibilities rather than requiring absolute answers
- J. **When writing notes (or speaking) in anger, “put the thoughts away for a while” before sharing.** Abraham Lincoln and so many others have shown us that this principle works to help limit/eliminate negative impacts of hurtful communication
- K. **Pray/reflect more frequently when making big decisions.** The book *My Stroke of Insight* mentions waiting 90 seconds to let the limbic system regenerate; maybe prayer/meditation can be part of that 90 seconds? :-)
- L. **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
- M. **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!**
- N. **LAUGH and share the grins with others! Find humor with yourself and those around you.** Sadly, I wish I’d done more of this myself – I’ve been a little too serious but am working to get more light-hearted! :-)
- O. **Keep reading! In our bookshelves are some great books you may want to read, including** *The Bible; The Humor of Christ; Three Boxes of Life; Halftime; Man’s Search for Meaning; Transitions; The Abundant Community; Fierce Conversations; The Four Things That Matter Most; The Untethered Soul; The Artist’s Way* and dozens more I still hope to read... Maybe you’ll even be blessed with “reading partners” like I’ve had with Chris Davis, Bill Tucker, Bookies and several other groups!
- P. **It’s worth paying for experiences.** Support the arts (films, theatre and concerts); travel to exciting cultural locations; buy good equipment (musical instruments, hiking shoes, kayaks, bikes,...) Let yourself be edgy...
- Q. **“Nature proves to be a great place when you just need space.”** Hike, kayak, amble, bike or ???
- R. **Consider Disciple Playbook-like experiences** (<https://christianplaybook.longmemories.info/>) It’s a great way to start the day!

Above all, continuously assess who you are (individually and as a family member) and who you want to be. For me, monthly introspection time provides me the opportunity to examine topics like those above regarding 1) current satisfaction levels; 2) what’s next; and 3) who is keeping me accountable. Remember to enjoy life “One Day at a Time!”