
Life Lessons Learned Along the Way: A Personal Tribute to 45

By Harvey R. Heller

I have used this space to tell stories about who I am and to introduce you to our group. My stories aren't usually about me, but about people and events that have had a profound impact on me. For this installment, I break slightly with tradition.

No, this is not about the president. Whatever your politics, please read on.

My wife Ronna and I have been married 45 years this month. We met during our first few weeks at Michigan State in 1969. A month later I told my childhood friend that I would marry her. We married after our junior year and, honestly until I sat down to write this, the passage of time has seemed like a blur.

Our teen years before we met were the 60's; a historic decade to be sure. From the start of our relationship, we had a front row seat for campus unrest, Watergate, and the many "gates" to follow. The changes we have experienced led by technology alone are staggering, and we jumped onboard that train together so we could stay current. Okay, we did little more than buy computers, phones, and televisions to stay up with the latest innovation, but the impact on our life together has been enormous. By example, pre cellphone if I was late for dinner, Ronna had a full head of steam along with the vegetables; now, a quick call from the car can cut that anger by as much as 10%!

The foregoing has been background as we have grown together. Ronna supported me while I went to law school and we had 3 wonderful children. Tragedy and illness periodically and unfairly intervened but never got between us. We went through each challenge together.¹

We have been lucky enough to travel the world together and look forward to many more opportunities. Every vacation we take has been great fun for both of us. (We have actually committed to looking at the pictures and videos of those trips and our family lifecycle events at some future time!)

Our daughters are happily married and we thus far have two wonderful grandchildren. We are on the same page when it comes to unlimited spoiling.

So what have we learned from our 45 years' worth sharing here? Well, I've just looked back in a very general way. I haven't done that before. I realize that we have always looked forward to the next — and hopefully positive — experience we can share together. If it's a negative experience, I know we will turn that corner together. We have never lived in the past but certainly agree that for us, it has truly been prologue. That's our successful 45: a great start to the next round.

Relationships are the key to every aspect of our lives. Marking time and reflecting on what works and what doesn't helps create a perspective and a great blueprint for a bigger future. I do this personally and professionally.

May you all work toward a positive 45 and, of course, COVFEFE!

¹Our second dog is not part of this reference other than to note that Ronna (the dog lover) surprisingly and quickly forgave me for accidentally causing his demise. Perhaps that's fodder for another story or yet another example of true love. Before I told her what happened, I thought I was a goner.