
We All Own Our Future: Life Lessons Learned Along the Way

by Harvey Heller

I have used this space to tell stories about who I am and to introduce you to our group. My stories aren't about me, but about those who have had a profound impact on me. This month's installment is about Mollie.

Mollie Feferman was my Grandma. Never called her anything else. I'm not sure if she was any taller than 4 feet, but she was always a giant to me. She spoke fluent Yiddish and her heated discussions with my Grandpa Max in that language were classic. Never knew what they were actually saying, but got the gist. The moment the argument ended, so did the anger. She came from Russia to the U.S. in 1908, gave birth to 4 children over the next few years and made a warm wonderful home in South Bend, Indiana that I couldn't get enough of. I would cry the days we left and couldn't wait to spend more time there.

One day, she yelled at me in her wonderful broken English. I was about 10 and up to that time enjoyed sleeping in, often until past noon. To my grandparents I could do no wrong. That said, imagine my shock when Grandma stood outside my bedroom door about noon one day and yelled at me because I had already slept "half the day away." Changed my life forever.

To this day, I can't sleep in. I've been married nearly 42 years and when I suggest to my wife that I may sleep in on a holiday she bursts out laughing, knowing full well that even if I don't get up at my usual time of 4:45 a.m. (without an alarm clock), the chances of me being in bed past 6 a.m. are slim.

There is a joke about billable hours that would fit here, but that was certainly not Mollie's lesson. To her and my Grandpa, after fleeing a changing Russia, it was how precious and wonderful every day in a free world was.

The lesson I have come to learn is very simple: we all own our future; the time we waste we can never get back. It's gone forever. In my youth I had someone who loved me enough to bring that to my attention using few, but highly impactful

words.

Mollie got to the heart of the matter, with me (and I'm sure with Grandpa Max in those colorful Yiddish exchanges!). While we sell our time in this business, our clients are paying for us to get to the heart of a matter and resolve it. Letting something languish is costly to everyone involved.

Everyone in our practice group understands the value of time and the cost of wasting it. We avoid it like the plague and if it happens, which it shouldn't, we eat it. That's our lesson to each other. We can't get it back.

One of our proudest examples is my partner of many years, Steve Wolock, whose enlightening piece on penalty interest is featured here. It is important to know.

I hope this is meaningful to you and I welcome the opportunity to talk further.

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