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LIVE LIFE NOW

When being told going into high school that I would have to complete a whopping 40 hours of community service, I felt the same way most of my peers felt: frustrated.

“It’s not fair! All the grades ahead of us don’t have to do anything. Why should we?!”

Little did I know that while I was completing these hours I would discover the law of life that I have been subconsciously living by for the past seventeen years. Now in my last year of high school, I have been doing my volunteer work at a nearby nursing home. Despite my initial misgivings, I do not feel forced or dragged to do this because of what I’ve seen and felt throughout my experience. During my visits and talks with the residents I have come across my law of life. This is a law of life that I can see takes many people a lifetime to figure out. However, I have been fortunate enough to learn such a valuable life lesson at this early stage in the game. This law of life is surely that all the seniors must live by and that is to “Savour what life has to offer, when life has to offer it. Simply put; just live life in the moment.”

It may seem hard to imagine but the friendly grandmas and grandpas seen in the nursing home all have lived active full lives. They all worked and lived through one of the most fascinating centuries in history. These people are in fact the wisest, most knowledgeable people in our society today. They’ve felt more joy, more heartache, been through more tragedies and experienced more of life than any other social group in the world.

The life of these people now, may not sound the most ideal. Most are cooped up inside all the time, with no family, just accompanied by other peers who are in the same boat. Compared to the free lifestyle they used to live, you would think walking into such a facility, that depression would loom and long faces would be abundant. This is not so. *Au contraire*. When I walk in the atmosphere is bright, residents are up and about and people are simply enjoying life. We, the rest of society are left to wonder, how people in this

dreaded, closed-in environment are so happy? The answer to this mystery, is simply that all these seniors are living by the same law of life; savour life now, not later. They are all living in the moment.

What exactly is meant by 'savouring' what life has to offer? It means taking advantage of what there is in your life at that point in time, whether it be during the course of a day, month or year.

Many of my peers are ready to leave high school and get on with their lives, whether it is university, college or whatever lies ahead. They are sick of high school and are beginning to look to future endeavours for their happiness. This attitude shocks me since it completely contradicts what I live by. I can't understand how you can solely depend on the future for your happiness. My viewpoint is to appreciate what high school offers now and enjoy the friends and family that you are experiencing life with at this time. If you are depending on university when you're in high school, what's going to stop the pattern? Won't you be depending on graduate studies or workplace for your happiness when in university? Then comes work. Would you then start looking forward to retirement? At last, you're retired, although now you begin to grow sick of life and start to look to death as the final escape from all of life's stresses. This to me is the logical pattern. If you depend on the future for your happiness when you're seventeen, will you not depend on the future when you're eighty? People with this attitude are abundant in society. They are unfortunate in a sense because they probably won't enjoy life, because they are too busy hoping that it will eventually get better. They won't realize that this is not the way to live until they are in the same situation as the residents of the nursing home.

These seniors do not choose to live in the moment. It just comes naturally because to them, there is no future. Each day, month or year could be their last.

Reflecting back on my own life, I have been living in the moment and appreciating what life has to offer for as long as I can remember. Throughout elementary school and for the most of my high school career I have been joining teams, clubs, anything and everything that interests me. I never once thought to myself, "Not this year. Maybe I'll try out for the team next year." I would always try out that year. Whatever it was, I joined up then and there and the future was never an issue. Now that this law of life was reinforced and I have become aware of it, I will continue to live by it for the rest of my life and apply it to all aspects of life.

I now, truly share my law of life with the residents of the nursing home. I've learned and realized how life is in fact more valuable than you could ever imagine. Life is fragile. That is something that many people in society can't accept. You should never wish away that last year of high school, that month before summer holidays, those days before Christmas or any other valuable point in time in your life. You will regret it later. Just think of all the good things that could happen during that time. The future is never definite, not to be depended upon, merely something that could happen. I am thankful for all that I have learned from the seniors. I've learned that you nor I are invincible. I've also learned that life is not going to magically get better. Things do not change suddenly and dreams don't always come true. This doesn't mean that life is terrible. Life is great if you take advantage of it and all its pleasures. I now understand that we should savour life now, not later. Even though death is not the harsh reality we live with, as it is the seniors, we should live like it is. So live like the wise seniors do. Live like today, this month or this year is your last and savour all that life has to offer.