

A Memory Or Past Experience Relived - You Deserve It!

By Mark Charnet



Have you ever wished you could go back in time to your youth to relive a moment or a period of time in your life that brought you happiness and joy? Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could relive the moment and the feelings that you felt of when and where you fell in love for the first time or kissed the person of your dreams and the magic feeling that came over you? Maybe one of your most treasured moments involved a certain location like where you were during your honeymoon or a vacation destination experienced as a child. Was one of your magical moments an acquisition of a personal effect like a dream car or a home? Whatever your collection of prized memories are, one thing is certain, it was either very expensive to accomplish at the time or expensive today to recreate the fantasy.

This leads to the point of this week's column. I'd like to challenge you to recreate and relive those moments in your life; those few moments before the responsibilities and obligations of raising the children and providing for a family took certain priority and discipline. For me, in my quest to create a facsimile

of those special moments from my past, I created the concept of a Daddy Adventure to include my children in my journey back in time. This journey can also cover dreams that haven't come true yet too.

I always wanted a new drum set and couldn't afford one as a child or young adult. The set I had was a combination of drums acquired at garage sales and picked out of the garbage when delivering newspapers along my morning and afternoon routes. They worked and performed good enough, allowing me to be the first chair percussionist in the 8th grade band, but, not far beyond that. So, a few years ago, at age 40, I asked my children to join me in the car to go on a Daddy Adventure! They didn't know where or why or what for, just that they were going to participate in an activity to regain Dad's lost youth. To say that I was like a kid in a candy store with a hundred dollar bill would be an understatement. I purchased the finest drum set the store had in stock! Even though I hadn't picked up my drumsticks in 22 years, the first rat tat I played immediately brought me back to eighth grade and High School. It was fabulous. Since that time I've taken the kids on many Daddy Adventures and the concept evolved into creating new Adventures for us to experience and enjoy that had no reference to my past. Other Daddy Adventures were designed to bring back to life memories where my wife and I traveled while falling in love. Terry and I traveled to Jamaica, the Bahamas and Italy so the kids and I traveled to Aruba, Tahiti, Australia, Italy and Spain, even places we found special as close to home as New York City, have all been recreated around our past experiences. Some of our adventures include

Mom and others are just special time the kids and I spend together making new memories.

As I mentioned earlier, new memories created or old memories relived, can be expensive and is my motivation behind penning this article. The overwhelming conclusion is: fun and excitement costs money, just ask a family that has recently returned from Disney World or a somewhat local water park or a week at the NJ shore. We all want to have fun. All work and no play leads to a very dull life. But, we are in the midst of a recession and economic malaise with historic unemployment and near record low interest rates. Consumer confidence is poor and our President has created more debt than all previous Presidents combined without regard for where these funds will come from. Taxes are being raised and new ones created. Is it feasible, fiscally responsible and prudent to spend money now on such non-necessities as a memory recreation? Absolutely! In my opinion it's Un-American to be defeated by economic forces. In fact, I believe it is our duty to take a small lesson from our own government. Spend your way out of a personal economic downturn as there is more to the equation than money. There is a psychological recession that needs a stimulus package also.

Don't misunderstand me as I am not recommending massive debt creation for the sake of a momentary high, not at all. Fiscal responsibility must be maintained. As an example, sleeping quarters are of less importance than the location in which sleep takes place. You can get a hotel room in Atlantic City for \$400 per night on a Friday and Saturday that costs \$75 on Sunday and Monday. Add to that the cost of get-

ting there, the cost of food for the week and a show or two, without gambling one dollar, a couple could spend \$2000 for the week there. For the same money you can create a life-long memory in a Punta Cana, Dominican Republic at an all inclusive resort including airfare, all expenses and gratuities for about the same price. A good travel agent is worth every penny of their commission, in the end costing you nothing, so I suggest you use a professional instead of the internet.

Remember the quote, "a penny saved is a penny earned"? In the universe of financial planning, this quote is the foundation of our entire profession. To accumulate \$1,000,000 you must first have a goal of accumulating \$100,000. To accumulate \$100,000 you must first have a goal of \$10,000. How are these goals accomplished? By having the discipline to pay yourself first before PSE&G and JCP&L. You should have an Adventure account, an emergency account, multiple retirement accounts, an account for big upcoming purchases like a car, house or college and a bill paying account. All of these accounts must be separate so it is visually simple to keep score; for if you don't know where you are or where you've been, how is it possible to determine where you are going. Like a croupier dealing the cards in a game of poker, you should deal out your dollars to your accounts religiously every pay period. This pattern should be repeated regardless of the frequency of your paycheck or the amount. After years of performance and discipline, each of your accounts will be significantly increased by repetition and total return. Soon you will amass a fortune. Dollars invested are your personal employees that work 24/7 with no vaca-

tion or sick time. How many dollars would you like on your payroll?

Finally, an education is necessary in the proper methods of removing money from your accounts as not to destroy the integrity and foundation of their ability to produce a salary for you in absence of your own, when you retire. If you require some suggestions or help as to the best investment vehicles to use for each of your accounts, especially your personal Adventure account, please call my office for an appointment because bank accounts might suffice for the emergency account, but not the rest of them.

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