

## *Life: On a Scale of 1 to 10 ...*

Linda and I watched a game show where they asked 100 people, "On a scale of 1 to 10 how interesting would a book about your life be?" "1" was the number one answer. Huh? Do most people honestly think their lives are that boring? Should I ask myself if I've really lived that interesting a life?

I've been locked in, locked out, beaten up, and grabbed; fussed at, cussed at, shot at, and stabbed. I was picked up and thrown down by one twice my size, hit in the face 'til I bled, hit in the head with a piece of iron, knocked unconscious, nearly drowned 3 times, set on fire once, and almost run over by a car.

I've also had parties in my honor, won a statewide art award, written several poems, played in a rock band on TV 3 times, played on stage, in night clubs, and before crowds from 500 to over 1,000. And all that happened before I was 20 years old.

I've been married, had 8 children, widowed, and married again. Together, my wife and I currently have 11 children, 31 grandchildren, and 5 greats. I've supported them all to one degree or another. I've encouraged them, kept them fed, clothed, and cared for, and loved them with all my heart. As much as I love them and they love me, I doubt any of them but my wife really knows me.

I've supported my country. For 4 years, I gave them my mind, my body, and my heart during a war in which our own U.S. citizens hated us, paid us below poverty level, and publicly insulted our combat vets when they returned home.

I've known loneliness. It's when you're away from the people you love. I was alone in my barracks 500 miles from home, got drunk, and cried myself to sleep the first Christmas I spent away from home.

I've known loneliness. It's when the people you love are away from you. I attended church every Sunday for 34 years with my family until they were grown then had to sit in church alone after my wife died. It's funny how you can be sitting in a crowd and still feel lonely but you can.

I understand work and I understand sacrifice. I worked in temperatures from 26 below to 108 in the shade when I was in the military. I worked in rain and gale force winds that soaked my socks 'til I could wring water out of them. For the next 37 years I worked for AT&T. I rarely enjoyed my job but I had a family to feed and couldn't quit.

I've worked aloft on poles and below ground. Once I was nearly blown off a pole by wind and nearly struck by lightning in a thunderstorm. Did I mention I have a fear of heights? I've worked when I felt great and I've worked when I was so sick I could hardly stand. When they didn't appreciate me, they threatened me. When they did appreciate me, they had me training employees and their supervisors statewide.

I've worked for all types of managers and managed all types of workers. I've worked with and for black, white, young, old, male, female, geniuses, and idiots. One manager said I could have anything I wanted, just ask. Another threatened to kill me – literally. 3 Managers dishonored me in writing and threatened to fire me.

This same company later honored me in writing several times, twice with a check, and once by throwing a banquet in my honor. I was honored by supervisors, managers, district managers, an assistant vice president, and once by the president of the company. The greatest honor I ever received on the job was when nearly 100 of my coworkers presented me with a plaque for my many months of training several large classes of them off the job on their own time. One of those classes took up a collection for me at Christmas time to thank me for the free training.

I've taught, trained, and supervised individuals and groups of all sizes and at all education levels for free and for pay. For pay was more lucrative but for free was more fun. I've supervised a team who had only high school degrees and I've supervised a team on which there were 3 with PhDs.

I've enjoyed learning and playing music in public and with friends for pay and for free. I've sung in public while playing the piano, acoustic or electric guitar, bass guitar, harmonica, banjo, and Dobro. Privately I've played the organ, the dulcimer, and a few chords on the mandolin. I tried for a year to learn the fiddle but never could quite get the hang of it. Performing rock music for screaming fans is exciting but singing church songs a cappella with my children is the real deal.

My internet activities are fun. I own 4 unique websites and two blogs. Through them I share my thoughts, photos, some music, and 45 years of family history research. My posts and comments aren't widely known. I only have a few hundred visitors but I once got 18,000 who were interested in seeing my Christmas photos of Temple Square in Salt Lake City. I've been told that I'm a fair musician, a good writer and an awful teacher. Also been told don't quit my day job.

I've traveled and seen things I never dreamed I'd see. I've visited 2 foreign countries and most of the lower 48 states, made friends in many of them. I've regularly corresponded with friends the world over in Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, China, Alaska, England, and Eastern Europe. I've corresponded on occasion with others in Chile, Mexico, and other countries, became good friends with paupers and millionaires.

My best friend is my wife but outside my family my closest friends are the ones I've known the longest. Maybe that's because of shared experiences. Maybe that's why I think my kids don't know me very well. Even though we have some wonderful memories, for some reason, most of life's experiences are shared outside the family. I've tried to do what I can to fix that.

I write about my experiences, my values, my dreams. I write to share my research and to share what I've learned. I've written and self-published 4 small books of 200 pages or less, mostly just for family: 2 on family history, a family funny book, and my

autobiography. I've checked off pretty much everything on my bucket list, rewrote it, and checked it off again. At times my life has been exciting, at other times downright scary, but never boring. I don't know if others would be interested in a book about my life but my children said they enjoyed reading the first 22 years of it. They've asked me for the sequel.

I might reply with a "6" or higher but I wouldn't say my life has been a "1." I'll bet you wouldn't either. If someone asked, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how interesting would a book about your life be?" How would you respond?

Ron.V  
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