



Julie Gaver Training & Development, LLC

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Theme: "Reflections"

The Station

by Robert Hastings

Tucked away in our subconscious is a vision. We see ourselves on a long trip that spans the continent. We are traveling by train. Out the windows we drink in the passing scene of cars on a nearby highway, of children waving at the crossing, of cattle grazing on a distant hillside, smoke pouring from a power plant, row upon row of corn and wheat, of flatlands and valleys, of mountains and rolling hillsides, of city skylines and village halls.

But uppermost in our minds is that final destination. On a certain day, at a certain hour we will pull into the station. The bands will be playing and the flags will be waving. Once we get there so many wonderful dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a complete jigsaw puzzle. How restlessly we pace the aisle, damning the minutes for loitering—waiting, waiting, waiting for the station.

"When we reach the station that will be it!" we cry. "When I'm 18." "When I buy that new 450 SL Mercedes Benz!" "When I've paid off my mortgage". "When I finally get that promotion." "When I reach the age of retirement, then I shall live happily ever after."

But sooner or later we realize that there is no station, no one place to arrive at once and for all. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us.

"Relish the moment" is a good motto, especially when coupled with Psalm 118:24: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad. It is the regret over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear are twin thieves who rob us of today.

So, stop pacing the aisles and counting the miles. Instead, climb more mountains, eat more ice cream, go barefoot more often, swim more rivers, watch more sunsets, laugh more, cry less. Life must be lived as we go along. The station will come soon enough.

The recent sudden death of comedian/actor, Bernie Mac brings this beautiful passage by Robert Hastings to light. None of us truly know how long our stay will be here on earth and all that may remain unfinished.

In the movie *The Bucket List*, Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman play unlikely friends whose paths cross because they learn that the station is fast approaching.

A list is created which highlights all of the places not yet visited, the relationships not yet formed or repaired, knowledge yet to be acquired, or moments to be savored. The two set out with an impressive To Do list and a passionate desire for completion.

I have had a "bucket list" for a long time. I did not know it was called that, but it has proven to be the catalyst for many learning opportunities and dreams fulfilled.

This past year I took a Spanish class, one of the many items on my list. Although I readily admit that my dialogue has not progressed much past *donde está el baño?* and *me gusta la comida*, the thought that I am still living and learning is exhilarating!

On the wall facing my desk in my home office, my good friend, artist Dawn Walker, painted the following quote which serves as my daily devotional and reminder to live life with passion:

*"Once you have tasted flight,
you will forever walk the earth with your eyes skyward,
for there you have been
and there you will always long to return."
Leonardo da Vinci*

If you had a bucket list, what would it contain? Why not make one today and begin living life more completely?

Julie

(301) 293-4195

julie@juliegaver.com

www.juliegaver.com