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Time Flies: Take Some Risks and Make Life Count!
By: Connie Reimers-Hild, Ph.D.

My Grandma and I both graduated from West Point Jr.-Sr. High in West Point, NE. She graduated from high school in 1930. I graduated in 1990. We attended our class reunions together. It was her 70th and my 10th. She was sad because only a handful of her classmates were left. It was hard to see the sadness on her face. I think she knew it was the last time she would ever attend her class reunion. I was disappointed because my classmates were so serious. To be honest, all I wanted to do was catch up with everyone and talk about the “Glory Days.”

West Point’s class of 1990 is now planning its 20th class reunion, and things have certainly changed. Instead of using snail mail and phone calls, we are making plans via Facebook (If you are not familiar with Facebook, you can check it out at Facebook.com). My classmates no longer seem as serious as they did 10 years ago. People have gotten jobs, lost jobs and grown businesses. We have moved, gotten married, divorced and widowed. We have all lost loved ones. We have all faced both tragedy and triumph.

The one thing we have in common is this: Another 10 years has passed.

My Grandma used to tell me that time would go by faster as I got older. As usual, she was right. Life passes by quickly, and we all need to embrace each and every day. Do you ever find yourself watching the clock or hoping the day goes by quickly? Remember, time is something we never get back. Wishing for a day to end is the same as hoping your life goes by even faster than it already does!

How can you maximize your life? Rediscover your passion and head in the direction of your dreams. I am convinced that society is missing out on vast amounts of human potential because so many of us never really “go for it” and pursue our true passions. Instead, we cling to what we know because it makes us feel safe and secure.

The most precious resource we all have is time, and we must use it wisely. We cannot get back today or yesterday, so pursuing our dreams cannot wait.

Pursuing dreams takes confidence and the ability to take risks. When you pursue your dreams, there will be times of self-doubt, there will be times when you second guess yourself and there will be times when you think you just cannot do it anymore. In order to make your dreams a reality, you must believe in yourself and in your dream.

Believe in yourself to the point that you are willing to take risks and to fail. Be willing to fail until you succeed. After all, learning from our mistakes is one of the best ways to move our dreams forward.

Does the thought of taking risks or failing seem too scary? Then, you may have to change your mind about risk and failure. Consider the following questions: Is it really a risk to pursue your dream? Or, is it more of a risk to never pursue a dream and regret it later in life? What is failure? Is pursuing your dreams failure? Or, do you truly fail if you never tap into your human potential and share your unique talents and dreams with the rest of the world?

Thomas Edison, one of the most prolific inventors in history, viewed failure as a learning tool and as a success. Edison held over 1,000 patents and founded 14 companies. Each time he pursued an invention he failed. However, he viewed his failures as a way not to do something. Each failure was a learning experience that advanced his idea.

We can each maximize our lives by remembering one of Edison's most famous quotes,

“If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves”

Go out there and astound yourself (and others too)! Time is going to move forward. What we decide to do with our time is up to us, so make every minute of your life count!!

Connie Reimers-Hild, Ph.D. is the Unit Leader at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Kimmel Education and Research Center in Nebraska City, NE.

Ask Dr. Connie your questions about cultivating your leadership and entrepreneurship skills by e-mailing her at creimers2@unl.edu.