

BUILD-A-BEAR LIFE

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It's a new month—full of promise and hope. A clean slate waiting for me to write my life, creating my own history. What history do I want to create today? Today forms a part of who I am, adds a layer upon yesterday's layer of creating Brenda. God formed me physically, built my body with all its genetics, heredity, and DNA, and then allowed family and life to mold me mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, one day at a time, until I began making my own choices. At salvation He gave me Holy Spirit, enabling me to love Him and to walk in my destiny. **Since then, with Holy Spirit at my side, I have been creating my own history, layer by layer, day by day, building who I am.**

Terry and I were recently in Florida with some friends whose son had earned a gift card to the Build-A-Bear store. There, you go through the process of creating your own bear from scratch. You choose how much stuffing you put inside, depending on how soft and floppy you want your bear. Then comes choices of clothing and accessories, from glasses to a spa robe and mask to personalized clothing, all a part of the process of customizing your bear. It has become an incredibly popular place for children.

In the same way, over our lifetime, we are creating ourselves from the Build-A-Human store. However, while the Build-A-Bear project takes place in one day, a human takes a lifetime. **And because it takes so long, we tend to get lost in day-to-day life and lose the fact that being custom-made is in the details.** Without those, all the bears would look exactly alike (hence buying them off the shelves at Toys R Us). The small, daily choices is what build us into individuals. Destiny and purpose don't just crash down onto us out of the blue as we're washing dishes or balancing the checkbook, we learn to walk in them on a daily basis.

Destiny is the process of building who we are, of creating a history by making each day "become" something in us. But what does that look like? How does today become valuable instead of lost in the ruckus of life? And I don't mean valuable in doing big things for God. I mean valuable in purpose, in joy, in discovering more of God's pleasure in us as individuals. Valuable in letting God carry our heartaches so we're free to walk in His joy. That doesn't mean that life isn't painful or stressful,

but that we let God carry the pain and stress for us so that we're not consumed by it.

God has given each of us the free will to create ourselves—to become whomever we choose to be, and that happens each day, whether we're fourteen or a hundred and four. The question then becomes, what are we creating? Are our days muddled together as if they were in a blender, or do we joyfully live every day as part of the Adventure? Here are some questions to ask yourself as you build.

LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. If I died tomorrow what would I be sorry I hadn't done? (Terry says "Eat all the chocolate out of the drawer.")
2. What are some things I enjoy doing? (Spiritual or abstract will be tolerated, but try to come up with something more physical.)
3. Am I getting that enjoyment often? Regularly?
4. What do I feel guilty over in my daily life?
5. What do I *need* to spend more time on? (Spiritually and non-spiritually.)
6. What do I *want* to spend more time on? (Spiritually and non-spiritually.)
7. What areas do I see in my life that I need to change? (For example, procrastination, perfectionism, intolerance, etc.)
8. What are five dreams I would fulfill if it were possible? (Without considering cost or training, just for the fun of it.)
9. On a scale of 1 to 10, how do I rate my satisfaction with my life now?
10. What keeps that from being a 10?
11. What do I want/enjoy right now out of a spiritual life? (We all go through seasons of needing different things, or times when God puts a particular

aspect of Himself on our hearts.) Be specific. (For example: more Father love, revelations/insights, acceptance, intimacy, spiritual understanding, chance to teach/preach/minister/pray for others, a special hunger for the Bible, etc.)

12. If I rewarded myself with something "special," a physical treat, what would it be?

Now look at your answers, and see if you like the you that you're building. Look at your dreams, pick one, and figure out the first step to making it happen. There are few dreams that you can't find a cheap, simple way to pursue. For example, I've always wanted to be a ballet dancer. I'm under no illusion that at my age and inflexibility that is possible, but that doesn't stop me from checking out books on ballet from the library, learning from how-to videos, and dancing by myself. Set some simple, daily goals and then at the end of the week reward yourself with a treat. **Don't overload yourself with goals and changes, just start looking at each day in itself and planning how you can insert something worthwhile into it.**

For example, I decided that it was high time I did something about trimming down my tummy. My personality is such that I would normally have gone to the library, researched the internet, and then come up with a long and time-consuming Plan-of-Action involving my whole body. But I've learned that when I do that I am instantly overwhelmed and never actually get around to doing it. So, instead, I've got a simple book called *6 Minute Morning - Flat Stomach* by Sara Rose. It'll take longer, but because it's simple and only takes a few minutes I'm managing to stick with it.

The point is, what would it take to end the day feeling like you owned it, that you have lived a "successful" day. I recently discovered that if I don't spend some time writing then I feel like my day was wasted and too busy. I was surprised by that revelation. I do all sorts of things in my days that are good, relevant, helpful, and necessary, but my feeling of accomplishment comes from writing. What does it take for your day to feel successful? I don't mean successful in the eyes of the world, or your job, or even your family, I mean what lets you go to bed satisfied that you're building what you want to build with your life. We choose our jobs and the larger structure of our lives for any number of reasons, and looking at those choices is something to also be done in the light of walking in your destiny, but here I'm talking about the daily choices *around* your jobs and responsibilities that are creating you. We're not meant to be slaves to others or to time. We're created

for life and freedom, and to walk in fulfillment, whatever our responsibilities are. So look at your answers, and rework your life accordingly.

And always, ALWAYS, add a touch of pleasure to each day, even if it's nothing more than sitting down, putting your feet up, taking some deep breaths, and going to your happy place.

(You'll find both a copy of the Life Questionnaire that you can insert your answers into and a copy of my own answers [here](#). Once there, scroll down until you see them.)