

Ten Thousand Steps

LIVING with Constructive Living

Happy Mothers Day to You All

In March, my mother called me up and told me she had walked 10,400 steps that day. "That's fantastic," I exclaimed!

"I knew you would say that," she said.

Apparently one of her friends had gently chided her for *going overboard at her age*, suggesting that I might also disapprove. The fact that my mother was three weeks away from her 90th Birthday gave some credence to her friend's concerns, but inspired my mother, in all of her glory, to "check it out" with her eldest daughter. Since both of my mother's daughters along with her grandchildren and great grandchildren delight in her efforts to stay fit in body, mind and spirit, we all uproariously encourage such behaviour. And she enjoys our enthusiasm.

When I tell stories like this about my mother, my friends look at each other and say something like, "we had better get moving." Or, "Oh my God, what's wrong with this picture-I thought I was doing well at 7,000 steps."

With her 90th Birthday in April and Mother's Day on the horizon, I feel totally justified in talking about the joy of having this woman as my/our mother. I suspect through these words she may inspire you too, to perhaps become your own family's 'living legacy'.

Take her birthday, as an example. We held it at the Nanaimo museum with 60-70 guests on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in April. Friends and family members of literally all ages were in attendance and we did a celebration of her life, culminating in the surprise of all surprises—a book of her life. The first edition of *Eileen Wilson-Still Dancing at Ninety The Biography of an Extraordinary Ordinary Woman*, is already sold out. The authors, James Hawkins & Sheila Swanson, friends extraordinaire and adopted family members, spent months gathering stories and details of mother's life and placed them in the historical context of the decades from the Roaring Twenties to the Twenty-First Century. And the cheerful optimism they wrote about is still evident to this very moment and it is why we all like hanging out with

this friendly, active, loving, unassuming and absolutely modern woman who is up for all adventures and willing to say "YES" to the invitations that life places on the banquet table.

As my sister wrote in the preface, *Our mother has LIVED life from the very beginning, seized opportunities to change her circumstances when necessary and cultivated an array of precious friendships along the way. The ancient wise ones always say it is not so much what you are given that determines a successful life, but rather what you do with it. The amazing thing about Eileen Grace Wilson is she has not wasted a precious drop of her life thus far. Moment by moment for 90 years, she has woven a tapestry of loving kindness, a pattern of inclusion for the people around her- crafted with millions of careful colourful stitches of joy, compassion, strength and other qualities that are too numerous to mention. I believe her own mother, who was her lifelong inspiration, saw 'something special' in that small baby when she was born. For as her middle name suggests... she has surely lived her life with amazing grace.*

As we celebrate mother's 90th year, I can't help thinking how lucky we are to celebrate life while we are still alive and to appreciate the legacy she has given us: do the best you can with what you have; pay attention; be kind to others; work hard; play and laugh; no complaining; enjoy your gifts and talents and do something with them; find any excuse to celebrate life and each other; notice what needs doing and do it.

Mother is loved and she loves. **In the end I suspect our main job on earth is to help others and to be helped, wherever we find ourselves.** Even if our life purpose may be elusive, we can't go wrong if we seize such opportunities every single day.

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-Dr. David K. Reynolds

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