

New Beginnings

By Maralene Strom

Over the past several weeks there has been so much news of endings. End of tournaments, end of life, end of businesses, and end of relationships. All of these endings could cast a pall of depression over us. We wonder why things have to end.

This column is going to focus on beginnings. It is like Spring which sends a natural message of new growth, after a season that has hardened seeds to be ready for their explosion into life. Spring has a sense of renewal and freshness.

Marsha Petrie Sue said, "Every day is a new beginning. Treat it that way. Stay away from what might have been, and look at what can be."

In my own life experience, I have felt that there were those times I was facing an ending. It was so overwhelming I was not sure that tomorrow would ever feel the warmth and joy again. Miraculously, I discovered a newness of living that was not on my radar screen. I experienced living life as it opened up to new vistas.

Beginnings require that we let go of yesterday to live today. If we hang onto yesterday wishing we had lived it differently, we reach the sunset of today only to realize that we have compounded our regret for not having lived another day. We sit in despair not beginning because we could not let go of the ending of yesterday.

It is true that yesterday may have been a life altering event. There is a time to grieve for a loss, a missed opportunity, an error in judgment, or just making the mistake of not trying or engaging. Whatever it is, we cannot live the day over again. Nor can we make someone else do what we wished or change what happened.

Maria Shriver said life-altering experiences make us then live the altered life direction we are pointed toward and make it into something worthwhile. I've thought a lot about that fact of living. How different our lives have become because of what looked like the end, and it became the beginning of a whole new life experience.

Beginnings are not a once in a lifetime event. They begin every day. When there is an ending, is it not really just the beginning of something new? I came across this quote, attributed to Semisonic, "Every new beginning comes from some other beginnings end."

The end of childhood begins adulthood. High school graduation begins a future holding a variety of options and challenges into a world of discovery what it means to be adult. The end of a career begins the discovery of retirement and new challenges yet to unfold.

Relationships end and new ones begin. Marriages may end in divorce or death. It is the beginning of a life not planned for when there were two and now there is one. Children leave home, the nest is empty, and time is open for something else to fill it. Explore a new career, an opportunity to serve the community, or rediscover the person who is full of gifts that could not emerge until this time of their life.

Jobs are lost to downsizing or relocation and now the door opening requires a new look at skills unused but valuable. Could it mean more schooling, creating a small business or something outside of the box only dreamt about?

Beginnings are often fearful, for we do not know what the ending looks like or how it will change or alter our lives. However, without them we have lost living to the fullest potential given to us.

Edith Lovejoy Pierce said, "We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

It is Spring! It is New Year's Day! Today is the beginning of another day of life. It is up to you to leave yesterdays pain and hurts behind which hinder your own ability to plant seeds of new growth and discovery.

Life is short, spring into action and live today's beginning. Who knows what the next ending will mean for your next new beginning.