What is Your Approach to Life?

By DeAnn Adler

After many years of living, I still don’t have life completely figured out and I’m assuming I never will, but age has given me some wisdom and I have hopefully learned a few things in all that time. I have not one philosophy of life, but many, and all of them put together make me the person I am today.

During my senior year in high school over thirty-two years ago, the teacher in my civics class asked what we students thought was the secret to a happy life. A blond, curly headed boy in the class answered that he thought “everything in moderation” was the key to a successful, happy life. I’ve never forgotten those words, even after all this time, and they’ve become a part of who I am and how I’ve lived my life.

In ancient Greece, the temple of Apollo at Delphi bore the inscription Meden Agan - 'Nothing in excess'. The ancient Greeks knew what my high school classmate had—that moderation makes life run more smoothly. Moderation in this day and age is not always hip though. What are cool are extremes, from extreme sports to extreme home makeovers. But it seems that for a lot of people, straying from the path of moderation causes nothing but heartache, from the drinker who loses everything to the bottle, to the gambler who loses his life’s savings. The more extreme our wants, the more we must accumulate to make ourselves happy.

But I also think moderation can make for an extremely boring life. It’s a life played safely and without true passion. But even one, good, all-consuming passion can make life exciting and infinitely more fun. Passion makes life worth living. The passion can be anything—for a husband, a child, one’s family, or for a career you love, for travel or a hobby or a cause that consumes you. For me it is several of those things. It’s the “icing on the cake” of one’s life. So I believe, have your moderation yes—but also find your passion.

I strive to live fully each day, laugh often and love intensely and I try every day to have more patience, to say kinder words, to gossip less, be a good friend, good mother, and a good person. And I try not to be too hard on myself when I don’t always succeed at those things, which is often! Then I try to remember that all I can do is try harder next time and learn from my mistakes.

For the young, time passes slowly. Remember how long the four years of high school seemed to last? But the older I get, the faster the days go by and the more precious they seem to be. So I try to enjoy them, live passionately, and make every day count.