

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION



THE THREE R'S

Chapter 11: Conclusion

Sandra and Paul's Three "R's"

Dear loved ones,

If you have had the stamina to read this rather lengthy family history, it is now time to reflect on what we have learned from it. We call them the three "Rs".

First of all, this book is known as our family "roots" (the first "R") for a good reason. Even genetic science will support the conclusion that humans are similar to plants that spring up from their roots. In essence, our "roots" are defining factors in our lives.

Today, the current generations of our family are enjoying the American Dream not only because of your hard work, but also your roots. These roots have two large branches. First, our immigrant ancestors who made enormous sacrifices to

leave their home and family to start a new life in America. And second, the founders of this great American nation who put a framework together, unmatched anywhere else in the world, to grant freedom to all; a nation founded “under God,” not under humans.

Despite any flaws in these roots, we can never be thankful enough that they are our foundation, and we are deeply indebted and grateful for this first “R”.

Next, as we look back over our history, it is clear that we are truly blessed. Although there have certainly been hardships along the way, we have been fortunate in so many ways, including our family traditions of mutual support, peace and love, and especially our religion, the second “R”.

We say “especially our religion” because as we have aged, we realize more and more how much this “R” has provided to us, fostering peace and love throughout our family history – and endowing us with the feeling of fulfillment and joy in our

lives. It is no surprise, and today it is well supported in the psychological world, that religious people are happier than non-religious people.

Sadly, however, religion is in a decline and the world is becoming more and more secular. As a result, a growing number of our fellow human beings are becoming self-centered, angry and divisive, and hence, more stressed out and troubled, and less happy.

Without a religious anchor, people are set adrift in the search for values, and wind up being influenced by what I call CHIB (Corruption, Hypocrisy, Idol Worship and Brainwashing), without even realizing it. But even in the secular world people still have a spirit that needs to be nourished. As the Greeks said centuries ago, we must feed our body, mind and spirit. Today, as a result of this need, many people try to reap the benefits of religion by turning to secular substitutes, like meditation or yoga – sadly, they are weak replacements.

Our next observation is that as we have gone through life, it is quite clear to us that the people we associate with, that is, our relationships (the third “R”), make a huge difference to us – in our accomplishments and rewards. We often say how blessed we were to have found each other at such a young age, and to have gone through our lives together.

But there are many other people, too numerous to list here, that have had an incredibly positive effect on our lives. In general, they certainly include our parents, other family members and friends as well as numerous nuns, priests, teachers and colleagues in our professional lives.

But the highlight in building meaningful relationships, which we learned from our religious principles, and has been supported by our lifetime experiences, is the importance of giving, not receiving. We have always strived to give, give, give, and do so without expecting anything in return. Here, we’re not necessarily talking charity, but actions in our

everyday lives. Sandra often uses the term “working together.” It has been part of her life’s philosophy.

One effect of giving is that it often begets a relationship, which has the power to influence not just family and friends, but one’s education, careers, and even side ventures.

Relationships have been the key to our pursuit of our life’s mission.

The modern “networking” is a rather corrupt version of this third “R”. Today this means getting the names and contact information of people you meet who might be able to help you. “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.” It might pay off in some instances, but it is rather self-centered. The missing element is the fulfillment one experiences with giving, without expecting any reward.

Look at people who are in religious life, or in other charitable roles. They get enormous fulfillment in their lives just by giving and not receiving – it is their life’s work.

The prayer of St. Francis, our favorite prayer, captures this best. Check it out in Box 6.4. Another picture of this philosophy is captured in our little booklet “Paul and Sandra’s Guidance for a Happy and Fulfilling Life.”

We urge all of our children, family and descendants to carry the values of the three “Rs” forward and through them find the joy and fulfillment in their lives that God intended.

May God bless you all,

Sandra and Paul