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Count your blessings

There is a wonderful saying that encourages us to “plan as if we’ll live forever, but to live as if we’ll die tomorrow.” Even though the events of Sept. 11 occurred more than nine years ago, if the events of that day taught us anything, they have reminded us to count our blessings and live each day to the fullest.

The rubble of Lower Manhattan sent us a wake-up call that told us it was time for a reality check. It reminded us life is short and we often get no advance notice when our ticket is going to be canceled.

We may not fully understand the significance of the Sept. 11 events for many more years to come. Certainly, as a nation, we saw the immediate changes in travel and increased levels of security. We saw resurgence in patriotism and a change in the tone of politics. Those things were obvious and important, but the big changes, the ones our children and grandchildren will remember, will probably be more subtle. The big changes will continue to happen over time, and they will happen one person at a time.

The big changes I pray for, even after nine years, are changes in our attitudes, in our daily actions, in what we strive for and in how we treat one another.

The big changes, as I have heard many folks mention over the years, will be whether these tragic events remain only traumatic and appalling, or whether they persist in inspiring and challenging us to be better.

Let us persevere in becoming more caring, more tolerant, appre-

ciative of differences, clearer about our values and our priorities.

Let us, once again, clarify our dreams, re-commit to pursuing our highest aspirations and demonstrate the best that is in us.

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are,” said Theodore Roosevelt many years ago. Where are you right now? Dwelling in the past or living in the present?

Your past is simply your past. It need not predict the possibilities. At any given time, and what time better than this coming year, for you to choose a new direction and create a new tomorrow.

Start now — wherever you are — and begin realizing your potential and giving the world the best you have to offer.

A thought for you to reflect on — what important goal, achievement or major challenge have you been putting off while you sit around waiting for “just the right moment.” Don’t put it off another day! Take action — safe, reasonable, cautious action if you wish — but take action. As the Nike commercial says, “Just do it!”

As a speaker, workshop leader, teacher and career coach who believes her calling is to help others find and fulfill their potential, I urge you to pursue your dreams with a passion, as though you could not possibly fail.

On track two of my CD, “Dr. Shirley’s Motivational Moments,” the topic is “Passion.” The words go like this:

“Isn’t it interesting how so many

times our inner spirit, our passion, can turn gray before our hair. Webster’s Dictionary defines passion as an intense emotional drive or excitement. Is there some aspect of your life about which you are really passionate? Does that passion shine through or has it grown dull and gray? My friend, you are never too old to be excited about something. Wake up every morning with a passion for life, a passion for your field of endeavor, a passion for giving the world your best and a passion for achieving your dreams.”

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not turn back the clock, we cannot rewind, yet we can live our lives with passion, with enthusiasm, with love, with integrity and with considering the eloquent words of Voltaire, “God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well.”

Eleanor Roosevelt reminds us, “Life was meant to be lived ... One must never, for whatever reason, turn one’s back on life.” My encouragement to us all as we travel our journey through life is to truly live, love and treasure every moment. Best wishes for much success in all of your endeavors within the coming year!

For more information on Dr. White’s programs and publications, visit www.successimages.com or call (225) 769-2307. ●