
Subject: 2015 Thanksgiving Missive from Paul Stewart

From: Paul A. Stewart, Certified Licensing Professional <pas@pascoventures.com>

As our American Thanksgiving holiday approaches this Thursday, I have much for which to be thankful this year — my family and I are healthy and happy, and PASCO Ventures continues to prosper.

For all of this and so much more, I am thankful, but the most notable item this year is that **my wife Susan and I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary** this December 20th. It's astonishing to believe that 40 years have passed since two naïve 20-year-olds, who didn't know much about what marriage entailed, said "I do."

For this year's annual Thanksgiving missive, I initially thought that "40 Lessons I've Learned From My 40 Years of Marriage" might be interesting. On reflection, however, that sounded **way** too long for you to read ... and for me to write ... so I decided instead to share with you the top 10 lessons that Susan and I have learned from our 40 years of marriage.

Even if you're not currently married, or have never been married, I believe at least some of the lessons I've learned from marriage are also applicable to life and work in general, so I hope you'll continue reading this even if you are not married.

My aspiration is that these selected lessons that I've learned might be a bit humorous, and perhaps even inspirational for you. Here goes:

1. **I've learned that sometimes life gets in the way of the best-laid plans.** When Susan and I married during our Junior year at Purdue University, my plan was to get my degree, return to my family farm and work from then on in our family seed business. I told Susan back then that we would live in the **same** house on the farm for the **rest** of our lives. That was SIX moves ago! We've gone from that first farm house, to a small town, to a high-rise in Boston, to Indianapolis, to San Diego, and then to two more houses in Indianapolis. Back in 1975, we never anticipated all of life's unexpected twists and turns. Our lives are SO much fuller than what we "planned" — and we've learned to become more resilient and flexible when life throws us curve balls and unexpected opportunities.
2. **I've learned to find — and frequent — a great marriage counselor.** In our second year of marriage, I was working 70+ hour weeks in our family seed business "to help build a future for us." Early on, I **felt** that Susan simply wasn't being supportive, so I found a great marriage counselor named George because I thought **Susan** needed an **attitude adjustment**. At our first counseling session, George quickly determined that ***I*** was the person who needed the attitude adjustment!!! George saved our marriage by recommending one fix that **now** seems very simple — he called it a "guaranteed evening" — he insisted that I go out and buy a calendar — and yes, for those of you who may be surprised by this, I did **not** have a datebook or calendar back then! Then ... in **red ink**, I had to commit **in advance** to Susan **just one evening** each week when I would actually show up **on time** and spend that evening with Susan — **without** doing **anything** related to **work!** (EEK! That was nearly impossible for me to agree to do back then, but I agreed to do it ... did it ... and it worked.)
3. **I've learned not to yell at each other unless the house is on fire.** I'm embarrassed to admit that both Susan and I **have** yelled at each other over the years, but George, our wonderful marriage counselor (see item #2 above) taught us to work through our disagreements without yelling at each other. We're both still working on that ... :-) ... and no, our house has never been on fire.
4. **I've learned that "if Mama 'ain't happy, 'ain't nobody happy!"** 'Nuff said. Susan's note: Because Mama always knows what's best. ... :-) ...
5. **I've learned that failures, disappointments and heartbreaks have come our way, and we have still been able to find ways to "stay the course" for whatever journey was ahead of us.** Susan's breast cancer — now 13 years ago — was a "two-by-four to the head" for me and all-consuming for our family at the time. That stressful experience, which was traumatic at the time, is now a fleeting memory that we often refer to as our "bump in the road of life."
6. **We've learned to frequently focus on "this moment" and appreciate that there are always wonderful moments, even during troubling times.** Susan and I have experienced life's normal bumps and disappointments, while also facing the deaths of parents and health crises while doing our best to raise two spirited, independent sons (who are both now living and working [yeah!] in Denver.) We try to take time to look at each other each day (often toasting each other with a glass of wine) and say to each other: "how could '**this moment**' be any better?"

7. **I've learned that taking ballroom dancing lessons as a couple is an enjoyable way to spend time together.** See my 2014 Thanksgiving Missive on the PASCO Ventures website (<http://pascoventures.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/PAS-2014-Thanksgiving-Missive.pdf>) if you did not see my missive from last year. To answer a question that you might ask, yes, we are **still** enjoying taking dance lessons!
8. **We've come to learn that memories and experiences are more meaningful than things.** Twenty years ago we joked that we had spent 20 years accumulating *stuff* and that it would take the rest of our lives to get rid of that same *stuff*. It seems like Susan still takes carloads of that same *stuff* to our church and Goodwill from time to time, and 20 years later, we still have an attic and closets full of *stuff* that we need to jettison. Instead of buying each other *stuff* as gifts, we now give each other and our children the gift of time together and experiences that create wonderful memories. (Three examples: ballroom dance lessons; scuba diving; and season ski passes as Christmas gifts to our two sons living in Denver.)
9. **I've learned that worshipping together is important.** Susan and I came from two very different Christian denominations. When we were married, we naïvely thought our faiths were essentially identical. Early on, though, it was a struggle for us to find a church where we both felt comfortable — and this was another topic George helped us with during our marriage counseling. Once we found common ground with our faith, our marriage became richer. As I've traveled the world and met people who worship in churches, synagogues, mosques or temples, I've learned that our faith in **something** bigger than ourselves provides a great foundation for deeper relationships with those we love.
10. **I've learned Andy Rooney's humorous reminder to us that "life is like a roll of toilet paper — the closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes"!** The years seem to fly by now, and when I was much younger, I could not imagine being married for 40 years. Now, we're halfway from being 20-year-old newlyweds to being 100 years old. Can't wait to see what the next 40 years will bring!

My warmest wishes to you for the upcoming holiday season, and may you have a healthy, peaceful and prosperous 2016!

All the best.

PAS.

PS – if for any reason you would prefer not to receive my Thanksgiving e-mail missives (the **only** uninvited communication that you will receive from me each year), please reply to me with the word REMOVE in the subject line of your reply and I will remove you from all such future communications. I understand the desire to reduce e-mail clutter and will graciously accept your wishes.

Paul A. Stewart, Certified Licensing Professional
Managing Director, PASCO Ventures LLC
Doing Deals That Help Make Our World a Better Place to Live™

and

Past President & Chairman, Board of Governors
Certified Licensing Professionals, Inc.
CLP website: www.licensingcertification.org

E-mail: pas@pascoventures.com
Phone: +1-317-590-1099
LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/thepaulstewart>

About PASCO Ventures (see www.pascoventures.com for more information):

- > We help some of the world's best inventors find, negotiate and consummate business deals with collaboration partners that develop and commercialize the novel technologies from these inventors.
- > We are a trusted board member and advisor to senior executives around the world.
- > We are an expert witness and mediator involving complex global licensing matters.

If you'll be attending one or more of these upcoming events, or in that city during that time, let me know so we can connect ...

- > **January 11-14, 2016 / San Francisco, CA:** JP Morgan healthcare conference.
 - > **February 14-17, 2016 / San Diego (Manchester Grand Hyatt):** AUTM Annual Meeting — speaker in session D2 entitled "*Understanding Global Cultures: Inventors and Licensees*".
-