



PUTTING
LIFE IN PERSPECTIVE

Appreciate the life you’ve been given, and live it to the fullest



▶an opinion of Anne Willman

The doctors said that there was supposed to be something “wrong” with me. They thought that I would be handicapped. Not “normal.”

After routine blood tests, my parents were told that there was a high chance that I would have a genetic disorder. The doctors suggested to my mom that she might want to have an abortion. My parents decided that termination wasn’t an option. I would live regardless of the advice of the doctors.

As it turned out, the doctors were wrong. But despite what the doctors and tests said, my parents stuck to their decision. They chose to give me life, not death.

I don’t know what my life would have been like if the tests had proven to be true. I will never know. But what I do know is that I have been given a chance. My parents made a commitment and have given me life. That having been said, I sometimes fall into bad habits and waste precious time.

Sometimes I complain — if it is about the amount of homework I receive on a weeknight, the social problems at school or that I only received five hours of sleep the night before. I even voice my opinions about what my family should

have for dinner and whine that my favorite jacket is in the laundry basket. I worry about the future and I sometimes feel sorry for myself. But all of those complaints fade away when I think about what I have been given — life.

Not until recently, have I started to understand the value of my short time on this planet.

I’ve had the opportunity to interact with people — people all over the community. I feel like I have a purpose, like I’m doing something bigger than myself.

During the past two years, I have made an effort to volunteer — at food pantries and homeless shelters, with Special Olympics and at the East used book sale and by tutoring.

Through my conversations and interactions with people, I learned lessons that have changed my thinking and attitude.

In my time helping the Special Olympics golf program, I’ve had the chance to connect with some of the most wonderful people I know. I look forward to seeing each and every one of those young adults. As I show them how to grip a golf club or pivot through the ball, I come to a pause and think to myself: *this is how I should be spending time.*

And when I volunteered for the used book sale — designing T-shirts and ringing up customers — I knew that I was contributing to something that would ultimately impact others. And again I came to the realization that *this is how my time should be spent.*

At the shelters and food pantries or even at school, as I mentor a student in the after school NHS tutoring program, I

begin to understand the importance of time.

After each activity, everything becomes clear. My priorities get back in order.

I sometimes regret that I haven’t lived life to the fullest. I’ve been given life and at times, I’m wasting it. I have worried (and still worry) about minute situations. Hours are spent on Facebook, Twitter and watching multiple episodes of Criminal Minds on Hulu. I wish that I had the power to reverse time like the Minutemen in one of Disney Channel’s original movies (another movie that has consumed my time). The sad reality is that nothing can bring back the wasted time. Hours have been consumed worrying about people’s perception of me and what was the “cool thing” to do. Instead of truly being empathetic, I have been absent-minded – concerned only of myself.

Right now, I’m trying to make the transition. I’m making small steps — lists are made up of simple tasks: cleaning my room, washing my car or reading a chapter from a book. These are things that can and should be completed in little time with the idea that I can use the remaining time being productive — achieving goals and helping others. I hope that these habits will form before I head to Manhattan next year for college. I plan to accomplish goals academically, athletically and spiritually. At this point, I am struggling and it will always be a constant struggle, especially when I will be given more free time in the coming few months. I’m determined to make the most of the next several years. Worth the life my parents chose to give me.

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Questions?

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