

Shared Interest

How much rain did you get?

The house was still dark as I sat in my chair one morning this past month. A thunderstorm was rolling in, and the pitter-patter sound of rain hitting the window filled my ears. While I should have been opening my Bible to read that day's devotion, my mind drifted back to memories of conversations with my grandfather. A farmer his entire life, Grandpa Bill passed away four years ago this coming July. One of my heroes in life, Grandpa Bill lived out the values I espouse today: **Integrity, Hard Work, and Humility**. What brought him to my mind that rainy April morning? The rain.

For as long as I can remember, prior to his passing, I made it a priority to call Grandpa weekly to simply check-in. Both of us avid sports fans, we had no trouble carrying on a conversation, but inevitably the conversation would transition to him asking, "How much rain did you get from the last storm?" If you know anything about farmers, the weather is never far from their mind. Therefore, it was only natural for him to see how our local rainfall compared to his out on the farm. After a couple times of being unable to answer due to the fact that I didn't own a rain gauge, I decided that, although I didn't really care to know the details of our rainfall, I would purchase one so I could provide an accurate answer.

And that's when it hit me, and my eyes swelled with tears. As the rain began to fall that morning, I missed answering that question. I missed those conversations. Reporting how much rain we had received was another 'shared interest'. Not one that came as natural as discussing sports, but one I had intentionally sought out, knowing it would build a bridge in our relationship.

I wish I could say I am always intentional about looking for ways to identify a 'shared interest' with others. I am not. Most of the time I am selfish, focusing on myself, and unaware of the missed opportunity. At the same time, my life experiences have taught me that most often we tend to enjoy being in the company of those we have 'shared interests'. Don't believe me? I encourage you to answer the following questions:

- **Who are your closest friends?**
- **Do you have much or little in common with them?**

My guess is your answer is the same as mine. **Much**

If it is true that we tend to enjoy spending time with those we have 'shared interests', then here's a more important question: **What are you doing to build bridges of 'shared interest' with those you love?** If you make an intentional effort in this area, I believe you will be on your way to mending the broken relationships and enhancing those that are already strong.

Below are a few examples in our family of intentionality with 'shared interests':

- **Watching Sports:** Watching sports would not naturally be Nikki's preference, but she invests time watching Ben's favorite teams, so they have more to talk about.
- **Wordle:** Watching Ava start each morning doing her Wordle word while she ate breakfast, I downloaded the app and we have been playing each other ever since.
- **Fantasy Football:** After years of saying "no" out of fear it would become too much of a distraction, I decided to start an office league because Ben wanted to play. The first year we had a team together, and ever since we have each had our own.

'Shared interests' are not built by accident. Intentionality is required. **And the time we each have left is unknown.** While I wish I still had the opportunity to answer grandfather's question, I will forever fondly remember him asking, "**How much rain did you get?**"

INTENTIONAL LIVING CALL TO ACTION: Take an interest in something new so that you can share it with someone you love.

