

“The Little Things”

At my wedding after the ceremony I asked my grandfather how he and Grandma lasted 60 years together. He replied “I just love her and remember the little things”. I wasn’t really sure what he meant until several months later and unfortunately I never told him that I’d figured it out. So I am telling him today. He was an engineer and understood that big things just a collection of little things, and that small changes have a way of having much larger effects than anyone can foresee. You all know that he was a lifelong golfer. I think it appealed to his engineering mind – golf played correctly is an orderly game made up entirely of little things. I was thirteen when he took me golfing for the first time and taught me how to play. I was twenty-six when he took me golfing for the last time. All the times we played together in between, he told me, often, “What wins golf games is not the long drives or the showy shots, it is the little things like chipping, the short game, the putting”. And he practiced what he preached – I’ve played with many different people over the last 20 years and I don’t think I ever saw anybody putt as well as he did.

I am not sure he intended this (or maybe he did – Grandpa was a pretty smart guy) but at the same time he was teaching me the little things about golf, he was teaching me that in general if you do the little things for long enough, eventually they add up to something big. For example, if you take enough 100 yard shots and short putts you can beat your grandson by 10 strokes even when he is taking much longer shots, since he also takes much longer putts. Somewhere along the way I forgot this, or never really understood what the real lesson was, at least until I’d been married for a few months

I realized the true value of what he taught me during that first golf game (and what he was telling me at my wedding) through getting married and the subsequent birth of my daughter. I am blessed with a beautiful loving wife and a daughter who is my joy and inspiration. At the beginning of my marriage I didn’t know how to be a husband, and I had even less an idea of how to be a father when my daughter was born. After I got married I figured out it is the little things that mean the most, at least to my wife. Things such as a card or flowers just because, calling to see how her day is going, or even routine things like emptying the dishwasher or not dropping my clothes on the floor. She knows I do not like emptying the dishwasher and if I am going to wear those jeans the next day, I think the floor is a fine place for them overnight. According to her anyway, these mean more to her than grand gestures like expensive jewelry or exotic trips ever will.

Doing the little things seems to be working equally well with my daughter. We play with her blocks and toys, I give her baths, change her diapers and galumph her on shoulder rides and push her on her swing. She puts stickers on my face. I kiss boobos and good nights and good mornings and sometimes middle-of-the nights. We read lots of books – often the same one 5 times in a row. And in return for me doing those little things and others, I get smiles in the morning when she wakes up that make my heart skip a beat. In the evenings when I get home from work she comes running from wherever

she is to give her Daddy a big hug as only she can. I know I've got the better part of that deal - there aren't enough little things in all the world that equal just one of her smiles. So Grandpa, thanks for teaching me the value of doing the little things. It has earned me the priceless love of my wife and daughter.