

Celebrating 65 Years

# J. Richard Coe

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In recent years I have wondered about attempting to write about what I have learned over the years. My memory is still reasonably good, and I am mindful of things I have said or done that I regret, as well as things for which I am especially grateful. Having learned from both what I call poor decisions and wise decisions, I have been intrigued by the idea of getting some life lessons in writing. I have found that my thinking can be focused and perhaps better expressed when I put thoughts in writing.

While writing in more depth on my life lessons is still just an idea, another thought came to me recently. Why not write out 65 things I learned by age 65? My starting approach was – “What things have I learned over 65 years that I would like to pass on to family members and friends?”

Of course I have learned much from others, and there is something in me that would like to name names and provide credit whether or not what they passed on is reflected in my “65 Things”. At this point I will simply state that I am grateful to all who have passed on wisdom and life lessons to me.

I was born August 19, 1949. Deb and I were married May 29, 1982 so we have been married over 32 years. Our son David and his wife Danielle have one son – Colter James Coe. Our son Doug and his wife Caitlin have two daughters – Mackenzie Grace Coe and Bailey Claire Coe.

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# Over 65 years I have learned:

- 1) That having parents who loved each other, my brother, and me facilitated a sense of security, confidence and well-being that has been extremely helpful.
- 2) That even though I was born into a wonderful family I was self-centered from the get-go.
- 3) That pride was also with me from the beginning and I did not want to admit to wrong.
- 4) That teasing my younger brother Alan was foolish and counter-productive. My mother was right to stop the car on East Central and explain that she would not start driving again until we stopped fighting.
- 5) That it did not hurt me (even though it didn't feel good) to not be among the first picked on grade school teams.
- 6) That my dad was right when he taught us that good friends are rare and precious and that our brother should be and could be a really good friend for life. Alan is!
- 7) That even though I had wonderful privileges growing up (for example, travel to 47 states and two summers in Europe) my attitude often left much to be desired and I took much for granted.
- 8) That my dad gave me a life-long gift when he gave me the opportunity to join him on a business trip to Washington, D.C. (and bring a friend) if I would earn money to cover 50% of my expenses (I learned to work a variety of jobs and enjoyed making money).
- 9) That I was not well prepared for junior high (now middle school) and adolescence, and am still not sure how one would prepare for such.
- 10) That my neighborhood paper route for *The Wichita Eagle and Beacon* was formative both in the discipline required (4:50 a.m. wakeup) and the personal interaction on evenings when I would "collect for *The Eagle*".
- 11) That running on the East High cross country team (typically low B team or high C team) in the Jim Ryun era was beneficial both for the camaraderie and the discipline of training with others and on my own.
- 12) That it helps to have a purpose beyond oneself, and I got a taste of this through "Up with People", "Sing-Out Kansas", and Mackinac College.
- 13) That being elected Vice President of the Sophomore Class at Mackinac College was not nearly as important as it seemed at the time.
- 14) That I am still relieved that I was not elected Community Council President at Macalester College during the campus unrest and protests of the Vietnam war era.
- 15) That being highly motivated to study during my junior and senior years at Macalester College helped pave the way for an excellent opportunity with Continental Bank (then Chicago's largest bank).
- 16) That flunking mid-term exams does not mean failure in the class because amazing recoveries are possible (Constitutional Law at Macalester; Linear Programming at The University of Chicago) with lots of work.
- 17) That for one used to doing well it can be quite a shock when things seem to be going poorly on multiple fronts (early months in Continental Bank training program; 2nd quarter at The University of Chicago; girlfriend problems).
- 18) That bitterness (my promotion to Commercial Banking Officer at Continental Bank seemed slow) is not only a terrible feeling, but is counter-productive.
- 19) That my dating of a number of women reflected some combination of my desires, perceived needs, and ego.
- 20) That concurrent romantic involvement with two women was one of the worst mistakes of my life (I informed each of the other).
- 21) That end of romance broken hearted feelings have long been replaced with deep gratitude for the love and partnership Deb and I share and enjoy.



- 22) That God can and does use all kinds of motivations (going to Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago to meet women) for His purposes (I started listening to sermons and got in a small group).
- 23) That Catherine Marshall was correct in writing in *Beyond Ourselves* that if one tells God he wants Jesus to come first in life above all else there will be something of a test or a crisis (for me, the end of a romance that I hoped would lead to marriage, and a glimpse of the peace that passes understanding).
- 24) That disrupted plans and apparent failure (expected to manage a U.S. Senate campaign and was terminated after clash with the candidate) can pave the way for something better.
- 25) That there is great benefit to being exposed to even one person who loves Jesus and others and who radiates God's grace.
- 26) That starting to know Christ in a deeper way (1977 & 1978) can be hindered when the emphasis is on The Bible rather than Christ.
- 27) That disappointment and pain can either lead toward bitterness or toward compassion and tenderness.
- 28) That the couples from whom Deb and I sought counsel before we were married were right in emphasizing the importance of communication.
- 29) That when I got married at age 32 I was naive to consider myself a good communicator (it took 7 years of marriage before I even started to realize how poor I was both in listening and in expressing my feelings).
- 30) That listening to and acting on advice from a wise marriage counselor committed to helping marriages can make a lasting difference.
- 31) That marriages benefit not only from quality communication, but from Jesus at the center and from physical intimacy.
- 32) That the joy from being a father exceeds the anticipation of such.
- 33) That "how quickly they grow up" is true and that Deb and I will never regret the time we spent with David and Doug in a variety of ways and settings.
- 34) That although I was "the world's best Jello maker" in my 20s, I was past my prime when I gave a demonstration to Doug's classmates at The Independent School.
- 35) That there was benefit in flexible work hours as our boys were growing up and in deferring my "overdrive" emphasis on my work until our sons were in college.
- 36) That after many years I still enjoy memories of fun and adventures with David and Doug and that some of my best memories are father-son trips with each of them.
- 37) That a) learning to selectively be an advocate for Christ in the lives of others and b) being open to others being an advocate for Christ in my life together changed my life for the better.
- 38) That I believe I know why I experienced frequent headaches from about age 23 to age 45, only occasional headaches from age 46 to age 62, and very few headaches since then.
- 39) That I am still amazed I married such a beautiful woman who has become more and more beautiful to me over time.
- 40) That a good wife is indeed a gift from God and I do not have words to express my gratitude to Him for Deb and for what we have experienced together in our 32 years of marriage.
- 41) That the grace of God makes a vast amount of difference in a marriage.
- 42) That although it is rare to see profound change in people, it can happen, and I have seen it happen in Deb's life.
- 43) That the best kind of friends to have are those who love Jesus and, better yet, know Christ as their life.



# Over 65 years I have learned:

- 44) That it is not tragic either personally or professionally if I do not get *The Wall Street Journal* read every day.
- 45) That it is a huge blessing to have work I really enjoy as I have (and continue to) in providing financial planning and investment management services.
- 46) That the blessing of good health looms larger and larger over the years, and that it is never too early to take care of one's body and health.
- 47) That acquaintances are nice, casual friendships are good, and close friendships are priceless.
- 48) That it is wonderful to be able to laugh at myself and my mechanical ineptitude has facilitated this.
- 49) That if the stool starts to run and Deb is in the hospital after giving birth to Doug that morning there are alternatives to calling her after hours to ask what to do.
- 50) That if I ever again decide to do battle with a mouse in the bathtub and use a mountain boot as a weapon, one hit is preferable to two hits.
- 51) That when the closet mushroom light I screwed in fell on my head days later, God may have been wanting to get through to me on something.
- 52) That my leadership role in the successful 2007 No Casinos campaign was simultaneously worthwhile, exhilarating, somewhat intoxicating, an ego trip, and rather toxic in my relationship with Deb, and I would not do it again.
- 53) That even though for the last year I have been more excited about my work and our services than ever, I am grateful to be transitioning to a 4 day work week (from what has typically been 6 days) with my 65th birthday.
- 54) That much of my life I have been religious and almost all of my life I have been responsible, and there is a very real sense in which both have been obstacles for me in coming to know Christ in me as my life.
- 55) That our Father has such great love for us that He will allow all kinds of things to happen to us to draw us deeper into Christ.
- 56) That although things looked bleak to me during the most difficult time in my life in the fall of 2011 while dealing with acute insomnia after something of a panic attack, that time actually paved the way for me to start to know Christ in me as my life and for the best years of my life.
- 57) That my biggest battles have been in my mind.
- 58) That although I perceive myself to be in the early stages of knowing Christ as my life, I cannot go back and I want the mind renewal to continue.
- 59) That I could have benefited throughout my life had I been a more eager learner from my parents throughout their lives, but in some ways I am still learning from them (my dad enjoyed working with his hands and hoped I could also enjoy such and I have experienced more of that in my 60s and especially since we moved to Four Oaks).
- 60) That if I consider myself too busy to walk in the mornings I am too busy, and sometimes I am.
- 61) That although I really do not know how I would deal with a serious health issue for me or a close family member or the death of one, I find a growing confidence in the scriptural truth I memorized decades ago that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.
- 62) That my gratitude to God continues to grow, both for basic things such as a night's sleep and another day, and for more weighty matters.
- 63) That grandchildren also add a whole new dimension to life, yet in a different way than children.
- 64) That although problems abound, it is possible to experience love, joy, and peace, and I do.
- 65) That I thank God our Father who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.