

Stop! Look! Listen!

(Not for Trains—for Life!)

The forgotten library book. Perfectly organized closets. A new car. An old shoe on the front porch. Ugly words. A Favorite television show. The “to do” list. The hobby. These things are all part of life. Some are desirable. Some are not. Are any of them truly important?

The advice “Stop! Look! Listen!” is good advice. It is useful when used for its original intent, that of not crossing the train tracks until you have taken those steps. We would be wise to follow that advice often as we proceed through life.

Yesterday I had a lot of things that I had planned to do. I really didn’t get started on my plans. But, looking back, I felt good about my day. I believe this is because I had the opportunity to stop and evaluate a few things that were important. Then I took the time to change my plans because something was more important than what I had originally planned. I decided to write this article at the risk of seeming preachy, simply because I knew that it might come in handy for myself when I find myself caught up in daily living instead of life again.

Each of us has an idea of what is of utmost importance in this life. When we determine to cling to those things of most value, we get the most out of life. In taking upon the role of teacher, it is fairly evident that one thing we value greatly is the education of our children. But, even more than the education, we value the child. If the relationship between parent and child is not working well, how can we expect to influence their education in a meaningful way? In applying the “Stop! Look! Listen!” principle to our schooling experience, we can ask ourselves some questions.

- ✓ Am I more concerned about how much it looks like we have progressed? Or am I making sure the child has gained the knowledge desired to continue?
- ✓ Is there an underlying reason why the child can’t seem to concentrate today?
- ✓ Am I pushing the child to get through the material or am I instilling a love of learning?
- ✓ As we reach toward our goals, am I allowing the child to set the standard of acceptable behavior, or am I remembering that I am the one who is in charge of guiding the child toward that which is best for him/her?
- ✓ What is most important in this situation?

While it is always good to have a plan in mind for your day, sometimes the best thing you can do is “Stop! Look! And listen!” because there might be something more important that needs to get done. More often than not, taking the time to fix the most important things will save you time in the long run. I believe that if I had not taken time for the most important things yesterday, I would be sorely wishing I had in a couple of months from now when the problem intensified.

We are at work building the lives of our children. Through educating them at home, we have an even greater influence over them. This article is just meant to be a little reminder that the daily grind, the fuss over schoolwork, the messy bedroom, money matters, etc. were never meant to take precedence over the things of utmost importance. (Note to self: Thanks! I know I will need the reminder!)

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