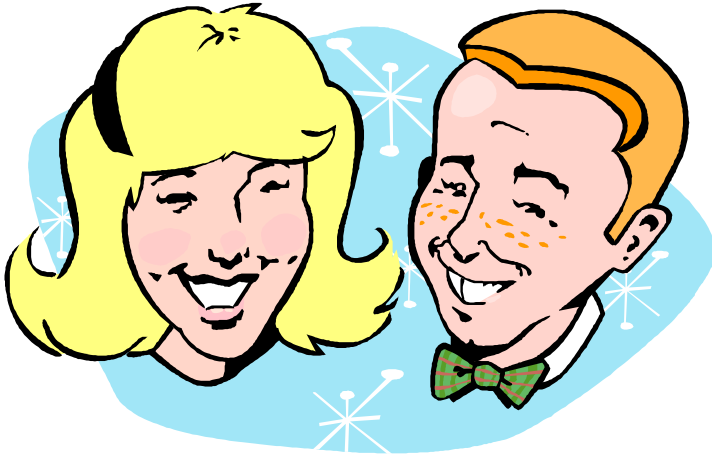


Booklet 13

Helps for Young People



You Are

12 Truths For Awesome Living



You Are ...

Would you have guessed a baby born one winter night could hold so much in his tiny hands?

By Diane Eble

Wonderful Counsellor

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."--Isaiah 9:6/

It's comforting to have someone who will just listen when I'm hurt and need to cry.

I can come to you whenever I want.

You always have time for me.

You are a wise and Wonderful Counsellor. (You run the whole world,

after all, so I know I can trust you with my life.)

When I'm confused and need to talk, you always offer good advice.

I can always count on your wisdom.

Mighty God

I see your might in the waves that crash against a rocky seacoast.

I see your strength when lightning streaks through the sky, and when thunder shakes the earth.

I remember your power when fire blazes through a forest, turning everything into charred stubble.

With the power of life and death in your hands, nothing I ask could be too hard for you to accomplish.

When my requests are in your will, you'll shove aside mountains to answer my prayers.

Everlasting Father

You always understand, always forgive, always deliver on your promises.

You're always interested in me, concerned about even the smallest details in my life (not to mention your concern for the billions of other people on this planet).

Always providing for all my needs, always gentle, always patient, always kind.

People may let me down, but you will always be there.

I long to feel the warmth of your huge hugs, to climb into your lap and forget about grades and dates and who likes me and who doesn't.

I want to rest in your loving arms forever.

Prince of Peace

The news blares of violence in the streets, in the schools and everywhere.

And in my school, too.

Misunderstanding reigns among family and friends.

Stereotypes and racial tension push people apart.

And the poor hate the rich.

And guys use girls and girls manipulate guys.

Sometimes I wonder what kingdom you're prince over.

But then I see those who love you:

People of different races praying together.

The rich sharing with the poor.

Respect flowing from guy to girl and back again.

Your people love you and this spills out to a hate-filled world.

Wonderful Counsellor, guide me forever by your wisdom.
Mighty God, help me trust in your strength. **Everlasting Father**, keep me in your care. **Prince of Peace**, I want you to rule my heart.

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12 Truths for Awesome Living

Anna O'Connor says having cancer has taught her to live life to its fullest.
Interview with Chris Lutes

Every once in a while, you meet someone who just kind of shakes your world. You're cruising along all nice and smooth, then wham, you're face-to-face with a person who makes you stop and take a good, long look at life.

For me, that someone happens to be Anna Elizabeth O'Connor. Anna, 19, has a serious form of cancer called neuroblastoma.

Not long ago, I got a chance to read a scholarship essay Anna wrote about having cancer. I then met her for lunch a couple of times. The first time we met, Anna picked at her food because her stomach was upset from some difficult cancer treatments. The second time, the day before she was to begin another round of

unpleasant treatments, she was feeling a lot better. It showed in her gentle smile and sparkly blue eyes.

This is not to say Anna ever feels all that great. The aggressive cancer treatments cause her lots of pain. Anna's cancer is extremely life-threatening and usually affects small babies or young children. Anna found out she had this devastating form of cancer the summer before her senior year in high school. She's now a college sophomore.

Here are just a few of the lessons about life and faith Anna would like me to pass along to you.

Enjoy Life, Have Fun. Anna says: "Before I got cancer, I was like, 'I'm gonna study hard and I'm gonna get straight A's.' But life is about having fun, too." The first time I had lunch with Anna, she'd just gotten back from a Lake Michigan dunes trip with some friends. Another time I was supposed to have lunch with her, we had to reschedule because her family had taken a spontaneous trip to the Colorado Rockies. Because of Anna's illness, fun times with friends and family have become extremely important.

Use Your Experiences to Help Others. Anna's currently studying psychology and desires to one day work with kids who have cancer. She's not waiting to get her degree to start helping, though. She's attended camps where she's touched the lives of many young cancer patients. She's also had several opportunities to speak at fundraising events for children with cancer.

Admit It's Hard to Feel Good About Yourself Sometimes. Anna says: "During my first cancer treatment, I lost all my hair and I lost 45 pounds. I was beyond skinny. I lost a lot of self-confidence during that time." Then there were the surgical tubes sticking out of her upper chest. And while the tubes are now gone, the scars remain. There's also the 13-inch red scar that runs across her stomach—where the surgeons removed a large tumour. During high school, guys seemed to distance themselves from her and when she'd look in the mirror she'd feel anything but pretty.

Why Looks Don't Really Matter. Anna says: "When you have cancer, you discover what's important in life. You find out that your looks don't really matter, especially when you look at the bigger picture. It was a hard lesson for me to learn, too. In high school, physical appearance was such a major thing. But really, it doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter."

Everyone Needs a Little Escape Now and Then. While Anna has done some reading to help her deal with her illness, she prefers to keep most of her non-school reading light and fun. Anna says: "I've read one cancer book, but I'm surrounded by cancer! I want to read books that are fun. For example, I've reread the entire Narnia fantasy series by C.S. Lewis."

Be Grateful. In the essay she shared with me, which was written as a letter to herself, Anna writes: "Don't view anyone as more fortunate [than you]. You just never know how their life, or yours, will turn out. You have a wonderful, loving family and friends that will support you through all you do, so put your focus on them and the many ways you've been blessed."

Share God Whenever You Can. Before she got cancer, Anna didn't talk to people about her faith. But now she realizes how important it is to tell others about God. Anna says: "I use my cancer experience as a way to get into a conversation about things that are most important in life. When it comes to witnessing, I just have a lot more courage than I used to have."

Everybody Needs Friends Who Will Make You Laugh. While Anna has had some friends who talk to her about her illness, she has had other friends who are real uncomfortable with the "c" word. For Anna, that's OK: "I had a group of friends in high school I could just have fun with. No deep, serious conversations. They'd invite me to stuff and it was always a good time. It was actually nice not to have to talk to them about my cancer."

Choose to Fully Live. In her essay, Anna wrote these words to herself: "I have met only two kinds of cancer patients. Half become very bitter toward their disease and dwell on their misfortune because they think their world revolves around them and owes them something; they become very depressed. The

other half of cancer patients do not ignore the fact that they are dying, but choose to take advantage of all that is good in life. They genuinely care about others despite what is happening to them. When they become sad, they have a good long cry, but afterward they decide there is nothing they can do about the situation, so they pick themselves up and take advantage of the life left in them. Become the second person, Anna! One of the most important choices you will make in life is the attitude you adopt. This determines the kind of person you'll be."

Sometimes Silence is Best. For the most part, Anna says the people in her life know when to talk and when to just listen. But, then again, there are those who just don't know how to keep their mouths shut. Anna says: "When I lost all my hair, there was this one woman who saw me at church in my wig and said something like, 'Oh, your wig looks cute, but I liked your real hair better because it was curly.' People just said the stupidest things sometimes. They didn't mean to hurt me, but they did. Sometimes I'd stay home from church just because I didn't want to listen to people's comments and advice." Anna encourages you to be very slow to give advice, especially if you don't have the personal experience to back up your advice.

Apologize and Move On. Anna says: "Try not to do stuff you'll regret later. But if you do make mistakes, forgive yourself and ask forgiveness from others and move on. Apologize and move on. Don't hang on to your guilt and regrets."

Love the Simple Things. In her essay, Anna wrote these words to herself: "Become aware of the simple pleasures of life: a cup of warm soup that slides down your throat warming you from the inside out. ... Relish every conversation; listen to others and seek to pry new truth from their words. Hunt for every detail of life like a child; you will find an awe that ... fills your whole soul with a wonder that calms you and gives you an uncomplicated peace."

**Some parts of this article were taken from an essay Anna wrote, which won her a \$5,000 college scholarship. For the essay, Anna was given this topic: "The Letter I Would Like to Have Received from a Friend or Relative During My Illness."*

If you know someone with cancer, Anna encourages you to pray for them and be sure to send them "thinking of you" cards. "When I had to stay around home because I wasn't feeling well, I would get really lonely and sad," says Anna. "It would mean so much to me when I would get a card in the mail. The best thing you can do for friends who have cancer is send them cards to let them know how much you appreciate them."

Bloopers in Church Bulletins

If you are going to be hospitalized for an operation, contact the pastor. Special prayer also for those who are seriously sick by request.

Usher will eat latecomers.

Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Ladies don't forget the rummage sale - this is a good chance to get rid of things not worth keeping. Bring your husbands.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person(s) you want remembered.

A new loudspeaker system has been installed in the church. It was given by one of our members in honour of his wife.

Miss Charlene Mason sang, "I Will Not Pass This Way Again," giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.