

TOOLS For Spike And Nails



Building A Better Life

**By
Gary Younglove**



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Gary Younglove
28540 Jim Dandy Circle
Fair Oaks Ranch, TX 78015

email: bigg@texas.net

DEDICATION

This book of tools is dedicated to my sons

– Gregory Younglove –
and
– Geoffrey Younglove –

(whom I called Spike and Nails for many years).

As they build their lives and search for happiness, my prayer is that they avoid the mistakes I made during the same process.

FOREWORD

Dear Spike and Nails,

Advice given when not requested is usually advice ignored, especially when the recipient is young. Many times I desperately wanted advice, but there was no one to whom I could turn. I stumbled through my problems then, making the mistakes many others have made, angering people, hurting them sometimes, and learning in the process what good advice might have helped me avoid. On many occasions I recorded my lessons in my journal, in my writings, and on small scraps of paper that were handy. I wrote my thoughts and how I felt at the time and often what I intended to do about the error of my ways. I also wrote many of my lessons in letters to my family and friends.

This book shares some of the lessons I learned and recorded on these many different pieces of

paper. I offer these lessons from my heart even though I know, at your young age, they are advice not wanted. You will not escape the conclusion, at some time in your lives, that you have become saturated with guidance to the point of rebellion or, at least, listening but not hearing or feeling. Your refusal to believe those who have only experience as proof will be but one cost of your youth – as it was of mine. However, if you should someday want to ask me for help and I'm not there, perhaps you will find this book useful.

Each entry in this book comes from my journals, writings and letters. In all cases, I was often writing to myself. As I extracted these lessons from lengthy narrative for this book, I substituted the pronoun "you" for the personal "I" wherever I could. The meaning didn't change and it further convinced me that if you learn to use these tools well, you will never have to write similar notes to yourself. Some entries I left unchanged as they are not so much instructions for a good life as they are conclusions of life itself.

As I have already indicated, the thoughts in this book come from my experience. I am still

learning lessons through this process. You will someday come to know the value of experience. Until you do, please accept the fact that my love for you is behind each thought in this book. It is a love that has no equal in my life. It is also a love I can't adequately describe in spite of my extensive experience with it. It is a love you will know and understand only when you have children of your own.

Dad

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANGER	10
ANXIETY	12
CREATIVITY	16
DEATH	19
DESIRE	21
EDUCATION	22
ENEMIES	26
FAILURE	29
FEAR	32
FREEDOM	34
FRIENDSHIP	36
GROWING OLD	41

TOOLS

GROWING UP	47
HAPPINESS	51
HATE	54
HONESTY	57
HOPE	60
HUMILITY	63
HUMOR	67
I TOLD YOU SO	70
IF ONLY	72
LIFE	74
LONELINESS	78
LOVE	82
LOYALTY	87
LUCK	89

TOOLS

MEMORIES	92
MONEY	100
PATIENCE	103
PATRIOTISM	104
PRAISE	106
PRIDE	108
PROMISES	110
REGRET	112
RIDICULE	114
SORROW	117
SUCCESS	120
THEOLOGY	126
TIME	129

TOOLS

TIMING	132
TRUTH	135
WORK	137
WORRY	143
YOUTH	146

INTRODUCTION

Growing up and growing old are two inevitable facts of life. One cannot be without the other. You will never stop growing old nor growing up. What matters most is how well you do both together. In this context there is only one stage to life – growing. The growing up and growing old are but parts of the central action. Sometimes you will get these two parts separated or leave one behind in pursuit of the other. Whenever that happens, things will go wrong, the balance will be upset, you will stop growing, and you will lose a little of yourself forever.

My hope is that you will learn how to keep growing in spite of the obstacles others place in your way – that you will never stop growing old nor growing up. The secret to a happy life is knowing that you will always grow older without help from anyone. Growing up, on the other hand, is entirely within your control. When you do decide to grow up, never lose hold of the youth you knew before you grew old. That is the key.

TOOLS

That is what will sustain you through periods of despair and seeming hopelessness. I know it. I have been there. It works.

These few words I have captured throughout my life are for you. I offer them not as advice, but as a series of very short stories of a life of growing old and growing up.



ANGER



You may shudder in the face of his anger, but if he is an honest man you can relax in the knowledge of his fairness.

If you can resist the temptation to strike back in haste and allow the small things to run off your back as easily as those things you can't control, you will also have a greater influence on your future.

I used to feel guilty every time I finished expressing my anger to you. I did this whether or not the anger was justified. Only recently have I learned that some anger is necessary if you are to be healthy. It is only that anger whose expression is without love that is damaging. I have worked hard to keep my anger from interfering with my love.

No one can make you angry. It is a choice you make on your own.



ANXIETY



If you ever suffer anxiety, you will come to know it as the most insidious, self-created sickness in your life. You'll tell yourself it is folly to heed its subtle demands. Yet, when it calls, you'll do its bidding in the face of your knowledge. It destroys dreams and ruins lives. It draws the victim into a trap of fear until physical symptoms begin. If you are ever trapped, you must defeat it totally or it can kill you.