

Greetings to family, friends, and colleagues around the world!

The new year has arrived! I am writing today, as promised, to share your lessons learned in 2011, in the hopes that they will help you develop in 2012!

Thank you so much to the nearly 30 of you from all over the world who shared what was in your hearts and on your minds. Without further ado, here are the lessons, in alphabetical order by first name of the author!

## 2011 READER LESSONS

- One of the greatest gifts I can give is to be genuinely happy for others and genuinely invested in what they say. **Amy, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- Life doesn't end for you when someone you love passes on. You need to take the time you need to morn before you are ready to move on, but your life does go on. And I think I had a little help from my very special guardian angel who continues to look after me. **Becky, Allentown, PA USA**
- When you're teaching a class, especially one like I was, where it was about the students' experiences at the university, I acted as more of a mentor and learned it's important to listen. The most successful classes were the ones where the students' questions lead the discussion. **Christina, Boston, MA USA**
- No matter what you may have been accused of, or what people may think of you, you are always right with God. It's been an amazing year. **David, New York, NY USA**
- The only way to heal a broken heart and overcome sadness is to open your heart to new love. This does not mean that you forget the past, but you move into the new love and accept it and help it grow by sharing the love you have to offer with others. **Debbie, Neffs, PA USA**
- Don't let your "things to do list" make you feel overwhelmed or under-accomplished. Instead at the end of the day, gather your thoughts with a cup of tea or a glass of wine and pat yourself on the back for at least one small or big thing you've done. **Farzin, Washington, DC USA**
- Life is good. it's that simple. And that it is our quest – to make it even better. **Inga, Wurzburg, Germany.**
- Don't underestimate the value of you. After having visited with so many of my friends and family the last several months, I've really come to cherish my relationships. What I didn't realize is that I'm cherished as well. I mean, I know that people care about me. I just didn't realize how much until this past year of my life. **Irene, Gwangju, Korea**
- Even in the darkest of circumstances, hope exists, and even comes to fruition more often than you'd expect. **Jan, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- Every day is a gift. Enjoy every moment with those you cherish and don't worry about the things beyond your control. Everything happens for a reason. **Jen, Somerdale, NJ USA**
- If you trust in yourself and truly dedicate yourself the end result will always be beneficial no matter the task. You'll learn more about yourself than you knew before and that will help you in any future endeavors you take on. **Jeremy, Philadelphia, PA USA**

- When you get to know someone, the people around that person (family included) are a great reference. Of course you cannot judge someone solely based on his/her friends or family, but it can give you a lot of information. **Jiyoon, Seoul, Korea**
- God is Good! After retiring, I have been given a second career of cooking meals for both the needy and those with money. To watch the joy my food brings puts me in touch with gratitude for the culinary gifts with which my God has blessed me. I have to say "Wow" - I love this new direction on which my life's journey has taken me. **Joe, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- My most valuable lesson I learned this year was to trust in myself. When I moved down to Philly after my knee surgery, I thought my lack of job experience would cut me off from any and all jobs but for the most menial. However, to my great surprise, I landed the first job I interviewed for and am now living a stable life - something I didn't think would come easy during this recession. I have a wonderful home and an incredible partner to share it with. Life has been very good to me. **Jon, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- I learned even more how not to be wary of taking on tasks outside my comfort zone: some of the greatest moments of 2011 for me were in areas I had never worked in before, things I simply "didn't do", and now....I do. **Joshua, Seoul, Korea**
- Even when business decisions don't support or benefit an individual, it is still important and right to approach the individual with compassion and honesty. Hiding behind the decision because it was beyond one's control magnifies the injustice. Personal kindness goes a long way. **Julie, Allentown, PA**
- I am thinking of all the times that I should have asked for help -- even something as small as perspective from someone else. As experts in being our own worst critics, we forget that no one asks us to do it all alone: that belief is counterproductive. **Kathleen, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- My big lesson this year is to not let the pace and demands of life keep you away from the relationships and people that matter most. Work and laundry will always be there – your family and friends won't. **Kim, Charlotte, NC USA**
- Accept love as it comes to you...and give, give, give it at no limit in return. Trust your instincts to guide you in taking the proper risks involved. **Lindsay, Baltimore, MD USA**
- When your whole world shatters into a million pieces, remember if you can keep your head up high and if you can keep love in your heart, you will come through it and on the other side there just might be a man feeding you pie. **Margie, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- After moving to London, I realised that I am at the centre of my own life, regardless of what other people think of me. **Mi Wol, London, UK**
- Success builds character; failure reveals it. Life's real failure is when you do not realize how close you were to success when you give up. Failure is a detour, not a dead-end street. Failure is not falling down, but refusing to get up. Failure is the tuition you pay for success. Forget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget about everything except what you're going to do now - and do it. **Monique, Bala Cynwyd, PA USA**
- We spend most of our life preparing to live. But life rarely defines the end of preparation and beginning of living. If we're not careful we can spend our life preparing. At some point we must choose to stop preparing and LIVE. **Nancy's son Sean, Los Angeles, CA USA**
- What I learned in this year is quite simple: have faith in yourself, ALWAYS. **Roh Haein (Beatrice), Seoul, Korea**

- Do not put off talking with or visiting friends and family or accomplishing tasks on your to-do or bucket list. This lesson was driven home two years ago when I didn't "have time" to wish my parents a safe trip to Cincinnati to visit my sister for the holiday. The next time I saw my mom was in the hospice. Don't put things off. Do them today while the time is right. **Sue, Lehighton, PA USA**
- I have learned to live life taking nothing too serious while taking nothing for granted. I have learned to treasure ALL moments with loved ones as if they were opportunities I may never have again. There was a time I felt only certain moments were valuable; however, the more I grow and the more loss I experience, the more I realize that even the most trivial moments should be valued. It has taken me 20 years but I have learned to live in the present, in the now, since the present is all there is and everything else is merely something to long for. I have experienced a much higher level of happiness this way. **Trina, North Wales, PA USA**
- Best piece of advice I have is something simple yet overlooked: Always write it down. What exactly does that mean? Often the power of written word is lost. Lost in meaning, emails, spam, #hashtags, you get my idea... If you write it down you are making someone know that this is important... Most likely yourself. Got 2012 resolutions? Write them down. Daily tasks? Write them down. Where you see yourself in 1, 5, 10, 15 years? Write it down! - **Victor, Philadelphia, PA USA**
- I learned that the support of your partner is invaluable to take big steps, although it may not be all you need to feel good and be happy, and I learned that friends are very important, and being so far away from home, they are your family, too. **Yrma, Wayne, PA USA**

## CONCLUSION

My good friend Andrew once told me at year's end, "Next year is going to be your year". So, now it's my turn to pay it forward. I know in my heart that 2012 will be your year. Make the most of it. Wherever the new year takes you, Jon and I are here in Philadelphia rooting for you.

If you need me, reach out via my blog, LinkedIn, or email. I am always happy to lend a listening ear and offer insight.

Best wishes for a joyful, peaceful year,

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*Have you invested in your community today?  
 The world only spins forward - the great work begins!*

PS – You receive a semiannual inspiration message from me approximately 3-4 times per year. If you would like to forward my message to others, please feel free to do so. If they would like to be added to the distribution list, please have them email me at [BFish@aol.com](mailto:BFish@aol.com). And if you ever decide you'd like to be removed from the list, please email me at [BFish@aol.com](mailto:BFish@aol.com).

PPS – Previous semiannual inspirational messages dating back to June 2008 can be found at <http://brianfishbone.typepad.com/becoming-the-blog/semiannual-inspirational-messages.html>.