

It is my birthday today, March 1. I have taken a little while to reflect on my 40 years. I've still got some reflecting to do that will help me engage and take more control of my life. But the following are 40 lessons I've taken from my past 40 years. They are taken and presented in a way that is based on my principles and views. My hope is you can find some wisdom in these. At the very least I hope you find it entertaining.

Blessings,
Mark

Sidebar: I have not edited this extensively. I'm very confident you'll find some of the errors and misspellings. Please look past these and apply the principles. Better yet, send me a note letting me know what you found and apply the principles. I'll fix it and you'll have created a great service. 😊

40 Lessons of My 40 Years

by: W. Mark Thompson

1. Age brings a sense of priority. I've come to realize that the real priorities in my life are God, Family, Honor, Character, & Integrity, Charity.
2. A vision is a powerful thing. It's never too late to create & live one.
3. You've not really fallen short if you've nee started to live your purposes... even if you're 40.
4. Sometimes boys just have to have dirt clog fights. But we learned to not aim for the head. Poor Tony. (Age 11)
5. Lack of clarity almost always produces confusion.
6. Mistakes don't have to be tragic. They can be a great source of entertainment for your friends. I know my friends still laugh at some of my screw-ups. It helps if you laugh with them.
7. Children grow up faster and faster every year. Hug them every chance you get. Tell them you love them every day... before they think it's not so cool.

40 Years of Lessons

8. My granddaddy was (1) wise and (2) prophetic. He told me at age 13, "Don't trust politicians. They only care about what they want. And they will steal your freedom. When you're old enough, vote carefully and take it seriously."
9. Sometimes boys just have to climb trees.
10. A spouse who spends money you don't have to help others who have even less than you do is a Divine blessing. (I think I'll hold on to mine for the rest of my life.)
11. Don't let circumstances ruin your day. One day you could wake up and you'll look back on a miserable life. (Age 30 lesson learned)
12. Be conscious of what you feed your roots. It always produces the same kind of fruits. At age 22 I learned I could choose to change the menu.
13. Tithing is not a bill. It is an opportunity for God to bless you. Cable. THAT'S a bill.
14. Life isn't fair. It's true. BUT it can still be fun.
15. Sometimes boys just have to jump big ramps on their bikes.
16. Fear can be crippling. But it does have a purpose. Knowing when to listen to it can determine your perspective in life. (Age: 22)
17. Almost every girl loves poetry - especially when she's the subject of the story and it's about love. (Self taught high school lesson)
18. Allow music to touch you emotionally. At the right time with the right song you can get chills - or even be moved to tears. It's worth the experience.
19. If your parents split up, it's not your fault. (Lesson at age 7)
20. Love is a commitment; it's an ongoing process; it's not a ditch to fall into forever spinning your wheels trying to get out of. (Lesson of 10+ years of struggling, fighting, loving, and being happily married)
21. The universe is not God. God created the universe. (Lesson learned having a relationship with Jesus & knowledge of scripture.)
22. The most important lesson in school is to learn to think for yourself. This is not being taught. (Learned this as my job being a parent.)
23. Sometimes boys just have to jump off the garage into the pool.
24. It's okay to have role models, but always understand that people will disappoint, and there is a difference in having a role model and putting someone on pedestal. (Lesson learned at age 25)

40 Years of Lessons

25. The sole responsibility to raise your children does not rest on the shoulders of the schools - it does not rest on shoulders of the churches. It rests 100% without exception on your shoulders. (Just an eternal fact.)

26. Politics and religion have been taboo subjects all of my life. It's time to break that silence. America needs to start talking openly about these things again. A lifetime of silence is long enough.

27. To start a business and run it right takes at least twice as much money than you think it will, at least 3 times as long as you think it will, and can be much more frustrating than you think it will be.

28. Alcoholism is very real, very destructive, and when combined with an immovable sense of pride, it will destroy many more lives than the person drinking. (Lesson learned at age 17)

29. Sometimes boys just have to play ball in the rain & mud.

30. Most people are rooting for you to succeed.

31. Depression is horrible. But we may be extremely surprised how our problems in this area almost disappear with a mindset and spirit of service.

32. It's a lot less fun to get out of debt than to go into debt. But it's much more necessary to get out. (Lesson learned age 30-32)

33. Even though it may take years to get out of shape and become fat, the good news is we can turn it around and get in great shape in just a few months with a little focus and discipline. The challenge is it takes focus and discipline.

34. I love my exclusive solitary time (being alone) but I have learned also that quality time with quality people can be an awesome source of growth.

35. Sometimes real friendships are lost without the reason being known. All you can do is keep being a friend to others. Do not harbor bitterness or resentment.

36. Didn't go to prom. Didn't regret it. Even at 19 I learned that I didn't want to spend big time money on clothes I would only wear once with a girl I didn't have a real relationship with to go spend hours with kids that I didn't even know or even know if I liked. (said with a smile)

37. If you ever get a chance to make friends with someone who never goes anywhere without their shotgun and a wiener dog, politely decline. Trust me on this one. (lesson learned at age 16)

38. Never give up if you're at a stalemate arm wrestling. The other guy is just about to wear down. (lesson learned at age 15) Yes. I won.

40 Years of Lessons

39. In case you're wondering, a childhood living in a house full of smoke can definitely cause adult onset asthma. (who knew!)

40. Sometimes boys just have to shoot guns.