



Now read the text to check your predictions.



Ψ LEARNING FROM YOUR REGRETS

“If only I had known then what I know now.” How often I hear that phrase replayed by those who dwell on missed opportunities and regrets.

Jane regrets dropping out of college to get married. “I wish I had had a better education and had made something of myself. Now that my kids are older, I’m bored. I would’ve liked to have an important career, but it’s too late now,” she laments.

Rick regrets taking the easy way out. “I entered my dad’s business right after college. Financially, I’ve got no complaints. But I have a hard time shaking off the feeling that I would have become someone special if only I had had the courage to go out on my own back then.”

Regrets like these can become a constant reminder of “what could have been”. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Regrets can also enlighten and be an incentive for new opportunity. Here’s how that might happen:

Conquer your negative emotions. People often imagine that they would have done things differently if they had known better. Yet, the decisive factor in their decision-making is often an emotional one, not a lack of information. Jane could still get her college degree if she weren’t afraid that the commitment would be too much for her. As she reflects on her past, she recognizes that feeling overwhelmed was the same reason she dropped out of school years ago. If Jane is to learn from her regrets, she needs to deal with her fears in a different manner this time.

Use your regrets to motivate yourself to take a different action. Rick can motivate himself to do something different now, instead of simply regretting his long ago decision. Perhaps, he could move the business in a new direction, start a second career, or blaze a creative trail in a completely different field. Ruing your regrets is a passive approach to life; using your regrets to make a better life for yourself is a positive and active approach.

Anticipate future regrets before you make major decisions. If Jane does decide to return to college, it would be helpful for her to anticipate what might make her regret this decision too. If her goal is to have a thriving career, she should choose an appropriate program. Simply taking the easiest courses (which would be her typical pattern) would likely result in her regretting her decision once again.

Use regrets to learn more about what’s important to you. Rick imagines that he might have become a musician if he hadn’t gone into his dad’s business. But he conveniently ignores how music might play a role in his life now. Too often people assume that it’s too late in life to make any changes. Not true, unless you get entrenched in the position that: it should have been a certain way then so there’s nothing you can do about it now.

Many people regret decisions they’ve made or opportunities they’ve lost. But only a few make those “woulda, coulda, shouldas” work for them. You can be one of those people! It’s never too late to use your regrets as a catalyst for revamping your life.

“Make your ‘woulda, coulda, shouldas’ work for you.”



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Copyright 2006: Linda Sapadin, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice who specializes in helping individuals, families and couples overcome self-defeating patterns of behavior.

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READING FOR GENERAL COMPREHENSION

Which fragment below summarizes the main idea of the text? Choose the correct item that answers this question. Write the answer in your notebook.

- a. "Regrets can also enlighten and be an incentive for new opportunity." (4th paragraph)
- b. "Too often people assume that it's too late in life to make any changes." (8th paragraph)
- c. "Many people regret decisions they've made or opportunities they've lost." (9th paragraph)

READING FOR DETAILED COMPREHENSION

- 1.** Choose the correct item that completes the sentence below.

Jane and Rick are examples of people who

- a. regret decisions they have made.
- b. have never lost any opportunities.

- 2.** In your notebook, answer the questions below with a fragment from the text.

- a. What does Jane regret?
- b. What about Rick?
- c. According to the author, what is really important when people make decisions?
- d. And how can people have a positive approach to life?

- 3.** What are the author's recommendations? Choose the correct items that answer this question. Write the answer in your notebook.

- a. Overcome your negative emotions.
- b. Use regrets to learn more about what is valuable to you.
- c. Use your regrets to motivate yourself to take a different action.
- d. Avoid predicting future regrets before you make major decisions.

- 4.** What does the writer do to explain each recommendation? Choose the correct item that answers this question. Write the answer in your notebook.

- a. She shares her personal life experiences.
- b. She makes comments on other people's life experiences.

- 5.** Use your own words to explain the meaning of the fragment below. Write the answer in your notebook.

"It's never too late to use your regrets as a catalyst for revamping your life."

- 6.** What does the expression "woulda, coulda, shoulda" refer to? Choose the correct item that answers this question. Write the answer in your notebook.

- a. Regrets.
- b. Opportunities.