Don’t Let All Your Days Be “Weak” Days: Make Someday Happen!

I read with much interest and pleasure your reprised editorial on Making “Someday” Happen (January/February 2016).

My wife and I, too, have always acted on the premise that we should not wait for “someday” to experience life and see wonderful new places. Doing them while we are functional physically and can enjoy them most seems common sense to us. We are fortunate to have been able to travel to many places and see many things during our years together, both in the U.S. and abroad.

What first caught my eye in your article were the action pictures from Queenstown, New Zealand, which brought back memories of a trip my wife Anne and I took there in January 2013. We had gone on a land/sea vacation involving a stay in Cairns, Australia, including a helicopter ride to the Great Barrier Reef which we snorkeled, followed by a stay in Sydney with a climb of the bay bridge, traveling to the Blue Mountains and seeing the Sydney Opera House, among other things. We then boarded a cruise ship, with a quick stop in Melbourne the next day, and then crossed the Tasman Sea to New Zealand for stops in multiple ports before finishing in Auckland a week later. The rest of our travel party flew home from there, but Anne and I decided to extend our trip for three days to visit Queenstown, the “adrenalin capital of the world” on New Zealand’s south island, as suggested by a New Zealander friend that advised us not to miss Queenstown if we were making that long trip anyway. It turned out to be the highlight of our entire trip! While we didn’t sky dive, we did parachute jump off the mountain, rode the Shotover River jet boats, the Luge, took Segway rides all over the town and visited the Kawarau Bridge bungee jump venue. Anne tried to talk me into a jump with her, but I demurred due to having had open heart surgery three months before and fearing that my sternum might not tolerate the G-forces. We still talk about the beautiful mountain range called “The Remarkables,” the picturesque glacier lake, the wonderful B&B where we stayed, and all the fun we had there. Bottom line is that we, too, decided years ago to not wait for “someday” to experience as many of the things on our bucket list as possible and will continue to do whatever we can while we have good health and function.

I leave you with a story of a tee shirt I saw on a trip to Mackinac Island a few years ago – on the front was written: “Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. See, there is no Someday!”

Thanks for bringing back some precious memories!

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The Pulse of Hope
A Surgeon’s Memoirs from Poverty to Prosperity
by William A. Reed
Reviewed by Lee A. Norman, MD

This book is as subtle and understated as Bill Reed himself. But there are lessons in it that come through loud and clear, three of which particularly spoke to me. The first is about “taking credit” for the good things and the bad things that happen in one’s life. Bill is the first person to stand up and be accountable when something doesn’t go right, and he’s the last person to accept accolades for those things that have gone not only well, but diamatically well. It is the mark of quiet heroism to credit others, and Bill has demonstrated that throughout his life.

The second lesson in the book is about efficiency – being economical with words (hint: Bill uses as few as necessary to quietly make his point) and about movement: his deft surgical skills have no wasted motion. If he were inclined to a career in music, he would have been a symphony conductor, one with very little dramatic and wasted flailing of the arms.

And finally, he demonstrates reverence of the sacred bond that exists between physician and patient, and doctor and colleague. This serves as the basis of trust we all have in this wise and quiet colleague.