

What Was I Thinking

Photographs never lie, and unfortunately they often remind us of a dorky moment from our past.

At a recent family function pictures were brought out from years gone by, including my mid-eighties wedding. Spiked hair. The 80's headband, and shoulder pads big enough to protect a football player from injury. I know – what was I thinking? – but it was the 80's, and if you lived them you know exactly what I am referring to.

Then there is the picture hanging in my kitchen of my kids when they were aged three, two and one. They're cute as buttons having a picnic lunch in their grandmother's garden. My eldest, now twenty one looked at me incredulously one day and with a hearty laugh asked, 'mom – we're all in fluorescent pink, green and orange clothes. FLOURECENT pink, green and orange! My shirt is glow-in-the-dark PINK! What were you thinking?'

I tried to explain it was the style but with him having no memory of that time period, and the one-liners zinging between everyone in the room, my protest came off like a crazy excuse from a mother with no fashion sense.

Sometimes those moments of slap-in-the-face awareness are a little less comical. Like the time long ago when I found myself looking back at a previous relationship with a bit of a head shake.

In my youth I dated one specific fellow for probably close to a year. Back then I thought he was the 'cat's meow'. The rose-coloured glasses stopped me from seeing we had absolutely nothing in common. I was headed to college – he was barely interested in finishing high school. I wanted to travel the world. He wondered where the next party would be. I loved life and lived in awe of all the possibilities ahead of me. The chip on his shoulder grew by the day, and he blamed the world and everyone in it for the things that were wrong in his life.

But he was cute. And those rose-coloured glasses really do warp the reality of what we are looking at.

One day we broke up. Actually, truth be known, he dumped me. All my optimism and eagerness to discover the world got on his nerves and he felt it was better if we didn't see each other anymore. That and he found a new girl to party with, one who shared his belief that life sucked.

I was momentarily crushed. A number of months later I inadvertently ran into him. One look, one extremely brief conversation and all I could think was that my mother was right all along – WHAT WAS I THINKING?

This sentiment isn't reserved just for fashion and relationships. Ever eat that second or third piece of pie and regret it. Or drink one too many cocktails. Or go home with the wrong people and end up wishing life weren't so cruel.

Ever hang out with the wrong crowd and accidentally find yourself in the wrong place at

the wrong time as a result. Ever live beyond your means and then have to save face while everything you ever deemed important is repossessed in front of your eyes. Have you ever ended a relationship or friendship and later discovered ending it was the biggest mistake in your life? Ever regretted saying or doing something as it came back to haunt you again and again.

The point is, we have all felt the 'what was I thinking' sentiment at some point in our lives, often more than once. And that is the lesson for today.

It is not wrong to question our choices and actions of the past. Quite contrary, it is a good thing to do. Wondering what we were thinking opens us up to learning the valuable lessons that were placed before us.

Life isn't a perfect journey where only good things happen to good people because they do good things. It's a collection of highs and lows. Of good times and bad, good decisions and ones we wish we could take back. In the greater scheme of things, spending even a moment wishing those parts of our life never occurred is a colossal waste of time and keeps us from learning the forward moving lessons of life.

Instead of wishing it wasn't so, we must learn from those moments where we questioned ourselves and our decisions - so that we know how we should react the next time the same lesson is placed before us. And it will. Until we learn it. It's the way life is.

Every single time we think, 'what was I thinking,' we open ourselves up to learning. We can ignore it or we can acknowledge it. The choice is ours to make.

If you desire peace, contentment, self-confidence and forward movement in life, you must ask yourself what you were thinking, and then be open to discovering the answer.

Peace on the journey,
Louise

What Was I Thinking: copyright Louise Smith July 24, 2009.

Feel free to share this posting with others.

Copyright requires you include: www.TheLessonsOfLife.com / © Louise Smith when sharing.