



This book is dedicated to my children, Shari and Dillon. May they find encouragement and strength every day of their lives through friends and family. May you tap into the Higher Power of Life ItSelf.

I would like to say thank you to my Higher Power for helping me to reflect daily and grow in His Peace and Power.

After spending over ten years on the oceans and gulfs of the world, I thought I would try and capture some of my thoughts about life. They may not be profound yet they help me in my focus and daily walk.

In the words of my father, his favorite expression, the thought comes through, "Press On."

One more thought, the words to a song that always encouraged me,

"Carry on my Wayward Son, there'll be Peace when you are done.
Lay your weary head to rest, don't you cry no more." Kansas



There is one thing I have learned about Life. "Life goes on." There are times when it is overwhelming but it goes on. The sun comes up, the moon moves through its cycles and life goes on. Sometimes the joys are unspeakable and other times the fears seem so strong but life goes on.

What am I trying to say?

No matter what happens, no matter how good it seems or how bad you may hurt, God is in control. This is just my experience, my opinion if you please. My hours on the water have shown me over and over that the ebb and flow of life will continue, unhindered by anything I can say, do or wish upon it.

The ocean will swell and become rough on some days and on others it will be calm like a mirror. It is on the calm days I must remind myself to reflect on the many wonderful things of this life. During the rough days I react to the environment. I must hold the wheel and maintain a straight course. I monitor my instruments and make sure we are safe through all of the tossing and violence of the moment. Sometimes I need to slow the vessel down to overcome the turbulence of that instant.

So it is with life. Slowing down to take a real assessment of where I am.



Every morning God makes a new day in my spirit. The breath of life is just beyond my nostrils and I breathe it in. Exhaling the waste of the moment I begin my second breath of the conscious day and so it has begun. The first second of the present moment we call life.

This is how I view the experience I call life, as a gift from God. The sunrise is the symbol of this fact to me. Every day is different. The clouds are not the same every morning. The gift of the day is not the same either.

There will be new horizons and new experiences for sure. Some clouds may look the same as the day before but the formations are never identical. So it is with life. I may think I have been here before but if I stop and look there are subtle differences in each moment. Life goes on. It is not static. There is no "lack of movement" in it. It is constantly changing.

It is when I resist that change that I begin to experience problems.

I want it to stay still. I want to capture that moment in a photograph and hold on to it. I can do that and it becomes a memory. It is not "my life"; it is my memory of my life. To feel the breeze in my face and the sand in my toes, this is the thing life is made of. Not just the memories but the experiencing of those memories.

This is new thinking for me. It has taken me 50 years to stop and smell the roses.



Another thing I have learned about life is that "friends make the difference". In the ups and downs we call life; it is the relationships with friends that will hold me up in the rough times. I feel that a person is really fortunate if they have a handful of true friends. Five true friends is a very strong matrix of support. If you find yourself with five to ten true friends, count yourself as truly blessed.

A friend will never look down on you and loves you unconditionally through all of your ups and downs. You can tell them anything and in the final reckoning, they never discount you or who you really are. They accept you in all of your humanity. Friends really make all the difference in the world.

Friends are mirrors. They reflect back my true nature. They show me who I really am. I see in them, in their eyes and spirit, my true self. Sometimes I do not like what I see and at times I am afraid of what I see and how it will impact me. But the friend will love me through those things and accept my shortcomings. That is not to say they let me "get away with" things that are not acceptable.

Friends are an investment. It takes time to cultivate a friendship and effort to allow it to grow. It is like a garden that we tend. Pulling weeds and fertilizing are just parts of the

process. God provides the water and sunlight but it is up to me to keep the garden "clean". Litter, rocks and weeds can choke out the garden. So it is with friendships. I need to regularly "clean house" to keep my friendships in tune.

This is my "experience", it is also my "strength and hope".



Sunsets are another thing all together. If a sunrise reminds me of the gift of life, the sunset reminds me of just how fragile the gift is. It is the sunset that reminds me of my humanity, how short life really is in the giant scheme of things. I am really just a speck of sand on the beach of eternity, just one head in the mass of heads called the human race.

"What is man that you are mindful of him?" "Or the son of man, that you should visit him?" Why does God even notice me? How could he with all these other specks of sand flying about? And this is where the leap takes place. The small step, the small fragment or seed we call faith.

This is the awesome nature of God, as I understand him. "He, She, It." However you refer to your creator, is concerned and invested in me. This I know to the core of my being. It is only by faith I perceive this simple truth. This is the paradox of faith. Alone in my own thinking I can not conceive of such a thing. But one look at a sunset, going off in a full blaze

of glory, one look and I know he is God. He is God. Remember what God told Moses? Just tell them "I AM" sent you. He just is.



Well, I hope you have enjoyed my little book. That is it for now.

In the words of some dear friends; "More will be revealed."

Captain James



Here I am doing that Boat Handling Thing under some platform in the Gulf of Mexico.



I hope you enjoyed the photos; all images are copyright [James W. Hudgens](#) 2002-2004