

When Enough is Enough.

The man was older now. He never thought about getting old; that is to say, he had vaguely considered it, but now he could only agree that he had indeed arrived at being old. A smile appeared on his face because he liked being old and the freedom it brought to his life.

For many years, he had been extolling a principle of knowing when enough is enough: enough money, property, friends, possessions, responsibilities, etc. He thought everyone should think about that rather than simply taking more on.

The man, however, noticed that he too was caught in the game of acquiring ever more, while at the same time knowing that he possessed enough. Yes, clothes wore out, as did his truck tires, and both needed replacing; there were recurring food and utility bills, and, at the same time, inflation, especially property taxes and insurance, took a big bite out of his budget.

Of course, his income and ability to earn money had almost always exceeded his expenditures, but in retirement, his prior choices predetermined his income. So, the urge to believe he might need more was motivated by fear of not having enough should a choice turn from good to bad. He couldn't prove either side of the argument; whether he had enough or he didn't. However, he resolutely believed he had enough of everything he needed.

This theme of when enough is enough, was not confined to money. He extrapolated lessons he had previously learned into untouched areas of his life, and in this way, he kept his needs in check.

For some time now, he repeated a mantra he made up that went like this: There were times in my life when I needed to take care of commitments, and taking care of them allowed me the freedom to then do what I wanted.

Several times in his life, the man wanted more than he had, and his life became ruled by the pleasures and responsibilities of his acquisitions, whether they were fine wine, women, cars, boats, or the myriad temptations he encountered. He made enough money, so he could afford the pleasures he wanted.

But then, his theme of when is enough enough poked his own words into his consciousness, and just like that, he smiled and knew that enough had indeed arrived.

His temperament of repeatedly questioning all aspects of his life begged many already answered questions to be revisited. He assuaged his questioning mind by carefully and intentionally answering those questions, hoping not to have to answer them again. That recurring hope made him smile.

And so he heard his mantra repeated in his mind: There were times in my life when I needed to take care of commitments, and taking care of them allowed me the freedom to do what I wanted.

This is the freedom I sought and achieved, and I know what I will do now.

Written by Peter Skeels © 9-10-2025