

BeefTalk 479: We Too Are Resting in Someone's Hand

Today there are more important things to do than the numerous processes we embark on in our daily routines.

[Editors: Kris Ringwall teaches at Dickinson State University along with being the Dickinson Research Extension Center's director. Three DSU students recently died after the vehicle they were in went into a pond. In this week's column, Ringwall reflects on life and death.]

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There is a time to set aside the business of life and simply do. Even the best-run business, cattle or otherwise, cannot deny that, in the end, someone else is in control, regardless of who we are, and really does not ask for input.

What may seem like important notes in our daily lives and our definition of success simply may be tiny specks of irrelevant thoughts in the big picture. Many times we miss the important points until we get slammed with the realities of life and death.

We all cling to hope and, with each passing thought, there is no end, simply a continuation of hope. With that hope and the desire for a positive ending, the news of a tragic death literally shatters our inner core.

The fragile feelings fed by hope are released as despair and we cannot stop. None of us can escape the loss and emptiness of death.

Our lives will go on, but at this point and time, we simply exist. The realization of someone being absent is startling.

As one's mind wanders for some rational thought, normalcy departs. In its place, one is filled with a deep sense of wandering with a seemingly pointless destination. The present seems so raw, the future somewhat gone.

Our own hopes are gone and no matter where one looks, only emptiness looms. The need for reassurance remains. There are memories of good times and not so good times, but life does go on. Death never has been a stranger to the prairies.

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Sure, our daily path remains, the first acquaintance only met with eyes, words left lost in fields afar. Finally, a resemblance of desire may surface, only to be tucked away in Northern silence. It seems safer that way, for what reason one does not know, but containment seems to be the need and so we do what we do.

Yes, a tough day. A day reflective of all that is and all that is not, but, fueled by the omnipresent, the day goes on. Unexpected death challenges us all to a self-examination as we continue the work of those who touched our lives.

My memory slips to a previous time, recalling a young, tragic death. I remember returning from the funeral and picking up an egg that was about to hatch.

Emerging from that egg was a new life, totally unknowing of the day's events. Earlier in the day, the youngster, with all its might, started breaking through from the only life it had ever known.

There was no reason. The youngster had been well cared for and all its needs met. However, the youngster kept on pecking. At first a crack, then a second crack, a split and finally a hole.

Through the hole came the most beautiful light the youngster had ever seen. So the pecking continued. With unending persistence, the youngster encircled the egg, with only faith that a better life existed on the other side.

As the outer shell began to give, the youngster stretched with the power of Samson. Gradually, the egg gave way in my hand. With toes clenching the large half of the egg, the youngster gave a final thrust and was free.

Blind, unending faith brought the youngster from the security of the egg to the vastness of a new world. In my hand, the youngster had no knowledge of how tough this life can be, but only a brightness of a new life that was ready, willing and able to secure tomorrow's future.

What were tears for me is morning dew to a youngster with nowhere to go but up. In each of our worlds, there are good things, but sometimes we need to look carefully and remind ourselves that each of us, too, not unlike the egg, is resting in someone's hand.

May you find all your ear tags.

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