

"It was the best of times, it was the best of times." A little different from the *A Tale of Two Cities* quote, isn't it. That first sentence describes my days in NW Ohio last month. Lots of time was spent with family members and then bonus days with my mom talking about elements of her "Binder of a Lifetime" (BoaL.)

"What's a BoaL?" you may ask (though I'm thinking many of you can accurately guess.) For those of us who struggle with organizational skills, a BoaL is a systematic, phased approach to assembling important items from one's life all in one place.

One of the BoaL activities was having my mom finish off the "Good-to-Go Toolkit."\*\* Fruits of those labors included having a completed values worksheet describing what is important to her on topics related to living and dying. Her answers offered opportunities for discussion on some philosophical topics we might never have confronted otherwise. They were indeed some of the best of times, especially since we got to talk about bucket list items completed and those coming up soon!

Using that toolkit also resulted in us examining, re-completing and notarizing her Living Will, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care plus examining the trust she and my dad did many years ago before his death. It highlights the fact that these documents should be completed by all of us, whether we're in our 80s or in our 30s.

In a similar vein, Mt. Washington Presbyterian Church is hosting a 5-week seminar series entitled "Being S.M.A.R.T. About Living and Dying." Experts from our area will be discussing important topics that help with BoaL efforts, including the Living Will and Durable PoA4HC (for more about that series, go to [www.mwpc.church](http://www.mwpc.church).)

Do your loved ones know your gratitude in life and your wishes for living and dying? If not, maybe it's time to formalize your bucket list, complete the Good-to-Go toolkit, attend some of the MWPC seminar series and/or spend time asking and answering questions. Whichever you do, my guess is that it will result in some of the best of times, providing an important gift to you and your loved ones.

Enjoy the day...and the memories!

\*\* provided here <https://www.compassionandchoices.org/userfiles/G2G2015.pdf>

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*Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an "aspiring memory missionary." He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts ([www.LongMemories.info](http://www.LongMemories.info)), focusing on helping others in "Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!"*