



# THINKING BEYOND™

## You Have 30 Days to Live...

... a very sobering, if not frightening, statement to be sure. You will likely never hear these words in your lifetime, but for the sake of participating in a very valuable mental exercise, let's imagine the following scene is happening to you.

You are sitting dressed in one of those backless gowns in the examination room at the local hospital after spending all day taking a battery of tests. You are waiting for the doctor to come and give you the results of the tests. He finally walks in. You can tell he is having difficulty looking you in the eyes. The news must not be good.

He sits down next to you and finally looks you in the eyes and speaks, "The test results could not be worse. You have a very rare, incurable disease. It is already so advanced that what little treatment we do have would be useless, and there is no surgical procedure known for this illness."

He speaks your name and then slowly says those six dreaded words, "You . . . have . . . 30 . . . days . . . to . . . live."

The doctor then adds some extremely good news to his shocking pronouncement, "With the nature of this disease, you will have no negative physical manifestations until the very last day. It will happen all at once, and then it will be over. For the next 30 days, you will continue to feel and look like you do right now. You will notice no

change in your current energy level until the very last day. No one will even be able to tell that you are sick."

"I have thirty days to live. Only 30 days!"

Your mind is swirling with the news that your days are numbered. Of course, your days have always been numbered as is the case for all of us. But your actual number of days has just been revealed to you, and it's several thousand less than you had just assumed.

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The great tragedy for far too many of us is that life never becomes more precious than when it is just about over.

Once the shock of the news finally sinks in, there is one penetrating question that comes to your mind and the mind of anyone who might find themselves facing this dreadful and enviable position. The question is this, "What will I do with my last 30 days on this earth?"

"Will I take this month to finally read those books I've been

wanting to read? Will I go spend these last precious few days with my children and grandchildren? Will I rush back to the office to finish that project that is already past due and absolutely must be finished within the next 30 days? Will I try to 'mend some fences' and 'rebuild some bridges' with people whose relationship with me has been broken or destroyed? Will I finally take that once in a lifetime vacation that I've always wanted? Will I go see those people who have influenced and helped me most and tell them 'thank

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## Thirty Days... *continued from page one...*

you? Will I devote the rest of my life to giving back something of all I have received? Will I prepare to meet my Maker?

At a time like this, the really important things in life become so obviously apparent, don't they? Under these circumstances, it is easy to distinguish between what is urgent and what is important, what is real and what is superficial, what is lasting and what is temporary.

The great tragedy for far too many of us is that life never becomes more precious than when it is just about over. Then, we hurry around and try to do what has been left undone, fix what has been broken, savor what has been overlooked and give what has long been overdue.

Few of us will ever be blessed with knowing the exact number of days we have left, so we "can get our house in order" before we say good-bye to this life and those we leave behind. Can you imagine how our priorities might change if we really lived our next thirty days as if they were truly our last. Can you imagine how much more at peace we would be if we actually did those final things now

instead of waiting until our last thirty days of life really arrives?

A gentleman once spoke at a national conference and shared a lesson he had learned from his grandfather. His grandfather told him, "Remember, son, there will be a first time and a last time for everything."

He explained what his grandfather meant. When you kiss your spouse goodbye, there was a first time, and there will be a last time. When you take a walk through the woods, there will be a first time, and there will be a last time. When you sit down to a meal with your entire

family, there will be a first time, and there will be a last time. When you put on your shoes each morning, there will be a first time, and there will be a last time. When you hold your child in your arms, there will be a first time, and there will be a last time. "There will be a first time, and a last time for everything."

Living life with this truth in mind enhances our awareness of life and makes all the "in-between" times far more precious and meaningful.

If *you* have just 30 days to live, what *will* you do with them?

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