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Lunch With The Former First Lady

By Laura Turner

"Get over there," my friend Nan said with a shove.

I won't. I can't go, I thought, then recoiled. I set down my tea, put the book back into my black tote bag and zipped it shut. She'd never, I mean why would she?"

"Just come on, will you?" Nan said so... well, so confidently. Oh yeah, that's right. I'm the journalist here.

I straightened my back, fumbled for the paperback and walked over to greet Nan. Yes, living life at the marrow, that's what I'd promised myself. It's my favorite quote from Thoreau's Walden: Life isn't worth living unless you can live it at the marrow. And I was doing it. Although, I could begin tomorrow...

"Hurry up!"

Okay, now I'm nervous, tightly gripping my dog-eared and yellowed copy of First Lady From Plains with anticipation. In the other hand a pen, damp with perspiration. "Are you sure? Do you think she'll mind?"

"Get over there next to her and I'll take your picture."

I looked up. Yes, there I was standing right next to her; the former First Lady Rosalynn Carter. I was. I swear. (You can see me here:

www.lauramturner.com

) I'd been invited to the National Women's Hall

Of Fame annual induction luncheon in Seneca Falls, New York. The best credential I'd ever earned working as a journalist. Just to be on the beat was an accomplishment, I promise you.

The Women's Hall pays tribute to females of experience, women of power, persuasion. Women from the likes of Oprah, to legends passed such as suffragist Susan B. Anthony, Rosa Parks and literary

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giants like Willa Cather and Eudora Welty. These Great Ladies, all two hundred seventeen of them, line the walls of the National Women's Hall. Accomplished women. Women who dared. Women who live life at the marrow.

"Oh! Hello. Good afternoon, Mrs. Carter," I stammered. "Congratulations on your induction, and your accomplishments," I paused. "Oh and would you mind very much signing my book. Would you? Oh and my name's Laura, by the way." I swallowed hard. Smooth, right? I finally get to meet The First Lady From Plains and there's no place at all to buy a vowel.

Rosalynn Carter extended her hand. I placed the pen in her grip and gazed at her like a child opening a pop-up storybook and watching the pictures come to life. "Pleased to meet you," she said.

She signed, then placed the volume and pen back into my hands. Snap!

"Thank you," I said smoothing the glossy cover. Nan and I returned to our seats. The former First Lady returned to her seat. And the chicken salad was served.

About The National Women's Hall Of Fame (Reference:

<http://www.greatwomen.org/mission.php>):

"In 1969, a group of women and men of Seneca Falls created the National Women's Hall of Fame, believing that the contribution of American women deserved a permanent home in the small village where it all began. The Hall is home to exhibits, artifacts of historical interest, a research library and office. The National Women's Hall of Fame, a national membership organization, holds as its mission:

'To honor in perpetuity these women, citizens of the United States of America whose contributions to the arts, athletics, business, education, government, the humanities, philanthropy and science, have been the greatest value for the development of their country.' (Copyright 2006 National Women's Hall Of Fame)

The Hall is a shrine to some of the greatest women in the history of this country and a tribute that grows annually with each induction ceremony as we learn to appreciate more about the wonderful contributions that women make to our civilization."

To take the online tour or to learn more about the National Women's Hall of Fame, visit their website

<http://www.greatwomen.org>

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How To Have An Argument With Yourself And Win

By Rev. James L. Snyder

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Throughout the years, I'm happy to report, I have learned a thing or two about myself. My only regret is I have not learned more than a few things.

I could make a long list of things I have not yet learned in life. My hope is, of course, to shorten this list drastically. Presently, I want to zero in on one thing I have learned, which has stood me in good stead for many years; how to have an argument with yourself and win.

I once thought I could argue with my Significant Other and win. It took years to realize (1) women, wives in particular, do not argue like men.

(2) Even if I win, I lose, if you know what I mean.

In light of this important marital lore, I have long since ceased arguing with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

When sitting in my easy chair, minding my own business, and my wife flies around the corner and stands in front of me with both hands firmly placed on her hips, I immediately say, "It's my fault, Honey, I did it and I'm sorry. I'll never do it again."

I don't even try figuring out what I did wrong.

Because of this, I have focused on arguing with myself. It is, if I may say so, an art that takes years to master. The key to arguing with yourself and winning is having a good relationship with yourself. This in itself may take years to accomplish and some people, unfortunately, never achieve this in their lifetime.

Let me illustrate something that occurred this week.

A friend for over 35 years contacted me about his granddaughter living in the area and wondered if I might have some time to visit her. Naturally, I said I would be delighted.

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I found her address and my wife and I stopped in several times without success. We stopped in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening, but we never found her at home.

Then we had a breakthrough; we discovered she was working at a local restaurant. Within a few days, we stopped by the restaurant for lunch and requested her table.

She waited on us, took our order, brought our lunch and was a very gracious and wonderful waitress. We didn't want to intrude, so we just had lunch and went home.

This past week I had some errands on that side of town, so I decided to drop in for lunch and introduce myself. It was one of those days when the traffic was dreadful.

As usual, I was running a little late with my schedule. I happened to look at my gas gauge and noticed I was on empty.

I did a little mental calculation and discovered enough money on my person for gas or lunch, but not both. My credit card, attached to my checking account, was "filthy-lucre-challenged" at the time.

At this point, I began arguing with myself. I could not get home without getting gas. Just a simple fact of life.

It's not that I haven't run out of gas before, for I have. And, it's not like I run out of gas every week, contrary to the opinions of my Better Half, for I don't.

My argument went something like this:

"This would be a good time to meet her. Just step out in faith and trust God."

"No, get gas for the car, you can always get lunch some other day."

Because of the traffic, I had plenty of time to debate thoroughly and heatedly both sides of the issue at hand. This went on for about 30 minutes.

Finally, I submitted the evidence on hand to God. "Oh God, I can't do both and I don't know which is the right one to do."

A peace settled on me and I headed for the restaurant.

At the restaurant, I found the young lady was not waitressing, but was the shift manager for the day. When I was seated, I asked for her. Then I didn't know what to expect. I really did not know her and she did not know me at all.

She came to my table and I introduced myself. I knew her grandfather, which was an opening for a very delightful conversation. She sat at my table for about 10 minutes and we chatted like old friends.

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I finished my lunch and the waitress brought my bill. I stared at it for a few minutes and realized after paying for lunch I had a grand total of 6 cents left. Not quite enough to buy gas for the car. I chuckled one of those nervous chuckles when you don't know what's going to happen, but you know you've done the right thing.

Then unexpectedly my waitress came to the table, snatched up my bill and said, "Your lunch has been taken care of." And with that, she whirled away leaving me in a semi-shocked condition.

Going to the door to leave, the young lady came to see me off. I profusely thanked her for the lunch, and she simply smiled.

Driving to the gas station, a verse of Scripture played on my mind.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not

suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV.)

The best way to win an argument is submitting the evidence to God. He always has a workable plan.

The Reverend James L. Snyder is an award winning author whose writings have appeared in more than eighty periodicals including GUIDEPOSTS. In Pursuit of God: The Life of A. W. Tozer, Snyder's first book, won the Reader's Choice Award in 1992 by Christianity Today. Snyder has authored 8 books altogether.



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