



Annette Estes
Columnist

Professional Development

People are the best gift

This Christmas I am counting my greatest blessings – all the people in my life. This will be a personal column, if you don't mind.

I am fortunate to have been married to two fine men, both of them named Bob. I was out of touch with them after we divorced, until the last few years. I'm pleased to be on good terms with both of them, and would like to share with you one thing each of them did for me recently.

When I was 19, I married Bob Carver in Arkansas. He still lives there and owns a car dealership in Mena. I had called Bob last year to chat after not being in touch with him for almost 40 years. Being from Arkansas, I'm a huge Razorback fan. So I called Bob before the Arkansas-South Carolina game in November to ask if he'd get me a ticket to the game so I could sit with the Hog fans. He did even better than that and got me a press pass; so, I watched the game from the Razorbacks' radio booth.

It was great seeing Bob again after all these years, even though we didn't get to visit too long because he's the spotter for the team and was working the whole time. It was a beautiful day and the only disappointment was that you Gamecocks beat us.

But after the game, I went to the gate and got one of the main things I went for – my picture taken with our popular quarterback, Matt Jones. I sent Matt the photo and he autographed it for me. Thank you, Bob Carver.

I married my second husband, Bob Estes, in 1968. I didn't have any contact with him after we were divorced, until 1998 when he had a stroke. I visited him in the hospital and once later at his home in Spartanburg. Even though we were married for nine years, and I know him well, I am amazed to see how well he is handling being partially paralyzed from the stroke. He is determined to live life to the fullest in spite of the physical challenges he faces daily.

Bob Estes sent me an email recently saying he was going to order my book, *Why Can't You See It My Way?* from my website. He was having a problem downloading the order form and called me. He wasn't able to get it to work, so I told him I'd mail the book to him. He ordered five copies, the other four as Christmas presents for his siblings and his daughter (from his second marriage).

I can't explain how honored I feel that he did that. It's one thing for family members and friends to buy your book, but having an ex-husband do it is, well, just really nice.

I had excellent taste in husbands.

The two most important people in my life are, of course, my mother Ruth and my brother Tom. Mom lives with me and Tom lives in Iowa. Our dad is with us now only in spirit. If you'd like to see his photo, go to www.wwiimemorial.com and select "Search the Registry." Enter Carlisle, William - Arkansas.

My Christmas wish for you is that you will experience and share the love you feel for all the wonderful people in your life. A lot of people don't enjoy the Christmas holiday; they hate the shopping and stress of it all. But I love buying gifts for the special people in my life. I love to get them gifts I know they'll appreciate for their beauty or utility; gifts that say, "I know you well and love you."

It really is true that it's not the gift that counts, but your thoughtfulness that goes into buying or making and giving it.

May you and your loved ones have the best Holiday season ever. Your love for and appreciation of them is the best gift you can give. When it comes down to it, what else really matters?

Annette Estes is a Certified Professional Behavioral and Values Analyst, Coach, and Consultant. She coaches "Reluctant Workaholics" on work-life balance. She is also a professional speaker and author of the book, *Why Can't You See it MY Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*. Contact her at Annette@CoachAnnette.com or call The Estes Group at 864-244-1156.

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