



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

Life

Nowadays all aspects of our life seem to be explained by the polls and media.

We get appraisals on which is 'your' favourite party, 'your' preferred American Presidential candidate, on whether 'you' think the government is corrupt or not, if the current Opposition has the qualities to be an alternative government, which is your favourite TV and Radio programme and whether 'you' prefer walking or catching a bus, to mention just a few – and after the results are out all hell will break loose if we even raise a query on these percentages!

Our lives seem to be conditioned by sampling, percentage points, trust barometers, census, surveys, market research and ratings.

But that is not what reality is about. Life as a matter of fact is about private stories and the bread and butter issues that en- thusi- and knock us off our feet.

I would like to believe that we are the ones making our own decisions, designing our own choices, determining our own destiny.

When you hear of people who are 'killed' on our roads like flies (with an estimated two people on average dying per month and our only snooty answer to that is that they must have been over-speeding), when we hear of people my age, at the pinnacle of their careers and when life should be serving them the best

set of cards and instead passing away due to sickness, when we are faced with bad health and illness, pain and suffering – one really needs to start thinking from end to end and appreciating what life is really about and putting everything into perspective.

Dear friends, 'being' should be about having fun and still doing good to self and others. It is about that feeling that you belong and that what matters most is how hard you try and not how successful society determines that you are by its own simplistic standards, it is about having your needs met, whether physical or psychological, sexual or emotional, security or safety.

People are content because they have money which they can spend on themselves and the people they love.

People are cheery because they can feel good with themselves. Life is also about having the opportunity and the patience to walk around the town and village you live in and find the moment to savour the smells, the sounds, the jiffy that makes up that community. It is about feeling protected and out of harm's way. It is about having enough time for the things that need time.

Life is about dreaming on the next life project you have lined up.

No, we should not allow our minds to be governed and man-

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What matters most is that we live our life to the full

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you listen to your conscience and to the few people who mean well to you and not to these senseless and injudicious people.

And how will you know that the people around you mean well?

Simple. Because when the push comes to shove, when everyone might be busy telling you off or having a go at you, they will be the ones that comfort you, spur you on, encourage, prompt, stimulate and they do that with an open and thoughtful heart. Unfortunately, there are very few people out there who will be ready to read beyond your imperfections, blots and weaknesses.

So there you go, my tip of the day:

What the media says, what self-made prophets claim, what the so-called honchos of this world tell you, at the end of the day 'you' need to hear, reflect but cautiously and watchfully, vigilantly and with care, process the message. Our responsibility lies with taking care of ourselves first and foremost and doing the right thing for and with others. What matters most is that we live our life to the full, to try and have as much fun as decorously as possible, work hard towards the cause we believe in and do it passionately, however, lest you forget, our passage here on Earth will not last forever anyway.

aged by some 'clairvoyant and forecaster' because we are better than that. These pseudo-institutional henchmen have a very brief shelf-life and will not make it through more than a couple of years so what matters is that

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~~Bank~~ ~~robbers~~ ~~jailed~~ ~~for 100~~ ~~years~~



Seven men who took part in an £8m bank robbery have received jail terms totalling nearly 100 years.

The raid at the Bank of America in Mayfair, London, last year is believed to be the world's biggest. Passing sentence, Judge Alan King-Hamilton said he was determined the thieves would not enjoy the fruits of their haul, only £500,000 of which has been recovered.

"What has been concealed will remain salted away so far as you are concerned for

a great many years.

"Whatever has happened to it, it will not be used for your benefit," Judge King-Hamilton said.

Key evidence in the trial came from Stuart Buckley, the "inside man" who turned police informant.

Buckley, who worked at the bank as an electrician, told officers the raid was the gang's second attempt.

They had previously tried unsuccessfully to drill through the bank vault's lock.

Criminal bankruptcy orders

Buckley finally obtained the combination by hiding in the roof space above the vault door and peering through a hole in the ceiling as officials opened it.

Judge King-Hamilton passed the longest sentences on those considered to be the ringleaders.

Safe-cracker Leonard Wilde was sent to jail for 23 years and Peter Colson, 32, a used car dealer, for 21 years.

The judge also ordered criminal bankruptcy orders for £500,000 against both men.

Others in the gang were sentenced to periods ranging from 18 years for robbery to three years for receiving stolen goods.

However, the man said to have masterminded the crime appears to have escaped justice.

Frank Maple left Britain shortly after the robbery and is now believed to be in the African state of Morocco which has no extradition treaty with the UK.

Stuart Buckley, who was sentenced separately, received seven years for his part in the raid.

The Bank of America theft was small compared to a robbery in January the same year at the British Bank of the Middle East in Lebanon.

The thieves escaped with safe deposit boxes whose contents were valued at up to £22m.