

[For Greater Happiness, Slow Down, Create and Enjoy an Experience](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 16th, 2013

My song for this Friday is the [Simon and Garfunkel](#) song: "America." It begins with:

Let us be lovers we'll marry our fortunes together
I've got some real estate here in my bag
So we bought a pack of cigarettes and Mrs. Wagner pies
And we walked off to look for America

Before their last reunion tour, Simon and Garfunkel appeared on the David Letterman show and sang "America." Here is the clip:

[America](#)



Nancy and I saw them at the American Airlines Center in Dallas on that tour. It was near the top of my all-time favorite concerts. I found this short discussion and photos from the [Dallas concert](#). Like the writer, I can't remember another concert where I knew all the words to each and every song. Like many my age around me, I sang along...quietly. For weeks afterward I could not get those songs out of my head.

Have you ever taken time to look for America? If you are Canadian, have you ever taken time to look for Canada? I fear you don't have, or at least do not make, time to just explore what is around you with no boundaries. Long ago, Nancy and I had time, and we took advantage of it.

In early December 1971, Nancy and I traveled across America from Virginia to California. At the time, Nancy and I had been married about 18 months. During most of that time, we had lived with my grandmother, my 100 plus year old great-grandmother and a law school classmate. (We were an interesting household to say the least. I will save that discussion for another blog post.)



I had finished law school, passed the bar exam, and received my orders from the USAF to report to [Norton AFB](#), in [San Bernardino, CA](#). Nancy and I were both very excited. This would be our first "real" home. This would be my first "real" job, and it was going to be in sunny, Southern California. We had never visited California, much less actually lived there.

We set out in our VW Beetle, and purposely took several days to get to San Bernardino. We took our time because we wanted to see places we had never seen, and spend time soaking it all in. We treated our trip like a great adventure. We spent time along the way in small towns and big cities. We saw fields, streams and mountains. Each morning when we started we had no idea where we

would spend that night. Now, 42 years later, I still have fond memories of that trip and our experiences.

Why am I sharing our story with you? I know from my own experience practicing law that it is very difficult to slow down and “smell the roses,” or even see the roses. In the pressure to get your work done, and your impatience, you may be missing important opportunities to simply enjoy and experience what is around you.

To get the idea, read, and look at the photos in a [Greg McBride](#), Huffington Post blog: [How Stopping to Smell the Roses Can Transform Your Day](#). Then, read a recent blog post by Luke Roland: [Stop and Smell the Roses](#). I like his thought:

On the road to living the dream take in the scenery around you, and enjoy the now moments.

In a recent study, scientists found that appreciating the meaningful things and people in our lives may play an even larger role in our overall happiness than previously thought. Read: [A Scientific Reason to Stop and Smell the Roses](#).

To get the most out of experiences read the HBR blog: [To Buy Happiness, Purchase an Experience](#) by Carmen Nobel. She suggests five key principles that I believe make great sense:

1. Buy Experiences
2. Make it a Treat
3. Buy Time
4. Pay Now, Consume Later
5. Invest in Others

Play the video in the blog. As you will see, the beauty of an experience includes planning for it, doing it, talking about it and remembering it. I know that many of you appreciate those points because I see the photos of your trips and other experiences on Facebook.

I want to leave you with a line from another of my favorite Simon and Garfunkel songs:

Slow down, you move too fast, you've got to make the moment last

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Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.