

Emily Dickinson knows a thing or two about life.

The thought Dickinson and Mr. Reider share is that life is meant to be lived without any additional motivation for living except living itself.

Let's digest that.

Look at the title of this poem, "Because I could not stop for Death." In literal words, the title means that Emily Dickinson doesn't even think of death.

If one were to think of death, what would happen?

Well, in the majority of cases, death changes who we are and we become motivated not to become a loser. Many will choose to live every day like it's their last.

BONUS POINTS: WHY AM I IRONIC TO USE THE NOUN LOSER?

I recently talked to my old neighbor, whom I hadn't talked to in years. He said that through the death of his father he got closer to his siblings. That's a great thing! However, is it the best thing?

If he were living life to live life wouldn't he feel a compulsion to try his best in every second of life lived? It took him death to realize that he should talk to his siblings more and to talk better than he had before.

What is Emily Dickinson's philosophy but one where living is considered extremely precious? If my neighbor truly held Dickinson's belief, then the death of his father wouldn't have changed the relationships with his siblings. Sure, it would have strengthened them as they related memories and experiences about their father, but it definitely wouldn't have been any different than what it was like before the death of his father. That is, the deep connections created in their conversations after the father's death would have been no different than how they were made before.

Is he a loser for thinking of death? Well, it certainly benefited his relationships with his siblings. But, why could it not have happened sooner? Is he a loser for not realizing this sooner?

Let me illustrate my point: living to live is the best way to live.

Say two siblings are in an argument. If you live to live then the argument ends with both sides seeing the other side. They may not yet agree with the other, but a greater understanding occurs nonetheless.

As long as greater understanding occurs between parties then there will be less hatred between those parties. And, there will be no loser.

If my neighbor was truly living to live then he would have only had moments of greater understanding with his siblings. Instead, he had grudges and so did they. Most importantly, they had grudges because they don't let go of things.

If one is to live to live, then they must learn to let go when living to live is no longer the goal of the situation. When it becomes living to win, then one is not living Dickinson's philosophy.

Even though I use winning and losing to illustrate my point, my answer does not involve either one. My answer is that my neighbor just didn't live to live his entire life, which I can be justified in thinking since we had a conversation about just that. Ultimately, he never lived to live when he sought only money in his life. Now that he doesn't pursue only money and went through the death of his father, the majority of his life really is just to live for the sake of living. See, I did not use the nouns winners or losers and I just gave my answer... I am not ironic to have used them earlier when I explained my answer in different words..

Let's take a look at the last stanzas of the poem.

Notice how she says something like, "when hatred about life came my way it felt like seconds in the grand scheme of my long life." That type of thinking is what my neighbor lacked with his siblings. He needs to understand that life is meant to be lived, not to be a winner in arguments with his siblings.

Think of this: as soon as we think of life in terms of winners and losers, then we already think of death.

If you want extra credit give me an answer to this question:

On her journey with death, what setting (School, The Home, or The-End-of-Life-Reflection-In-The Last-Stanza) best fits Dickinson's philosophy of living just to live?