



## *Perspective*

After my parents died, I was left with their memories intertwined with mine. The hundreds of pens my dad hoarded, the long, cardboard Italian menu I framed for them when I was 13, but they got on a trip to Italy before I was born. Bits of china and silver plate from long-dead relatives I never met. I was a very good steward of my parents things to the point I struggled letting any of it go.

Over a period of three years, I meticulously yard saled, flea marketed, social media and app sold, Good-Willed, unloaded on my own kids and friends and still...I had more to get rid of.

New internal pulses to become a minimalist coursed through my thinking at various times and disappeared. But seeing the piles diminish brought tinges of hope that I was actually making progress!

On the phone with my daughter, we decided to hold one more yard sale. It was easy to find more stuff to purge. I decided if I hadn't used or seen it in three years, I wouldn't miss it. In the pile it went. Electrical wires, rusty tools, afghans, coffee pot, musty old things forgotten and unloved.

My nine-year old grandson became fixated on one item in particular when he saw the great stash on yard-sale day. Could he buy it for \$10? Absolutely not! Fifty cents and it's yours. With a shy but valiant grin, he handed me two quarters. I was intrigued that he liked the dulled tarnished cup, a thing I had used to hold pens for years. He disappeared into a secret space, and I began selling.



Time passed and my daughter and I were talking about life, when the boy seemed to magically appear beside me. He was grinning from ear to ear with pride. He held up his new prize and waited for my reaction with high anticipation. The emotions that ran through me ranged from disbelief to surprise, and from my heart dropping to holding in laughter as I looked at his workmanship.

I examined his new, shiny cup with awe as I exclaimed how well he had done sanding the silver-plated cup. It actually looked like gold! The fine lines on the once smooth surface gave me the opportunity to exclaim how diligent he had been to make sure not to miss a spot. “It looks so different now and very pretty in its new color!” I handed it back to his open hands, eyes full of happiness. I was not about to squelch his joy, after all, it was his cup to do with as he pleased.

Once out of ear shot, my daughter and I shared a good laugh. I told her, “If he’s anything like I was when I was that age, you might want to explain silver polish vs. all things metal and sandpaper – for I would have gone through my parent’s house and made everything shiny!”

So...what is value? Value is something determined by us – what we say that “thing” is worth to us. We determine our own value – how we agree to be treated by others – how we agree they will treat our stuff. What we value – the worth we put on things – will also determine how we take care of it – and how we treat it.

My mom would have polished that little cup and put it on a shelf if she had liked it. I appreciated the tarnished look, so I let it be and used it to hold pens. My grandson saw something beautiful lurking under the tarnish and wanted to expose it. He didn’t understand the “damage” he might do to lower the value...in someone else’s eyes. To someone else, he ruined it. He devalued it. Made it worth....less. But he saw it as a work of art – a labor of love – something he couldn’t wait to share with Grammy. Me.

Every day we treat everything and everyone by the value we place on it, including ourselves. As a survivor of domestic abuse, we are often brainwashed into believing we are worthless – that we have no value. God didn’t create junk. With the right care, the right teachings and new thought processes, we can take our dull-hued selves, sand off the tarnish and shine again. ♥