



## **THIS IS THE YEAR!**

The first week of the year always offers such promise – new year’s resolutions to eat less, exercise more and focus on the important things. For many of you, that probably means focusing on your career. I personally find it easier to keep my own resolutions if I have a tangible reminder of what the bigger picture is and what I’m working toward. I carry a single glass marble in my pocket and it reminded me of this story to share with you.

My grandfather kept a big glass jar on his worktable in the shed. It was the kind that sealed with a rubber ring and a clamp, I think it was an old canning jar. The jar contained a variety of colored marbles. One Saturday I was perched on a stool in the shed, chattering away, while he tinkered with some old machine he was fixing and, as he was cleaning up, he reached into the jar, pulled out a perfect blue marble and he stared out the window for a while with it in his hand. Then we left the garage and went into the house where Grandma was getting supper on the table. He put the marble into a similar jar on the dresser in their bedroom and I heard its clink just before he joined me at the sink to get washed up. He hugged my grandmother and we sat down for dinner. It was a ritual I had seen played out hundreds of Saturday nights at their house, but for some reason, I asked about it this night.

It turns out that it was a tangible reminder of how quickly our lives pass and a reminder to make each day count. Years earlier, my grandparents had seen a life expectancy chart that said how many years they would likely expect to live. He had calculated how many years he would have “left” and was surprised at how much of his life had already passed. He multiplied that number of years “left” by 52 weeks and made a promise to my grandmother that they’d make every week count. He bought a bag of marbles and filled it with one marble for every week that life expectancy chart said he’d have left. Every Saturday afternoon, as he cleaned up in the work shed, he took one marble from the jar in the shed and brought it in to the jar on their bedroom dresser. It was a tangible reminder to make their time together count. Sadly, there were still marbles left in the jar on the workbench when he died. A telling reminder that we are all on borrowed time. But, it set a tone in my life to make sure that I fill my weeks with activities that are meaningful and rich.

Life expectancy for Americans averages 77.3 years (slightly more if you are a woman, slightly less if you are a man). That means I can expect another 33 years (on average). 1,716 marbles to be exact. And, the beginning of the new year is always a time to recommit to making sure that what I do with my 52 marbles this year, and the 52 weeks they represent, is making a difference in my life and the lives of the people I encounter every day.

A terrific book, ***The Number***, written by Lee Eisenberg asks some intriguing questions about how much we each need. In this industry, we can be increasingly driven by the economic aspects of our life, not an entirely bad thing, if you know what you're working toward and not just working to amass "more". The underlying premise of the book is determining what your "Number" is that will let you retire or start doing what you really desire. He notes an interesting phenomenon that, as many people approach their "Number", they move their Number higher – never really readying themselves to get on with the things they have always wanted to do. Perhaps, for them, it is just about the "getting" and not about the "living". He also questions whether your "Number" would change if you knew you had less time left in your life. And, what you would do differently if you learned you had only six months left to live.

I thought it was an interesting book, especially since none of us have a date/time stamped return ticket from this trip. Yet, almost all of us behave as if we have all the time in the world and put off doing the things that are really meaningful in our lives. How would you be different if you knew exactly how many more marbles you had to spend? Would you stay in a job you can't stand? Would you really care about whether you were making "market comp"?

My friend, David Roth, wrote and recorded a fabulous song called "***This Is The Year***" and it's on our website [www.pinnaclegroup.com](http://www.pinnaclegroup.com). I think it sets the perfect tone for the year ahead and about making changes – especially those you set for your new year's resolution.

Please email me at [dpalmieri@pinnaclegroup.com](mailto:dpalmieri@pinnaclegroup.com) with your new year's resolution and I'll be glad to send you a marble to carry in your pocket to remind you how we can work together to make **This Year Your Year!**

Happy New Year!  
Denise