



What are you going to do with all of the time you've been given?

My April, May and November 2008 columns — “Make every day count,” “What’s on your ‘bucket list?’” and “Great teachers live on” — comprise my Adam Gaspar tribute trilogy. If you haven’t read them, please do yourself (and your family, friends and co-workers) a big favor and spend 15 minutes reading them at www.landscapemanagement.net.

In the columns, I share the many life lessons learned while accompanying Adam, my buddy from the first grade, on his journey home to God. Adam became increasingly incapacitated during his 10-month battle with a brain tumor, but that did not stop him from living each day to the fullest and putting God, family and friends above all else.

I’ll never forget a cell phone conversation I had with my oldest brother, Jim, last October, just a few weeks after Adam peacefully embraced our Creator. I was pacing back and forth in Adam’s backyard, telling Jim I planned to ensure my family stays close to Adam’s wife, Ann, and their six children, by spending at least one day a month together. Jim — my dear friend and spiritual sherpa — encouraged me (as always), saying God would help me meet such a worthy goal. He added that one day a month should be doable, especially given I had spent several hours most days during the past 10 months getting closer to Adam, his family and, in turn, God.

Then Jim asked me *the question*. ...

“What are you going to do with all of the time you’ve been given?”

At the time, I thought Jim was referring to the time I used to spend talking to, and laughing and praying with Adam. I now know Jim’s question was a great and overarching gift to be shared. You see, on Feb. 9, my wife called me at work and informed me as I sat at this very desk that my beloved brother, at age 47, had suffered a heart attack and joined Adam and God.

I now beg you and your family, friends and co-workers to help me celebrate Jim’s and Adam’s lives by contemplating and praying about *the question*.

For examples of lives well lived, peruse www.landscapemanagement.net/AdamEulogy, www.landscapemanagement.net/DadLetter and www.landscapemanagement.net/JimEulogy.

I first pondered *the question* with Adam and Ann a year ago, when we created Bucket Lists — our final wish lists/To Dos before dying. Adam’s Bucket List has dozens of things crossed out. And every time he bravely completed one of his final To Dos, he added another one. Mine, on the other hand, has just 1 of 50 To Dos crossed out. Like many, I got too busy with the busyness of this life.

Feb. 9 was my second wake-up call. To honor Jim, Adam, and the life God graced me with — and to add a new level of public accountability with our publication’s projected receivership of 211,000 — here’s my new, simpler, 10-item Bucket List equipped with deadlines or frequency measurables:

▶ **Spiritual To Dos** — Share time with, and serve, Adam’s and Jim’s wives and children (at least once per month); help kids with cancer find humor, hope and God (quarterly); and be a better husband, father, son, brother, godfather, friend and co-worker by better seeking and following God’s will throughout each day, and scheduling more time with these loved ones (daily).

▶ **Personal To Dos** — Eat less and move more (Lose 55 lbs. by Jan. 1, 2010); spend less (eliminate debt within three years while paying for two Catholic educations); obtain more life insurance (this year); undergo heart tests (this year); and create a will (this year).

▶ **Professional To Dos** — Write a book of family stories (“Whit’s World — Living proof that evolution is overrated”) by Jan. 1, 2010; and craft a screenplay by Jan. 1, 2011.

Enough about me. Now it’s your turn. Time for you to answer — and ask others — *the question*.