A Missed Opportunity Essay, Research Paper

A Missed Opportunity

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Regret, something that one grieves the loss of seems to imply a deep emotional state, an inability to accomplish or even a sense of failure. I prefer to think of regret as a missed opportunity as is shown in the following tale.

In January 1992 my husband was offered the opportunity to work in Switzerland. It was a great chance to extend his life’s time’s work to another market. After many discussions about the “Pros and Cons” we decided to take on the challenge and he accepted the position. Two of our sons would be in college as of September of that year, leaving the youngest to travel with us. We justified it would be a great experience for him, so the planning and moving process began. Ken, my husband, had taken German language in high school so had the basic understanding of the language. I on the other hand had had no prior education. The Swiss company, in our best interest, felt it was essential to immerse us in a language school in Berlin, for a month, for intensive schooling. We had to go in July and we needed to enroll together. Initially it sounded exciting but as we got closer to July the pressure mounted, furniture needed to be stored, cars sold, kids and college needed to be organized etc; etc.

When July finally came I was harassed and not mentally prepared for Berlin. The intent was for us to stay with a German family, go to classes and move to Switzerland with enough of the language to be able to hold a conversation. I had visions of a pleasant home with friendly people, small classes and sightseeing with my executive husband but that was shattered on arrival. The place we were taken too was clearly an economic enterprise to accommodate teenagers just glad to be away from home. The classes were held in the middle of a very busy, hot, city only reachable by traveling what seemed like hours as a mole underground and because of Ken’s prior knowledge, would conclude by sending us in different directions till the end of each day. Again I was not mentally prepared and within 48 hours was ready to retreat to Denver and my comfortable home and life in Evergreen. It took some serious persuasion and change of accommodation before I relented to continue the course.

That month set the stage for what was for me a challenging four years. I never acquired the confidence, desire or education to speak and understand the German language second to my own. It made it difficult to adjust and understand the culture, which in turn fed intolerance and unhappiness. On reflection the gamble we took by making the move went in our favour and the experience of living in Europe again did leave our family with great memories. I just wish my introduction to the language had been at my own pace and in my own time, maybe I’d be able to say more than “Guten Tag”.