



LOST AND FOUND

by Daniel J. Bressler, MD, FACP

A FEW WEEKS AGO I temporarily lost my cell phone. It must have dropped off its holster while we were walking to a neighborhood restaurant on a Friday night. I noticed it was gone during the walk home. We retraced our steps and found nothing. Once home (and suppressing my panic), I discovered that the Motorola Android phone has a built in location device that signals its whereabouts via GPS. The phone, as it turned out, was lying by the side of the road a few blocks from our previous path to and from the restaurant. I can only surmise that someone picked it up, and then having discovered that access to it was locked by a passcode, discarded it. The phone was undamaged. Lucky me.

The incident got me to thinking about all the aspects of life that involve losing and finding. We, along with our patients, can lose our health and need to find our way back to it. We can lose our professional momentum and — if we're lucky — find it again. We might fall out of love and again, if we're lucky, fall back in it, even with the same person.

Many people experience loss not just in specific spheres of their life but

in their overarching sense of meaning. It seems that this is particularly common in middle age — a club of which I am a member — when the initial questions about building a career and having a family have been answered. Unlike my phone, lost meaning does not generate a GPS signal. Each person must seek it uniquely based on his or her own personal history, interests, and values. One can take heart, perhaps, by realizing that getting lost seems to be one prerequisite to growth. It motivates us to find ourselves on a broader or deeper level.

This poem, "Lost and Found," catalogs many of the ways in which we can get lost. However gloomy you might find the observations of the poem to be, remember that being lost is the launching-off point of self-renewal. **SDP**



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*A church bell tolls the morning in
The day gets dragged along
Car doors slam and children call
Cacophony and song
The whole chaotic enterprise
Unfolds the world around
As dreams dissolve in things to do
And lives are lost and found.*

*The streets are filled with wandering souls
Dressed in vacant looks
Following directions learned
From parents, priests, and books
Their eyes inquire, why are we not
By now sweet homeward bound?
But the next appointment's waiting
As each is lost and found.*

*The television teases,
The screen provokes to sell
Bringing higher definition
To lower rungs of hell
The oh-so-human spectrum
From corrupting to profound
That titillates and elevates
And leaves us lost and found.*

*This chest pain only seizes me
When I'm twisted and upset
When the scale of mortal tragedy
Breeds frustration and regret
My shrink tells me it's in my head
But my surgeon's gloved and gowned
Is it grief or circulation?
Diagnosis: lost and found.*

*The park is edged by gravestones
A playground laughs nearby
This ancient eucalyptus
Pulls my vision to the sky
Are the answers to my questioning
Found beneath a burial mound?
The sunset's revelation says
That we all are lost and found.*