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Life Lessons From The Andy Griffith Show

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Our world is a little less perfect with the loss of Andy Griffith this past Tuesday.. Known by most of the world for his creation of a special place called Mayberry, the perfect hometown where everyone lived in harmony with one another.

This landmark television series was not real popular when it began on Oct. 3, 1960. By the final season, the show had moved to the number one position on all networks. Since then, the Andy Griffith Show has provided entertainment to countless millions and thrived for over 5 decades in syndication.

While many contemporary viewers cherish The Andy Griffith Show for its rural values, the reality is that the integrities, morals and religious beliefs instilled in the show could be a lesson for us all. Each week as viewers tuned in to laugh and enjoy, there were true life lessons to be learned by watching the wonderfully diverse and original characters on Andy Griffith.

Honesty, kindness, charity, respect, love thy neighbor, a strong work ethic, and humor were always present within the under current of the weekly dialogue. Many times, you would find that Andy's commitment to personal responsibility and community involvement were always evident. If you watched closely, no character quality was more obvious in each weekly lesson than Andy's tolerance for situations and for others.

Tolerance is defined as a fair, objective, and permissive attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry. Can you imagine how this applies to the relationship between Andy and

his buddy Barney Fife. Daily, the character played by the late Don Knotts, offered challenges from purchasing a used car to riot causing tickets issued to the suspicions that only Barney could dream up.

And of course, tolerance would abound in the relationship with Otis Campbell. Otis was the harmless town drunk who carried an entitled attitude with him when he checked into his jail cell each night after a long drinking binge. Singing, stumbling but always kind, everyone questioned Andy's leadership by allowing Otis to take advantage of everyone in this way. Andy's ability to always seek a way to resolve a situation to the best possible outcome is found in his response about Otis:

ANDY WISDOM: *“In a way, that drinking does a good service for the town,” Sheriff Taylor once observed of the town drunk. “Otis laps it up so fast that the other folks can’t get to it.”*

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Beatrice Taylor could be seen as one that was meddling, a little bossy and always required an extra helping of patience. Therefore, to live with Aunt Bea would have been a challenge in and of itself. But Andy was always kind and looking for the best outcome of others.

ANDY WISDOM: *“Sometimes what's important to some folks is real important to other folks”.*

Remember the episode when Aunt B produced the hazardous waste problem known as "kerosene cucumbers". However, the situation here was filled with double trouble as Aunt Bea and Ms Clara Edwards were in a match of pride over winning the county fair's pickle contest. Andy saved the day for both ladies by eating 16 bottles of Aunt Bea's pickles while sustaining Clara's 20-year reign as the County Pickle Champion. Andy was able to make everyone feel good about themselves in the end.

One particular show had the nit-witted Gomer Pyle entering the courthouse singing the Marine Battle hymn, actually the rebirth of a new series. You could see and feel the worry on Andy's face as Gomer enthusiastically shared about his enlistment and departure the next day. Compassionately, Andy found a way to accompany Gomer to his first day to report for Marine bootcamp. He cared enough to be a servant to his friends.

There was nothing more moving than the father-son relationship portrayed between Andy and Opie. A single dad, Andy was always the dad that worked to teach the deeper lessons found in all situations to the young Opie, played by Ron Howard. Usually the lesson was about the importance of life itself as when Opie accidentally shot the mother bird with his sling shot. Andy simply opened up the lesson by opening the window of Opie's room so that he could hear the young baby birds chirp in the nest nearby .

Oddly enough, Sheriff Andy Taylor was completely 100% surrounded by misfits. All the characters of the show were engaged in creating problems and troubles for the always able and competent Andy Taylor to play problem solver, mediator, advisor, disciplinarian and counselor. It was a big job as you think of the notable list of cast members.

Goober Pyle - The Town Mechanic

Floyd Lawson - The Town Barber

Helen Crump - The Girlfriend

Thelma Lou Beasley - Barney's Girlfriend

Howard Sprague - The Momma's Boy Insurance Agent

Emmett Clark - The Town Fix It.

Martha Clark - Emmett's Wife.

Ellie Walker - Andy's First Girlfriend and Pharmacist.

Ernest T. Bass - Wild Crazy Moonshiner that *LLLL UUUU VVV SSS UUUUU*)

The Darlings: Briscoe Darling, Charlene Darling and the Darling Boys -

Moonshiners and Bluegrass Players.

Clara Edwards - The Interfering Neighbor & Best Friend of Aunt Bea.

Emma Watson - One that Andy was always doing favors for around town.

Ben Weaver - The Grouchy Ole Landlord and Businessman

Deputy Warren Ferguson - The Not So Smart - Huh? Yea! - Huh? Yea! - Huh? Yea!

Leon - Remember the Peanut Butter Snot Nosed Quiet Kid.

Rafe Hollister - Local Farmer and Moonshiner Extraordinaire

The Fun Girls - Daphne and Skippy - The Party Girls that Really Messed with Barney.

Asa - You have to remember the old security guard at the Mayberry Bank - His Gun Would Fall into Pieces.

And Others - **Mayer Pike, Mayer Roy Stoner, Millie Swanson, Peggy**

McMillian, John Masters, Reverend Tucker, John Paul Jason, Wally and others.

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his cast. Even with all the work involved to keep everyone happy, Andy always seemed to maintain a positive spirit of optimism about himself and to others. Andy always delivered dignity to the drunk, integrity to the moonshiners and fairness to every bully. He taught us to listen and evaluate carefully before we react, even if the person is your young son, Opie.

A person will find many biblical truths in the character and integrity of Andy Griffith. His roots were deeply rooted in his faith in Jesus Christ and it reflected in the wisdoms

that were shared through his show. Having Andy in charge of Mayberry, he taught us all what we seem to have forgotten over the years.

- *Everyone has value*
- *Everyone has something to offer*
- *Remember, winning is not everything, but being a good sport is always important.*
- *Remember, the love of family and community was, and always will be the most important lesson in life.*

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Andy Griffith remained a good man throughout his life and it just wasn't a show. May he rest in peace.

Enjoy the Intro and Exit:

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