

Chapter 4 Home: Present and Future

How many coolers does a family need?

Cindy Hudson, my BFF (Best Friend Forever—How long is forever?), is my accountability partner, running buddy, prayer partner, encourager, sounding board.... up and sells a 3-story house, gives her three grown boys their inheritance artwork, buys an R.V. and rolls out on a new adventure with her newly retired husband. Talk about a new way of life!

My husband David and I frequently say, “How are they doing it? Cindy, Miss Boots and Scarves, as David calls her is a Mary Kay Cosmetics Director with inventory, sales slips, facials to do, parties to host, stacks of bags to package, assemble and ship is now living in an RV. Really, a cat too? with a tower and a litter box that fills the bathroom floor except for just enough area to put a foot to the right and one to the left. That brings back memories of being in the woods and squatting to go to the “bathroom/restroom”. Where did those terms come from? No bathtub or ability to relax and stretch out in there. Doing your business room is a better term. Knowing the difference between black wastewater as opposed to grey, sink water, when going to the dumping station is essential information an RV owner must know and calculate. Walk in closets, three jugs of laundry detergent, a Sam’s sized package of toilet paper and paper towels are a thing of the past for them. It makes one think. Is buying in bulk cost effective? Having extra a necessity? What about the potatoes and onions that rot in the cute, wooden tater and onion box I finally got after years of seeing them and wanting one? That won’t fit in Harvey the RV.

The thoughts, which hopefully will turn into actions, of purging our living quarters started after I purchased a darling, handmade log cabin for the grandchildren (3- & 5-year-old girls). Actually, probably for me. I’d always wanted a doll house and natural wood colors appeal to me more than the white with wallpaper fancy ones I’ve seen. Those might need the adorable miniature furniture I’ve seen. A three-inch dresser can cost the same as a life-sized six-drawer one you can fill to the rim with how many t-shirts, sweat-pants, PJ’s....?

After my purchase, I left the little cabin in the back of the car for several days. One, I wasn’t sure where to put it and two, I could hear David saying, “Why, where, what about all this stuff we are accumulating?” Of course, it’s easiest to see the other person’s clutter, but admittedly, I have lots and lots of things that just might be useful somewhere, someday, by someone. The basement laundry room is the favorite we (you) need to get rid of what’s on the shelves room.

So, at 3:00 a morning in June, I went to the “bathroom” downstairs, so as to be as quiet as possible, and stopped by the laundry room. A quick inventory:

- Jugs of laundry detergent
- Hand sanitizer & wipes
- Coolers (3 hard-sided and 5 soft ones)
- Spiral notebooks (17cents each) a whole box

A highchair; bedside commode; exercise bench; plastic zipper bags that once had comforters, bedding, etc.; containers of art supplies; partially completed projects; candles, containers of highlighters and pens....

If I lived in a log cabin with two rooms and a loft, what are the essential I would take with me?

Last night at a meeting of the Arts Collective group at church, Sarah asked us to write the word “home” on a 3X5 index card and one word to describe that. I had stepped out of the room to retrieve pens for our visitors to the group and missed the “assignment” details but before leaving the room, I had pictured a weeping willow tree. We have one in our back yard and it’s a frequent source of conflict/irritation. The dropping branches make mowing difficult as do the long branches that fall to the ground and get tangled in the lawn mower. (Yes, I had promised to push mow and like the kid who says, “Yes, Daddy, I’ll walk the dog every day”, I have failed to live up to my part of the bargain. This tree has had serious issues. Initially the west winds made it lean. We used a garden hose and ropes to redirect its growth. Yes, the hose is now part of the tree. The windstorms have removed a couple larger branches which has made for an asymmetrical tree. The physical therapist who wants level shoulders and hips and can’t leave a patient crooked in the bed part of me can’t tolerate that. Willows have interesting growth patterns, and you can’t just trim a limb. The other day we had intense winds from the east and I’m looking at the tree praying, “God, please take that limb and cause it to droop on the right-hand side to fill in that gap.” The willow tree symbolizes to me the scripture ***in Revelation 22:2 ...and the leaves are for the healing of the nations.***

It also brings childhood memories of a huge weeping willow in our side yard, in Montana, which was our fort, giving me that warm, homie, good feeling inside. We moved to KY in time for first grade and am I glad we left snow country. Water freezes at 32 degrees and the blood in my feet at anything below 72. Interesting that the child in me is being revisited. I recently heard a pastor speak about “When at war create” and how a study revealed that 95% of 1600 five-year-old children tested as creative geniuses and by the age of 18 only a small fraction continued to test at that level. Our first understanding of who the Godhead is comes in the first chapter of Genesis.

In the beginning God (Elohim, a pleural noun in Hebrew) created the heavens and the earth.”

We are made in His image and were/are designed to create. Just a look around at the bridges, buildings, paintings, sculptures, computer programs, books, teaching styles, medical equipment—they are examples of the many ways humans have unlimited opportunities to create.

That’s a topic for another chapter, so let’s get back to the development of a friend and friendship that has helped shape, mold, and direct the lives of many people including the women in the Fresh Start Community in Owensboro. Cindy Davis Hudson grew up in east TN and Texas with a heavy accent especially noted with words like nice, spice, lights. She married her high school sweetheart, Sid and worked in a factory. Youth leaders barely out of college,

they started a family. A transfer of jobs brought them to KY where they were grafted into the Owensboro community. Cindy has developed her Mary Kay business to the point that she has earned more than one vehicle and has her eye on a pink Cadillac. I have no doubt she'll be pulling one behind the RV one day. Her compassion for others led her to volunteer with a sexual assault agency, the health department, and during a run one day, she agreed to go to Nashville, TN with me and others to tour a ministry for women wanting to leave prostitution and start a new life. Thistle Farms helped Fresh Start for Women develop a vision and Cindy Hudson was a founding board member.

Cindy's entrepreneurial skills, drive, love of people, and her love of God lead to her being nominated for the Athena Award which recognizes women in the area who have had a profound influence on others and the community. Her take life as it comes attitude, has helped her weather the challenges of squirrels chewing a hole in the propane hose during a time away from the RV park. Who would have thought temperatures in the 30's in FL? High winds, sharing the highways with people with road rage and distracted/impaired drivers, while driving down the road toting most everything you own, doesn't get her down. Faith in God and enjoying the journey is her way of facing the challenges of homelessness if Harvey needs to go to the mechanic. Wintering in an RV camp with recreational staff coordinating daily activities and all the amenities imaginable, meet the stark contrast of a campground in the boonies. Almost no phone service and a weak Wi-Fi signal that is NOT conducive to Zoom Mary Kay parties or board meetings. It will all work out is Cindy's motto. She is an example of how someone of simple beginnings can set goals and with perseverance and prayer, can achieve them. Helping the Fresh Start women do the same, has been a goal of our board. These families usually come to our transitional housing complex with little to no belongings and gradually rebuild their lives.

As I take inventory of my possessions, the passage in ***Matthew 6:19-20 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy.... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...*** comes to mind. For a Christian, that is our true home for eternity. Do we really live our lives with that focus? For 59 years I have "played it safe". Not wanting to be rejected for behaving in a manner that some might frown at or at least question. Being passionate about pursuing healings, miracles, deliverance from evil spirits and the like, cause many to say do you really believe those for today? Available to any who can believe and contend for the Kingdom of God to manifest ***on earth as it is in heaven*** right here, right now? Could that possibly be how we turn the world around and put an end to the chaos and fear? People have lost their identity and don't even know if they are male or female. The God who designed humans in the image of Elohim said, ***"I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."***
Jeremiah 29:11

To this culture that's attempted to steal our hope, make us fearful of a stock market crash, pandemics, wars, natural disasters, and squelches our dreams and imaginations, it's time to say NO MORE!! Earth is my temporary home and a footstool for the huge God I serve. What is there to fear? It's time to embrace Psalm 59 and believe that the One who created the

heavens, and the earth will deliver me from my enemies. Most of them are not flesh and blood but principalities of fear and dread; worry and cares of this world.

Where is your home? Eternity is a long time. My friend Cindy and I will be friends for eternity as we both believe in life everlasting in heaven with Christ Jesus. She's fun loving and she helps me see life on earth through lenses of joy and enthusiasm. My perceptions of heaven are changing. The images created by many are a life without tears and sickness (Revelation 21:4) including images of sitting on a cloud playing a harp and having a mansion on a street made of gold. Worship music is something that most quickly can get my mind refocused on the promises and goodness of God but musical talent and playing an instrument NOT SO MUCH. A mansion, I don't like the upkeep of a large house and most of my current basement collects clutter and items I doubt will be a part of the redeemed Heaven and Earth.

I remember a thought many years ago when the picture of heaven presented to me seemed materialist and almost made me feel sinful to try to conger up pictures along those lines. Somewhere along my journey, I looked at the beauty and majesty of the Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountains, intricacy of the details of a flower and the insects perfectly designed to pollinate them. I began to embrace **1 Corinthians 2:9 No eye has seen, no ear has heard, o mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.** Creation is magnificent, the universe vast. I think heaven will be out of this world. I'm going to let myself imagine a world beyond anything I've ever experienced. I do believe a willow tree and a waterfall will be close by whatever dwelling there may be in my eternal home with Elohim. Our eternal home is worth persevering through the trials and heartaches as we learn to trust God and experience glimpses of His holiness, the comfort of His presence, the joy of friends and family, laughter.....

Take a moment to think of the things you enjoy and thank God for them and look forward to more to come.

