

February 2017

Dear Clients and Friends:

When Charles M. Schulz was born in 1922, his uncle nicknamed him “Sparky” after the horse Spark Plug, from the *Barney Google* comic strip. That was a bit of prophecy, as the boy had a knack for drawing. He grew up reading the funnies every Sunday morning, fascinated with strips like *Skippy*, *Mickey Mouse*, and *Popeye*.

By the age of 27, Schulz had already dealt with his mother’s death from cancer, and was haunted by memories of his service in the army during World War II. The lingering effects of his early life forever colored his work as a cartoonist. The first *Peanuts* strip, a simple four-panel creation, appeared in 1950. In no time, it became a phenomenon and an essential part of the American experience.

Thank goodness all those kids were frozen in time. *Peanuts* has been described as “arguably the longest story ever told by one human being.” The daily adventures of Charlie Brown and his gang found endless humor amid the perils of growing up.



Schulz didn’t have to write a novel to explain what it means to be a kid. In one cartoon, Charlie Brown silently watches his friends swimming in a pool, then goes back to his yard and sits alone in a bucket of water. We’ve all been there at one time or another.



*Peanuts* was full of simple truths, like “Get some friends!” Nothing can replace our friends, our family, and all the people who make a difference in our lives. When Charles Schulz died in 2002, he left a wonderful legacy, including these words of wisdom:

You don’t have to actually answer these six questions, just read them straight through.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners.
6. Name the last decade’s worth of World Series winners.

How did you do? The point is, none of us remembers the headliners of yesterday.

These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here’s another quiz. See how you do with these six questions:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who made you feel appreciated and special.

5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

6. Name half a dozen heroes whose stories have inspired you.

Easier? The lesson is ... the people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards.

They are the ones that care.

For being a part of the *Peanuts* saga, many thanks to Lucy, Linus, Schroeder, Sally, Peppermint Patty, the Little Red-Haired Girl, Pig-Pen, Snoopy, the Kite-Eating Tree, the Great Pumpkin, and of course, Charlie Brown.

Regards,



Charles M. Shackelford