

10 Δεκεμβρίου 2017

Letter to my newborn daughter (Evangelos Sotiropoulos, political scientist, freelance columnist)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



It seems like just yesterday that your mother and I left the hospital with all six and three-quarter pounds of you securely fastened in your car seat, your surprisingly full head of hair covered by the traditional hospital baby cap.

As we celebrate 40-days since your birth, years before you'll be able to read it and perhaps decades before you'll be able to understand the love with which I write it, here is a letter to you, my newborn daughter.



You were born in Canada, a truly blessed country that has offered so much to so many, including both of your sets of grandparents. They came to this country with little, but were able to grow and prosper and build a strong family foundation, from

which your mother and I benefited from and hope in turn to pass onto you.

The life expectancy of a newborn girl in Canada today is approximately 85-years. That's a little over 1,000 months and 31,000 days. It may seem like a lot of time, especially now as you're still small enough for me to hold you in the palm of my hand, but believe me, it's one of the most precious things you have, which can never be bought, replaced, or recovered.

Not quite just yet, but an important, perhaps the most important question for you will be how you spend your time, how you spend the number of days God grants you on this earth.

You will one day have the freedom to decide what to do with your time; God gave us freedom and does not violate it. We are free to choose between right and wrong, good and bad, and of course are responsible to live with the consequences.

I want you to know that you can do anything you want with your life. There are no limitations and certainly none because you are a girl. You can become a lawyer or a librarian, a painter or a pilot, a neurologist or a nun, it's up to you.

Whatever you choose to pursue, however you choose to spend your time, I hope that as your father (together with your mother and all of your family and friends) I can instill in you a principled foundation with values and virtues that propel you to success, however you choose to define that.

Therefore, let me set out some stories and standards that I hope you employ and uphold throughout your life.

Always remember that together with your physical body you have a spiritual soul. As you preserve and try to sustain your perishable body with good habits such as eating well and exercising, do not neglect your immortal soul, including by going to church and praying.

More, as St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Let all that you do be done with love." If you remember and implement these nine simple words in your daily life, you will be on the path to true happiness. This includes, for example, being a cheerful giver, be it of your time, money, or possessions, and also by looking out for the interests of others.

Be watchful and guard your thoughts, they are powerful and can determine your life. There was recently a holy monk (who had the same baptismal name as your father), who gave, like others before him, a rule to guide our thoughts.

St. Porphyrios describes how every person has a power in their soul, but it's up to him how he channels it: the good is like a garden of beautiful flowers, while the bad is full of weeds and thorns. Be sure to use your power to water and cultivate good thoughts, paying no attention to the bad.

This is especially important in today's society, where much evil, lies, and deceptions permeate; instead, recall what Paul wrote to Titus, "Avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless." Never give others the power to determine how you feel, especially about yourself.

Now, if you try to avoid bad thoughts, and the people who propagate them, keep in your heart that all people are equal in dignity, without exception, since all humans share the same nature in Jesus Christ our God.

There are other things, too, that should underpin your life: be humble, for humility is the active ingredient that cultivates the virtues. Humility, keep in mind, does not equal weakness: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves," we read in the Bible.

Be curious, ask questions, read a lot, always looking to learn and grow. Likewise, travel and explore; there are so many wonderful things to see and special people to meet around the world (especially in Greece and Italy!).

Love to smile, love to laugh, and especially love and respect people: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep," Paul writes to the Romans.

Don't be afraid to fail, because it's in failure that you will learn the most (trust me on this one). Be confident in whatever you do, since without it you won't be able to do much. Finally, as a very wise man and mentor once told me, "Never anger ... keep your dignity."

This may seem like a lot of information, but if you choose to follow these suggestions, you'll see that they create a virtuous cycle, complementing each other with precision. As you navigate the days of your life, may they guide you to the truth like a lighthouse in a dark stormy night. If you do these things, I promise your 31,000 days, or however many you are fortunate enough to have, will be happy and blessed ones.

Source: *huffingtonpost.com*