

## **Favorite quotes and a few heartwarming snippets shared from Opportunity Knocked, by Clyde Seely**

The purpose of this collection of quotes is to serve as a quick reference for times when we need a boost and encouragement. I have recorded them in a journal for over 50 years and have used them throughout my life. Some are silly, some profound, all have played an important role in my life. They can be found on the pages indicated in Opportunity Knocked.

*I would much rather have men ask why I have no statue, than ask why I have one.*  
– Marcus Porcius Cato, Page 1

*I am only one- But I am one;  
I cannot do everything, But I can do something,  
And what I can do- That I ought to do;  
And what I ought to do- By the grace of God, I will do.*  
- Edward Everett Hale, Page 4

*Parents can tell, but never teach, unless they practice what they preach.*  
- Arnold H. Glasow, Page 11

In her journal Mother wrote about my big brother Dean following in Dad's footsteps. Then she quoted the following poem entitled:

### **"A Little Fellow Follows Me"**

A careful man I want to be,  
A little fellow follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray,  
For fear he'll go the self-same way.  
I cannot once escape his eyes;  
What'er he sees me do, he tries;  
Like me he says he's going to be,  
The little chap who follows me.  
I must remember as I go  
Through summer's heat and winter's snow;  
I am building for the years to be,  
That little chap who follows me.  
I have tried to follow in Dad's footsteps as well.

Reverend Claude Wisdom White, Sr., Page 15

Near the end of her journal, Mother recorded a poem she addressed to her grandkids who were graduating high school.

You are the fellow who has to decide,  
Whether you'll do it or toss it aside.  
You are the fellow who makes up your mind.  
Whether you'll lead or linger behind.  
Whether you'll try for the goal that's afar,  
Or just be content to stay where you are.  
Take it or leave it it's all up to you.  
- Author Edgar A. Guest

She then signed her name as "Grandma", Page 27

*All the water in the world, however hard it tried, can never sink the smallest ship unless it gets inside.*

Author Unknown, Page 32

### Button Button

Here's a lighthearted poem, just for the fun of it and for your amusement. A poem similar to this was given by my Aunt at a big church social. People laughed uncontrollably the way she read it. (I couldn't find the original so I wrote my own version.)

"Years later, at my dad's family reunion in 1997, we were asked to come prepared to reminisce about things that used to happen. I remembered the gist of one of those readings that I thought would be fun to read but could not find a copy. We were also going to play the childhood game of "Button, Button" so I adapted from what I remembered to make up my own version and entitled it "Button, Button." This silly little poem was read in a light-hearted way and everyone laughed at the reunion as they had at the ward party."

- CS

### "BUTTON, BUTTON": AN EXPERIENCE LONG PAST

At the "Seely Reunion" I have heard we're going to play "Button, Button."  
Well, let me tell you of an experience that was really somethin'.

I once heard a cowboy poet who sent me a laughin'  
But to recall all the details- my memory is lackin'.

So please forgive me as I make up my own recollection,  
About a lady in church and a little boy's reflection.  
The lady was rather portly, as I recall,  
As she stood up to speak from the podium to all.

Now she was all nicely dressed, as she stood to speak in church,  
I could see that from behind, as I sat on my perch.  
Her dress was stuck up between one of those embarrassing places,  
I had to act quickly before someone else noticed and got flushed faces.

She looked awfully uncomfortable just standin' there  
And was probably too embarrassed to reach down and just pull it out of there.  
Now, I had always been taught by King Benjamin about service,  
I knew this was my chance, so she wouldn't get too nervous.

So, feeling certain this lady would have great appreciation,  
I squatted down behind and crawled up to relieve the situation.  
My hand reached up and pulled her dress right out from where it was stuck.  
I turned to my seat, when I felt like I was hit from behind by a great big truck.

For she kicked me so hard, I slid across the floor,  
Right back over to where I was sittin' before.  
Now she continued right on with her talk,  
O how I wished I could just go for a walk.

I sat there with my head in my hands totally confused,  
For I thought I had done a good deed, but instead felt all abused.  
I guess my good intention had been mistook,  
She must have wanted her dress hangin' there like it was on a hook.

With all my church learnin', somethin' had gone awry.  
For I remembered when doing a wrong you must also make it right.  
Now realizin' she must have wanted her dress there, I made a resolution  
And began to plan out how I could make restitution.

Remember as kids, "Button, Button," we would play?  
Maybe with this technique I could again get her dress to stay.  
I figured this would accomplish my mission,  
If I merely reversed the position.

So without giving it another thought, again I squatted,  
And crawled up behind her to do what I thought she wanted.  
With my hands cupped tightly together, I see-sawed her dress in an upward motion.  
Oh! If it was bad before, well another truck would have caused much less commotion.

For I had just started to return to my seat, feeling right proud,  
When from behind without making sound,  
She hit me with her purse on the side of my head with such a blow,  
I slid back across the floor, it must have been quite a show.

Someone told me later, I had laid there for an hour,  
Until someone, on my face, cold water they did shower.  
Well, when all is said and done, I still believe in my religion,  
Even though the blessings of service and restitution were not very Legion.

There is only one thing I regret, after all these many long years.  
For I am sure I would have laughed until it brought many tears.  
I never got to see the expression on her face,  
When I first withdrew, and then replaced her dress  
in that very special place.

- Clyde Seely, 1997, Page 37

"Clyde, sometimes you just have to put your heart in your pocket and do what has to be done."  
Raising sheep was part of my early childhood. During lambing season, quite often the ewe  
(mother) could not have the lamb on her own. If it isn't turned right, feet and nose first, it cannot  
come out and the mother could die. I would quite often have to help Dad. A memorable time  
was when I was about 12 years old. Because my hands were small, I had to push my hands up  
inside and Dad explained to me how to turn the lamb into the right position. "Once I hesitated  
several times and said, "It hurts her too bad." In response, Dad said something I will never  
forget. He said,

"Clyde, sometimes you just have to put your heart in your pocket and do what has to be  
done."

"This has been a reminder to me over the years that sometimes-hard decisions have to be  
made. These decisions can be painful to others or me in the short term, but these decisions will  
bring great rewards in the end."

- Clyde Seely, Page 52-53, 60,132

*The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken.*

- Samuel Johnson, Page 61

Definition of a Kiss:

It is a noun because it is common, proper, and possessive.

It is a verb because it shows action.

It is a conjunction because it connects two things together.

It is plural because one follows another.

It is a pronoun because she stands for it.

- Author Unknown, Page 70

“Dear John”

It often happens, when a guy leaves on a two-year mission for the church he leaves a girlfriend behind. Most often the boy receives, what is called a “Dear John” letter.

- CS

Absence makes the heart grow fonder,  
fools say as departure nears.  
But the same have cause to ponder,  
If the absence lasts two years.  
Though you started by declaring- She’s the only girl for me.  
Chances are it’s not meant to be.  
Oh, beware of the lips that promise,  
I’ll be faithful while you’re gone.”  
Though your name be Floyd or Thomas,  
You will soon be called- “Dear John.”

Page 68

My wife, Linda was having a miscarriage.

-CS

I grabbed some towels and rushed Linda to St. Anthony, to the hospital which was 74 miles away. She had lost a lot of blood, so the staff rushed someone to Rexburg to get her blood for a transfusion. It was rather frightening, and I was pretty worried, wondering if everything would be okay. I remember watching her while she was sedated and thinking how beautiful she was and how much I loved her. There she was, looking almost lifeless having lost the baby and a lot of blood. Gradually, she opened her eyes and not yet seeing me asked, “Is Clyde all right?” That was typical of her. It was for her they had rushed to Rexburg to get blood. It was she who had just had a jolting miscarriage and whose life I was concerned about. Yet, the first words out of her mouth were, “Is Clyde all right?” My love and appreciation for her increased that day and has continued to increase since that time so many years ago. How blessed I am to have a companion like that.

- Clyde Seely, Page 74

*Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of the things which matter least.*

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Page 77

“The greatest work we will ever do will be within the walls of our home.”

- Harold B. Lee, Page 87

*Somehow, across each stretching mile,*

*I feel your touch and see your smile.  
As though your thoughts had found a way,  
to reach me with your voice today.*  
- Author Unknown, Page 93

The following is the first poem I had ever written and was put on the back cover of my daughter Rochelle's funeral program.

To Rochelle  
I have been honored over the years to speak at funerals galore,  
But for some reason this one isn't the same as before.  
Because of the person who we honor this day,  
I just can't get the words out I wish to say.  
So bear with me, my little daughter while I pen a tidbit or two  
That only feebly expresses my love for you.  
Just 29 years ago straight from heaven you came,  
To brighten our lives, that would never be the same.  
'Twas 3 in the morning when you first arrived,  
After a scare and struggle you finally arrived,  
With a prayer on our lips and a doctor's shake,  
That first precious breath you finally did take.  
With blond ponytails and a happy little smile,  
You had special friends and would go the extra mile.  
Then came your best friend Kevin, you married;  
For the rest of your life with him you happily tarried.  
While your first breath was so slow coming,  
Your last was too quick to leave,  
And we who love you are left here to grieve.  
You would have us pick up the pieces and carry on,  
And not look back just because you are gone.  
We will do our best to follow your happy and positive ways,  
Until we have our reunion again one of these days.  
This last thing you must always remember,  
We love you with all our hearts and will forever.  
- Dad

Page, 99

Since her death we have given the Rochelle Seely Burns Scholarship to high school seniors. The inscription on the award is as applicable today as when I wrote it 25 years ago. It reads:

"Life itself is precious, cherish it. Life is a gift of God, give of yourself in return. Life is to be enjoyed, be happy. Life is to be productive, magnify your talents and make a difference. May you be successful in all you do and help others along the way."

- Clyde and Linda Seely

Page 105

*Faith walks in, Fear walks out: Fear walks in, Faith walks out.*  
- Author Unknown, Page 106

*Don't grumble, don't bluster, don't sleep, don't shirk,  
Don't think of your worries, just think of your work.  
Then your worries will vanish, the work will be done;  
For no man sees his shadow who faces the sun.*  
- Author Unknown, Page 113

*It's not the size of the man in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the man.*  
- Mark Twain, Page, 126

*No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.*  
- Theodore Roosevelt, Page 137

*God gave us two ends, ...one to sit with and one to think with. Success depends on which one  
you use the most. Heads you win, Tails you lose.*  
- Author Unknown, page 144

*The successful person has the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like  
doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.*  
- Albert E. N. Gray, Page 154

Awesome Autumn: written about Parade Rest Ranch

#### AWESOME AUTUMN

A camera, I did not have, so words will just have to do,  
As I stood amid the cottonwoods with leaves of a brilliant golden hue.  
'Twas fall at Parade Rest Guest Ranch,  
The silence broken only by the rustling of the leaves and a broken branch.  
At my left hand stood our "black as coal" mare,  
And under my right hand her little paint colt was just a standin' there.  
The Quaking Aspen had mostly lost their leaves,  
With just a little yellow left shimmering in the breeze.  
Up on the hillside a jack leg fence ran way up high.  
The sagebrush, grasses, and scrub oak were so colorful, and yet so dry.  
To the East the quakies gave way to the pines,  
And just to the left Hebgen Lake and Lionshead were just in line.  
I looked on around to complete the horizon,  
The mountains of Yellowstone and the grazing lands for many a bison.  
Right in front, Grayling Creek was just a gurgling.  
Where earlier this spring it had been raging and whirling.  
Across the creek stood the old Homestead Cabin,  
Standing like a sentinel and a testament of things that used to happen.  
Now I could not help but stand in the solemnity of awe, of the beauty all around me just  
before dark,  
And our privilege to live next to Yellowstone National Park.  
Even this frame made from the handiwork of God and shaped by an unskilled hand,

Takes on new meaning as a product of this almost hallowed land.  
But the thing most abundantly clear, is that we are so blessed by the Almighty above,  
To be the caretakers for a decade or so of this place we so dearly love.  
- Clyde Seely, Oct 1996

Page 156

*Solomon said, "With all they getting get wisdom" (See Proverbs 4:7) And then someone who must have been a little wiser than Solomon said, "With all thy getting, get going."*  
- Sterling W. Sill, Page 165

*The 3 Cs of failure are criticism, condemnation, and complaining.  
The 3 Cs of success are compassion, courage, and commitment.*  
- Author Unknown, Page 180

*Someone once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."  
Someone else added, "If at first you do succeed, try something harder."  
I might add, "If at first you don't succeed, you're about average."*  
- Clyde Seely, Page 191

*You can't win a war, unless you are willing to fight the battle.*  
- Author Unknown, Page 199

### **Two Fool Jackasses**

Two fool jackasses say, get this dope- We're tied together with a piece of rope. Said one to the other; "You come my way while I take a nibble from this new mown hay."

"I won't," said the other. "You come with me. For I too, have some hay, you see." So they got nowhere, just pawed dirt. And oh by golley, that rope did hurt!

Then they faced about, those stubborn mules and said, "We're acting like human fools." Let's pull together. I'll go your way, then you come with me and we'll both eat hay." Well, they ate their hay and liked it too and swore to be comrades good and true, as the sun went down they were heard to say; "So-this is the end of a perfect day."

- Author Unknown, Page 210

Winter in Yellowstone became a controversial matter between those who wanted to ban snowmobiles from the park and the access community to keep them in. We were involved in this struggle for over 13 years. During that time I often thought of the following Aesop's fable: "The Goose with the Golden Egg"

-CS

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find, - nothing.

Page 208

The resolution of the problem has allowed the Golden Goose of Yellowstone to continue laying its golden eggs for all to enjoy.

Over the years this little poem keeps popping back into my mind as I keep raising my hand at the appropriate time.

It seems whenever I go to a public meeting,  
I slip quietly into the back of the house  
Pretty soon things begin to start heating,  
No longer can I sit quiet as a mouse  
This could turn out to be a real pity,  
Reluctantly, I raise my hand and open my mouth-  
And "Bam," there I am on another committee.

- Author Unknown, Page 221

*When a man has put a limit on what he will do, he has put a limit on what he can do.*

- Charles M. Schwab, Page 241

*Guard well your spare moments. They are like uncut diamonds. Discard them and their value will never be known. Improve them and they become the brightest gems in a useful life.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Page 267

*Don't get so heavenly minded, that you are of no earthly use.*

- Author Unknown, Page 257

The Yellowstone fires of 1988 were becoming a real threat to the town. Few who lived here will soon forget the anxious feelings when it seemed imminent that our little town and homes were threatened. At the encouragement of others, I have written and included here a description of the role I played and memories of those days when we watched the fire come ever closer until the town was in imminent danger of the fire.

- Clyde Seely, Page 276

Commentary, CS

I was responsible for initiating and carrying out a massive effort to defend West Yellowstone from the Yellowstone fires of 1988. The farmers from Idaho brought up 16 miles of sprinkler pipe from their fields and the Park Service let us cut trees and lay many lines of pipe between the Madison River and town. People often asked, "What drove you to take on such a huge undertaking?" In answer to that, I often refer to my favorite definitions on Hell. Applying this definition has been a driving force in my life. It has led me to take on some far-out projects and stick with them until they were done. The definition is this:



**“When the man that I am, comes face to face with the man that I could have been, that is hell.”**

It's all about avoiding the regrets that come from not doing something that my gut tells me that I should do. How would I have felt if the fires were about to invade the town and I had to say, “If only I had done what I was prompted to do.” ...Even though confronting the fires was similar to being in the jaws of hell itself, I escaped the regret of my definition of hell, as I felt I had done all I could do.”

- Clyde Seely, Page 295

We ask for strength and God gives us difficulties, which makes us strong. We pray for wisdom and God sends us problems, the solutions of which develop wisdom. We plead for prosperity and God gives us brain and brawn to work. We plead for courage and God gives us dangers to overcome. We ask for favors and God give us opportunities. This is the answer.

-Jule Johnson, as quoted in Ensign, May 1973, Page 298

After the fire at Three Bear, I couldn't just tear down and through throw all the old material away. I wrote this of my Dad and Mother.

#### **The Legacy of the White Shirt**

Long before recycling was the in thing, I thought it was something people just did in order to survive. Take for instance, my dad's white shirt. Farm life was hard, and there was not much money for store-bought things. Dad wore his white shirt to church every Sunday. When the collar began to get frayed, my mother would unstitch it from the shirt, turn it over, and sew it back on. It looked pretty good, but Mother washed it with her homemade laundry soap so often the shirt was no longer quite as white. After the collar was worn out again, Dad used it as a work shirt. No one cared if the collar looked worn. When the white shirt got stained or there were too many holes to be patched, Mother would cut off the buttons to reuse and cut the shirt into cleaning rags and smaller pieces for nose rags. When we needed to blow our nose, we would go to the top left-hand drawer of her old Singer sewing machine and get a white rag. After a good blow, it was taken to the cook stove where it contributed to the fuel supply. The final use of the white shirt became part of the ashes, a substitute for lye. My mom would then stir the ashes along with other ingredients in a big copper kettle over an open fire as she made her laundry soap so she could- you guessed it- wash Dad's white shirt!

Here is the inscription on the bottom of the Legacy of the White Shirt historical display.

“When it came time to demolish Three Bear Lodge after the fire, the principle of the white shirt that I grew up with protected the historical and sentimental materials from being crushed and hauled to the landfill. Even though it was not known at the time what some of the items would be used for, because of the legacy of the white shirt, they were saved. It is interesting to see, touch, and feel the homemade room furniture throughout the lodge and in the décor of the common areas. The result of this recycling effort has now become part of the history of Three Bear Lodge.”

Clyde Seely, Page 304

*“He ain’t heavy; he’s my brother.”*

The Hollies, Page 308

I think of the little poem my mother used to recite to me about the rocks on our farm. It is now prominently displayed in the lodge lobby entitled “The Rocks at Three Bear” on the massive fireplace constructed from those same rocks that we brought from my boyhood farm.

I wish I was a little rock, a sit’n on a hill  
A do’n nothin’ all day long but just a sittin’ still.  
I wouldn’t eat, I wouldn’t sleep, I wouldn’t even wash.  
I’d sit and sit a thousand years, and rest myself, by gosh.

Page 317

Actually, the thought of sitting still for long periods of time gives me the wiggles (Later to be officially named Restless Legs Syndrome) just thinking about it, but it would be nice for a little while anyway.

The following was written about my friend, the Seely Wiggles, which has been a lifelong companion.

**Pain**

Pain, you have been my companion too long;  
Now why don’t you leave me alone and be gone?  
Even when I was a little guy and so small;  
I would put up with you by trying to feel you, not at all.

As I grew older various things hurt so bad;  
Everyone said to be brave, but I was just a lad.  
As I grew older you bothered me every day with those “wiggles,”  
Creepy crawly pains caused my legs to do the jiggles.

As I’ve grown older, you’ve even introduced  
me to your twin brother, Aches.  
Aches and Pains, teaming up together makes  
me want to pull on your reins.

Pain, like darkness, you lurk around every corner too,  
And I dread to meet you for what you'll do.  
Why don't you leave me alone and to another, go bother?  
I wish so badly that you will soon be a goner.

Then one day, Pain turned and said back to me:  
There are many lessons of life I have caused you to see.  
I, who you thought to be your enemy, was really your friend.  
Hang in there with me and you will be a better man in the end.

Remember those times when you would  
have taken the easy way;  
Instead you suffered and struggled and pulled  
yourself up to stay.  
It was I who made you strong, when you would  
have taken the lower road.  
If I'd not been there to try you, you'd be too  
weak to carry your load.

If I had not been there for you,  
I'll bet you would have just given up too.

Because of the "wiggles," how many  
times have you said, "Be gone!"  
I who have been your friend have tested  
and tried you to the end.  
Am I wrong?

Look at you now after all you have suffered;  
Recollect what I have done for you as others wondered.  
I have caused you to be tender hearted,  
For others in pain that has just started.

Patience you learned from me while keeping so busy,  
Look at all you have done because I kept you in a tizzy.  
Are you sure you want me to be gone,  
or shall I linger a while longer,  
So that you can still become a little stronger?

- Clyde Seely, Page 310

NOT IN THE BOOK

Rats! I can't believe it. While writing the book I left out a couple quotes that other people have known me to use.

- CS

*"Always at hand is the thing needed, if you have the wit and the wisdom to use it."*

- Clyde Seely

In the early 1970's, when we first started to rent snowmobiles I would take our people into the back country. I became known as "Clyde the Guide." The machines then were often prone to breakdowns. One time when we were way up in the mountains, one of the machines broke down. Would we have to come back later with the part and fix it? One of the guys with me said, "Always at hand is the thing needed, if you have the wit and the wisdom to use it."

So we started looking through the machine tool boxes and found a piece of wire and a pair of pliers and with a little ingenuity he wired two things together and we made it home.

Since that time, when something goes wrong or needs fixing, rather than throwing hands up in despair I simply stop and look around and see what we can do to make it work. That's the way I grew up on the farm. It was said you could fix anything with baling wire and a piece of duct tape. My boys reminded me of such a time. When we were going on a back road, we came across a 6" tree that was laying across the road. I recited to them, my oft repeated saying. We looked through the pick up and there was a claw hammer. We took turns slamming the claws into the tree and like a beaver cut through it so we could go on our way. Recently, we made a face mask out of a handkerchief and two elastic bands. My sister said, "That reminds me of your "Always at hand," saying. Even she and many other people are familiar with that little saying.

- Clyde Seely

*"If a job is worth doing, do it well or not at all."*

- Proverb

*"Clyde, if you don't get in the habit of swearing, that is one less habit you will have to break when you go on your mission."*

- Oneta Seely, 1955

When we were teenage boys my best friend started to swear. It sounded really awkward for him but that's what some of our friends started to do and he worked at it until it began to sound natural. One day I was talking to my mother and telling her that some of my friends were starting to swear and asked her if she thought it would be okay if I did? The decision was mine but she said, "Clyde, if you don't get in the habit of swearing, that is one less habit you will have to break when you go on your mission."

That made a lot of sense to me so I decided it would be easier not to start, than to stop. That was a decision that I was glad I made since my wife nor my kids have never heard me swear. I have no problem being around those who have a different language etiquette than I do, it is a matter of choice. However, interestingly enough, on more than one occasion in board meetings or visiting with others a swear word may come out and they (both men and women) have said, "Excuse me, Clyde".

Commentary - CS

**If you have the book "Opportunity knocked" be sure to look up the following fun little story snippets:**

page 15 Interest never sleeps

page 23 Mother's cure-alls

page 25 Beneath the cover of my mother's book

page 57 Grizzly bear

page 60 The skunk

page 62 Shirt caught in the power take off

page 68 Like the ripples from a pebble in a pool

page 79 Our little family

page 101 Dear Deer, (My letter to a deer)  
page 115 A race with the train  
page 148 My one-dollar scale ruler- "Learn it, Teach it, Do it"  
page 157 Feelings for Parade Rest Ranch staff  
page 167 As the walls were falling, our hopes and dreams also came crashing down  
page 173 The allegory of the snakes West Snakeville  
page 191 The first snowcoach allowed in Yellowstone  
page 238 Averting a crisis at Grizzly Discovery Center  
page 281 Blasting a hole in the Madison River (1988 Fires of Yellowstone)