

rated me from death—but apparently, it was not yet my time.



“Every one of us has a limited time in this world,” Mr. Karasani continued. “We all know that. When a person dies at the ripe old age of, let’s say, eighty-five, we say he lived a full life. He accomplished, became, did, achieved. When a person dies at thirty, we say he was snatched in the prime of his life, prematurely. We think about what he could have accomplished if only he had lived longer. When a child of seven dies . . . life can be so cruel, he was so young. When a baby dies at two months, what can you say?”

I took over. “Highway robbery. Senseless. Pointless. Why?”

“What you’re really asking,” observed Mr. Karasani, “is why are we so shaken at the death of an infant and so much more accepting of the death of an eighty-five-year-old. I think what really bothers us is that the gift of life was so fleeting. We think we know how long we should live. Why isn’t life the way we expect it to be?”

“If someone offered you a fully paid, two-week vacation, would you take it? How about one week? Three days? Even one day? Of course! ‘No strings attached? Where do I sign?’

“If someone promised you a beautiful friendship that would last eighty-five years, would you take it? How about thirty years? Seven years? Three months, maybe even less? Of course, why not?

“We are given many gifts in this world. Should we be upset that some are short-term, or should we appreciate every day of that vacation or that friendship? What should we tell our kids? Maybe we should tell them to be thankful for every day, every hour, every minute.”

“I hear what you’re saying, but it is just so hard when the gift is taken away. It is just so hard. The mind doesn’t rule the emotions. They rule,” I confessed.

I thought to myself, some special moments are worth a lifetime. We’ve all experienced them: sitting mesmerized by the sea’s endless waves; watching the sun set in a rainbow of purples and reds; savoring your child’s smiles; being with the person you love more than anyone in the world; becoming a father, a mother,

or better yet, a grandparent. Then you realize life is really great. Life is made up of these moments.

Mr. Karasani helped me realize that a lifetime of these highlights can be much shorter than other lifetimes—maybe just a few years, or months, or even less. This isn't easy to accept. Although it makes sense and I understand, I fight it.

And what about a person who experiences hardship, pain, illness, and torment? What about my baby, who never had a chance? As my friend Dean wrote in a beautiful note, "Such a sudden end to such innocence and love."

Why?

The look in his eyes is one of betrayal. Fear . . . a blank stare of fear. How could you do this to me? I've known you my whole life! I always trusted you. I knew I could come to you whenever I needed anything. You were always there. You gave me all the love anyone could want . . . endless. Just tell me, how can you do this to me now? Why do you just sit there and say nothing?