

***City Slickers*** recounts the adventures of three friends having mid-life crises. They escape the city and head west for a two-week cattle run to discover what's important in life.

Before they leave, Mitch (played by **Billy Crystal**) shares what he does for a living at Dad's Day at his son's school. Instead of talking about his work as a salesman, Mitch bewilders the third graders with a monologue about how bleak their future is.

He says:

Value this time in your life, kids, because this is the time in your life when you still have your choices, and it goes by so quickly. When you're a teenager, you think you can do anything, and you do.

Your 20s are a blur.

Your 30s, you raise your family, you make a little money, and you think to yourself, *What happened to my 30s?*

Your 40s, you grow a little pot belly. You grow another chin. The music starts to get too loud, and one of your old girlfriends from high school becomes a grandmother.

Your 50s, you have a minor surgery. You'll call it a procedure, but it's a surgery.

Your 60s, you have a major surgery; the music is still loud, but it doesn't matter because you can't hear it anyway.

70s, you and the wife retire to Fort Lauderdale. You start eating dinner at 2:00, lunch around 10:00, breakfast the night before. And you spend most of your time wandering around malls looking for the ultimate in soft yogurt and muttering, "How come the kids don't call?"

By your 80s, you've had a major stroke, and you end up babbling to some Jamaican nurse who your wife can't stand but who you call mama.

Any questions?

Elapsed time: Measured from the beginning of the opening credit, this scene begins at 00:16:50 and lasts approximately one minute.

*City Slickers* is rated PG-13 for language and sexuality.

Source: *City Slickers* (Columbia Pictures, 1991), rated PG-13, written by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, directed by Ron Underwood;

## Glib outlook of the future

On the **stock market** it is referred to as a **bear or bull** market.

When you look at the future, are you a bear or a bull?

When you think about your days ahead do you believe your dreams are possible? Or do you doubt?

## Jeremiah says God has a plan: Jeremiah 29:10–14 (NRSV)

<sup>10</sup> For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. <sup>12</sup> Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. <sup>13</sup> When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, <sup>14</sup> I will let you find me, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

**Do you believe it? Do you believe God has a good plan for your life?**

**Have hope in the future**

**Optimism**

### **Murphy's Church Laws**

One of the most inescapable universal truths is undoubtedly Murphy's Law: "If anything can go wrong, it will -- and at the worst possible moment."

Murphy's Law in church life:

- Members living 15 miles away will be 15 minutes early; members living two blocks away will be 15 minutes late.
- Audio/Visual Equipment work only before the service begins.
- When all five points of the sermon begin with the same letter, people don't even remember the letter.
- When you're right, nobody remembers; when you're wrong, nobody forgets.
- Church furnaces and air conditioners rest on Sunday.
- Absent choir members all sing the same part.

Source: Steve Dennie in Leadership, Vol. 7, no. 1.

## Become an Optimist

### 1. Fasting: remind yourself that food is on the way.

*Fasting and Prayer for Protection: Ezra 8:21–23 (NRSV)*

Israelites were allowed to return from captivity in Babylon by Cyrus the Great, emperor of Persia.

<sup>21</sup> Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might deny ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our possessions. <sup>22</sup> For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and cavalry to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king that the hand of our God is gracious to all who seek him, but his power and his wrath are against all who forsake him. <sup>23</sup> So we fasted and petitioned our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

*Barnabas and Saul Commissioned: Acts 13:2–5 (NRSV)*

<sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

<sup>4</sup> So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

<sup>5</sup> When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them.

## 2. Prove it to yourself. Prove that positive outcomes are possible.

- Set achievable milestones
- Journal your accomplishments.
- acknowledge what you did to make them happen.

## 3. Celebrate your milestones

Zephaniah says to celebrate: Zephaniah 3:14–20 (NRSV)

- <sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!
- <sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.  
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.
- <sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.
- <sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing
- <sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.  
I will remove disaster from you,

so that you will not bear reproach for it.

19 I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

20 At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.