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There Will Come a Time When You'll Have to Leave Something Behind

By Yolanda Hood
UCF Forum columnist
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Goodbyes are never fun, except when they are.

Even if you haven't read *Gone with the Wind* or watched the movie, everyone knows Rhett Butler's famously delivered line as he says goodbye and shuts the door on his relationship with Scarlett O'Hara:

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn!"

When I was a young girl I would watch *The Lawrence Welk Show* with my grandmother. I thought the best part was when the women and men would line up at the end of the show in their beautifully styled 1960s flowing chiffon gowns and polyester three-piece leisure suits and sing, "Good night, good night until we meet again. Adios, au revoir, auf wiedersehen 'til then."

I know that those who are as old as I am are now humming that glorious tune.

There are also the inspirational goodbyes, like the one from Central Florida's very own Fred Rogers that went generally like this:

You make each day a special day. You know how, by just your being you. There's only one person in this whole world like you. And people can like you exactly as you are...and I like you so much. Bye bye.

It was this inspirational goodbye that helped to convince a 1969 Senate subcommittee on communications to maintain \$20 million in federal funding for public broadcasting.

Then there are the goodbyes that make you weep.

John Travolta, in the 1996 movie *Phenomenon*, was in bed dying from a rare brain tumor. He turns to his girlfriend and asks, "Will You love me for the rest of my life?" His girlfriend responds, "No. I'll love you for the rest of mine."

Just gets you in the heart every time.

So why my obsession with goodbyes?

Saying goodbye is always a hard thing to do when you are leaving a place where you have made friends, joined families, learned lessons, and maybe taught a few as well. Saying goodbye is hard when you love walking outside of your door and seeing sandhill cranes pecking in your lawn as you skip over and around the multitude of lizards that scuttle across the sidewalk.

Saying goodbye is hard when the sun is always there, warming your skin and brightening all of your outdoor activities – weeding, car washing, mowing the grass. You know, the things you have to do because it is always so warm and sunny, at least here in Central Florida.

But there comes a time when you'll probably have to leave something behind, whether it is a city or job or loved ones – like I'm doing now as I leave UCF to begin work at a new university in Canada. That's why I've been thinking a lot about goodbyes lately.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that life is a journey, not a destination. And, so, we all must journey on, to make more wonderful friends and learn more lessons.

I've decided I won't be sad because I have many good memories and have met many great people here.

As Dr. Seuss suggested: "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."

It's a lesson we all should learn.

And I'm smiling right now.

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