

end of his concert he made one final emphatic push of his bow upward across the two remaining strings and another one snapped. The crowd went crazy. They stood, cheered, and seemingly realized that they had just witnessed the most amazing display of musical magic ever performed. Paganini, however, wasn't done. With the crowd standing in amazement, he stood silently and motioned for them to be seated. He then stood on his chair and raised his arms, with his bow in one hand and his violin in the other, and proclaimed, "I have never yet performed a concert without giving an encore, and tonight will be no different. Ladies and gentlemen, Paganini...on one string!" He played his one-stringed violin for another five minutes. At the end he simply bowed and left the stage. So let me ask, when would you have stopped playing? Paganini taught us all something that evening.

*It's not the broken strings that stop you;
it's your inability to see what you have
left to play.*

Your focus so many times is on what you want or what you've lost without even realizing what is most important – what you have. Many people are afraid of not having enough of whatever it is they need or want, so they are always striving toward a destination where they believe they will have enough. They fool themselves into believing that some day they will have all the money they need, all

the possessions they desire, all the love they crave, and all the success they strive for. Late in life they come to the realization that it was never enough and there is no destination. So take a minute to think about everything you have and where you are. You have a loving marriage, health, good friends, and so many other things that cost you nothing, but are truly priceless.

Something else that makes the present so powerful is the inner peace it offers. When you live in the moment, you aren't reliving the past or fearing the future. Your past is made of regret and resentment, while your future is made up of uncertainty. Your present offers no expectations, only the realities of the moment. I remember what a friend of mine, who is a professional counselor, one time, said: "Make your life a series of moments that when multiplied transform into a series of memories." My translation – you'll never remember what you never experienced. So many people are so focused on what's next they miss so much of what's now. I fly virtually every week. If you were to ask ten passengers sitting on an airplane headed to Charlotte, North Carolina, what they were doing, nine of them would most likely respond, "I'm on my way to Charlotte." The tenth one who responds, "I'm reading a great book," is the one who has learned the lesson of present peace.

I'm not suggesting that you completely detach yourself from the past and stay blind to the future. I am a firm believer in setting goals, planning, and pursuing your passions. I am suggesting that in order to enjoy the ride you must pursue your passion and plan for it, but don't