One day I had lunch with some friends. Jim, a short, balding golfer type about 70 years old, came along with them — all in all, a pleasant bunch. When the menus were presented, we ordered salads, sandwiches, and soups, except for Jim who said, “Ice Cream, please. Two scoops, chocolate.”

I wasn't sure my ears heard right, and the others were aghast. “Along with heated apple pie,” Jim added, completely unabashed.

We tried to act quite nonchalant, as if people did this all the time. But when our orders were brought out, I didn't enjoy mine. I couldn't take my eyes off Jim as his pie a-la-mode went down. The other guys couldn’t believe it. They ate their lunches silently and grinned.

The next time I went out to eat, I called and invited Jim. I lunched on white meat tuna. He ordered a parfait.

I smiled. He asked if he amused me.

I answered, “Yes, you do, but also you confuse me. How come you order rich desserts, while I feel I must be sensible?”

He laughed and said, “I'm tasting all that is possible.

“I try to eat the food I need, and do the things I should. But life's so short, my friend, I hate missing out on something good.

“This year I realized how old I was. (He grinned) I haven't been this old before. So, before I die, I've got to try those things that for years I had ignored.

“I haven't smelled all the flowers yet. There are too many trout streams I haven’t fished. There's more fudge sundaes to wolf down and kites to be flown overhead.

“There are too many golf courses I haven’t played. I've not laughed at all the jokes. I've missed a lot of sporting events and potato chips and cokes.

“I want to wade again in water and feel ocean spray on my face. I want to sit in a country church once more and thank God for His grace.

“I want peanut butter every day spread on my morning toast. I want un-timed long distance calls to the folks I love the most.

“I haven't cried at all the movies yet, or walked in the morning rain. I need to feel wind on my face. I want to be in love again.

“So, if I choose to have dessert, instead of having dinner, then should I die before night fall, I'd say I died a winner, because I missed out on nothing. I filled my heart's desire. I had that final chocolate mousse before my life expired.”

With that, I called the waitress over. “I've changed my mind,” I said. “I want what he is having, only add some more whipped cream!”

This is my gift to you. It is a reminder. Live well, love much, & laugh often. Be happy.

*Share this with your friends*, including me if I'm lucky enough to be counted among them.

Be mindful that happiness isn't based on possessions, power, or prestige, but on relationships with people we like and respect. Remember that while money talks,

**Chocolate Ice Cream Sings!**