

SUMMER MOMENTS CAST IN SALT AND LIGHT

By **Dr. Peter F. Folan**
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It was 1982. The Nantucket Sound current was strong, and the tide came in fast. At seven, I kicked hard, fighting the waves, trying to outswim the dreaded Long John Silver — he wanted my pirate gold. The current off Ridgedale Beach kept pulling me backward toward the old pirate. Out of breath, my father scooped me up and snarled in his best pirate voice. We laughed all the way to shore and sat in the surf after an epic game of Treasure Island. Moments like that, I carry with me still.

Years later, I played Marvel's Thanos while my son was Captain America. We wrestled in the same surf, dodging waves and laughing, just like I had with my dad. A generation apart, the meaning was the same: connection, joy, love.

With my daughter, it was dancing. The Bunny Hop, next to the bandstand on a warm summer night. Her curls bounced as the incandescent bulbs from the bandstand roof drooped overhead. We twirled, laughed, and lived in that single, glowing moment.

For me, summer in New England is a season for recharging. The feel of sand, the sting of cold water, the smell of sunscreen — they awaken memories. Bryan Adams had it right: "The summer used to last forever." And oh, how



it did. Flashlight tag, hunting for sea glass and arrowheads, watermelon-stained afternoons, life felt slower, and better for it.

On the sundeck, without screens or distractions, I learned to listen for the calls of songbirds and came to appreciate their elegance. I discovered worlds through books, finding friends in Prince Caspian, Aslan, Bilbo Baggins, and Jack Ryan.

Now in midlife, I appreciate the quiet, everyday joys: the taste of native corn, a ceramic mug of coffee, or a slice of blueberry pie. Kayaking, campfires, sunset walks — these aren't just summer activities; they're authentic ways we stay connected to ourselves and our loved ones.

Nature has a way of restoring us, and we do so by being open to its power. But only if we allow it.

Only if we trust in it. The world moves fast, often too fast. If we don't slow down, we miss it. We lose the wonder. The laughter. The meaning. Making time to be present, paying attention, being astonished, and sharing astonishment makes us whole.

So, this summer, try something different. Unplug. Put down the phone. Turn off the GPS. Get a little lost. Play a card game. Dance by a bandstand. Let your kids track sand into your car. Let yourself be present.

Because in the end, it's not the photos we scroll through that we'll remember — it's the precious memories of salt on our skin, the sound of our children laughing in the surf, and the fact of being fully there, in the moment. These are the treasures that last.