

Thoughts and Smiles – August 1, 2022

THERE ARE some things in life over which we have no control, probably most things. We discover in our lives that reality refuses to bow to our commands. Another force, sometimes with a sense of humour, usually comes into play with different plans. We are forced to let go when we want so much to hold on and to hold on when we want so much to let go. Our lives -all our lives include unexpected twists, unwanted endings, and challenges of every puzzling kind.

Reinhold Niebuhr, an American Protestant theologian, composed a prayer that has become the cornerstone of the recovery movement:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

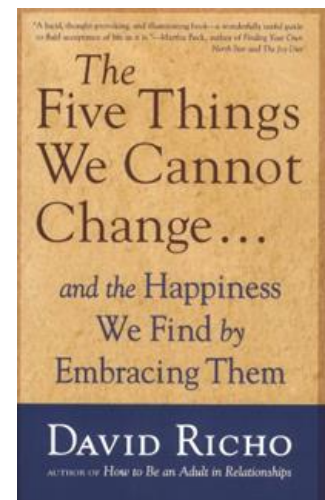
This is a profound aspiration. But what are the things we cannot change?

There are five unavoidable **givens**, five immutable facts that come to visit all of us many times over:

1. Everything changes and ends.
2. Things do not always go according to plan.
3. Life is not always fair.
4. Pain is part of life.
5. People are not loving and loyal all the time.

The phrase "accepting the things we cannot change" makes it seem that we accept things only because we cannot change them. Actually, once we understand that what happens beyond our control may be just what we need, we see that acceptance of reality can be our way of participating in our evolution. Serenity comes not only from accepting what we cannot change but from giving up trying to be in control. There is meaning in events that happen, and this meaning is multileveled... A given is a fact of life over which we are powerless. It is something we cannot change, something built into the very nature of things.

Shhh... She's fixing the world ❤️



In this book, I propose the somewhat radical idea that the five givens are not the bad news they appear to be. In reality, our fear of and struggle against the **givens** are the authentic sources of our troubles. Once we learn to accept and embrace these fundamentals, down-to-earth facts, we realize that they are exactly what we need to gain courage, compassion, and wisdom-in short, to find real happiness.

- Author: David Richo

Folks, you will note that I repeated from last week the image of the little girl fixing the crack in the pavement with bandaids. This picture struck a chord with some in the congregation, who offered their own interpretations. The importance of the title to that image – *Shhh... she is fixing the World* – reminded one that to intrude on her "work" and telling her she is wasting her time, wasting bandages, or being simply foolish – might result in crushing the very spirit in her that – when older – would be confident to take on challenges others would deem futile. In the nature of the **givens** – this little girl responds in creative hope and a very, very divine spirit!

The image above also prompted the one below. It's wonderful, and it too provokes thought and wonder.



"Child of Vision" came about shortly after the outbreak of the Gulf War. In the past, history has recorded wars fought over boundaries and territories. We all know that no borders are visible while viewing the Earth from space. With all the complexity of this World, it would take the simplistic view of a child to show us how simple it can be to live together in Peace.

Artist is Johannus Boots the name of the picture is "Child of Vision."
– contributed by Marian Noble to this blog post – thank you, Marian!

On the lighter side...

**I NEVER CALLED YOU
STUPID, BUT WHEN
I ASKED YOU TO
SPELL "ORANGE",
AND YOU ASKED ME
THE FRUIT OR COLOR
IT KINDA CAUGHT
ME OFF GUARD.**



**The point I'm
trying to make**

**The way I
explain it**



Every family has secrets
until a Sunday School
teacher asks a group of kids
if they have any prayer
requests.



And last...

It Couldn't Be Done

BY EDGAR ALBERT GUEST

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

