

Thoughts and Smiles... Monday, February 20, 2023

I asked a friend who has crossed 70 & is heading towards 80 what changes he feels in himself. He sent the following:

- 1. After loving my parents, siblings, spouse, children and friends, I have started loving myself.*
- 2. I have realized that I am not "Atlas." The world does not rest on my shoulders.*
- 3. I have stopped bargaining with vegetable & fruit vendors. A few more pennies will not break me, but it might help the poor fellow save for his daughter's school fees.*
- 4. I leave my waitress a big tip. The extra money might bring a smile to her face. She is toiling much harder for a living than I am.*
- 5. I stopped telling the elderly that they've already narrated that story many times. The story makes them walk down memory lane & relive their past.*
- 6. I have learned not to correct people even when I know they are wrong. The onus of making everyone perfect is not on me. Peace is more precious than perfection.*
- 7. I give compliments freely & generously. Compliments are a mood enhancer not only for the recipient but also for me. And a small tip for the recipient of a compliment, never, NEVER turn it down, just say "Thank You."*



Painting by: James Coates

- 8. I have learned not to bother about a crease or a spot on my shirt. Personality speaks louder than appearance.*
- 9. I walk away from people who don't value me. They might not know my worth, but I do.*
- 10. I remain calm when someone plays dirty to outrun me in the rat race. I am not a rat & neither am I in any race.*
- 11. I am learning not to be embarrassed by my emotions. It's my emotions that make me human.*
- 12. I have learned it's better to drop the ego than break a relationship. My ego will keep me aloof, whereas I will never be alone with relationships.*
- 13. I have learned to live each day as if it's the last. After all, it might be the last.*
- 14. I am doing what makes me happy. I am responsible for my happiness, and I owe it to myself. Happiness is a choice. You can be happy at any time, just choose to be!*



WRITE ME DOWN

If one day I don't remember, do not feel helpless, my love.
You will have much work to do.
You must remember me enough for both of us.
Write me down.
Put the things that make me 'me', in a beautiful box, with my treasured photos and my joyous memories.
Build my essence whole again with pictures, words, music, recipes.
The things which sparked my spirit.
If one day I begin to fade, my love, do not feel hopeless.
Put yourself straight to this task.
I was very much here, so very much alive, you know that better than anyone.
You know me enough for the world, so tell the world who I am.
Because if I have forgotten me, it is vital that you don't.
Remember me, my love; remember all of me, enough for two.
And then I won't be gone.

- Donna Ashworth

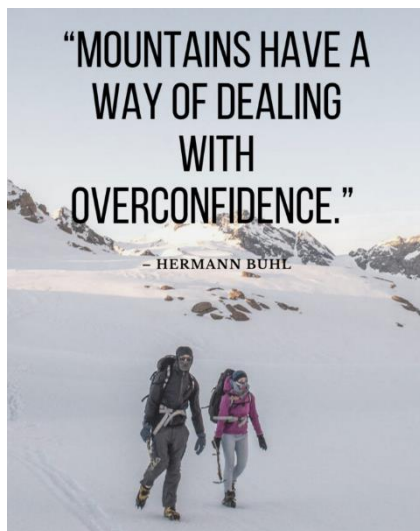


And... by popular demand (both of you out there, you know who you are), the reading from the close of the Sunday message...

Mountaintop experiences are essential; they're a gift of God's grace and love; they're the catalyst of transformation; they're not meant to last forever, for they inevitably lead to the valley below.

Sometimes I wish to live my whole life on top of the mountain. I foolishly believe it's where happiness is found. Sometimes I even close my eyes and imagine it. I imagine taking deep breaths and letting the fresh air fill my lungs. I imagine watching puffy clouds effortlessly drift across the bright blue sky. I'm captivated by the greens, reds, blues, and browns that speckle the valley floor. The rolling hills, deep valleys, lush pastures, and raging waters are mesmerizing. It's all spectacular from a distance. Who wouldn't want the "mountaintop experience" forever? Then I look at my feet. I'm standing on a rock. A hard, lifeless rock. While the view from the top is stunning, the beauty isn't at the top. The immense beauty is in the valley below.

There's very little growth on the top of a mountain. While the mountaintop experience can be wonderful for a little while, real life, real growth, and real experiences don't happen at the top. Everything "real" occurs in the valley.



But the valley is scary. Vision is limited in the valley. I can't see the big picture. The unknown is uncomfortable. I often allow fear to rule my thoughts and actions. Sometimes my view is so limited I can't even see past the next grove of trees or the rushing river looming in the distance.

What if I stopped right in the middle of the mess and admired the forest's majesty or stood in awe of the roaring rapids? Would I see beauty? What about that tiny, fragile flower bravely peeking through the fertile soil? Would I see how it struggles through the muck to become glorious? I definitely can't see that from the top of a mountain.

I know the valley is exactly where I'm supposed to be. I can't live out the fruits of the spirit on the mountaintop. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control only grow when I experience trials, pain, and challenges.

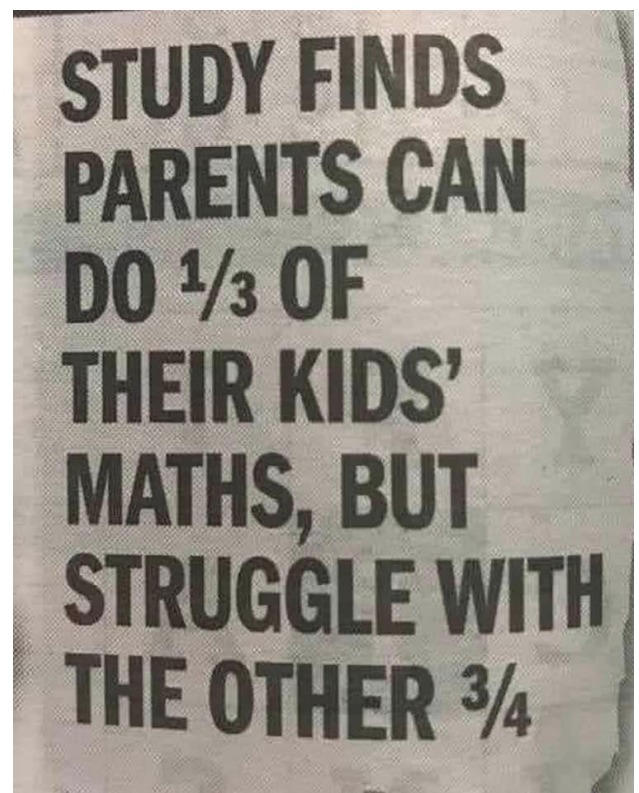
"In the valley where your heart was broken will be the place of your greatest harvest."

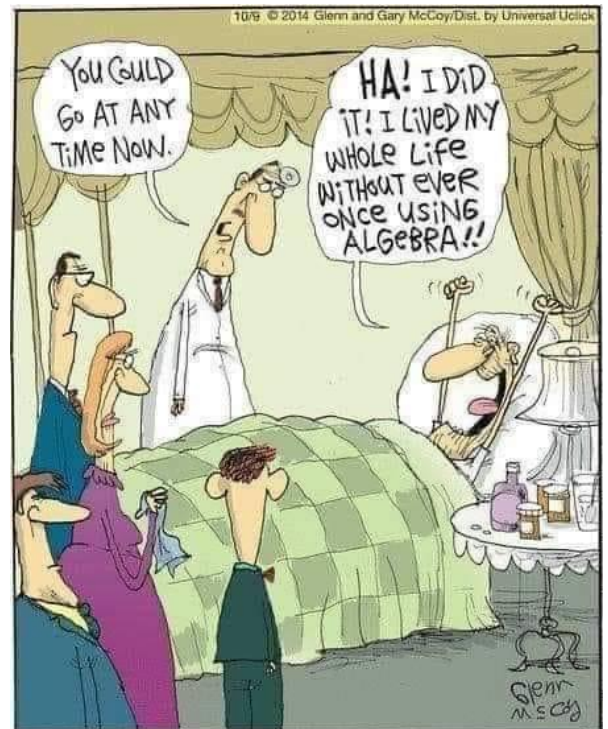
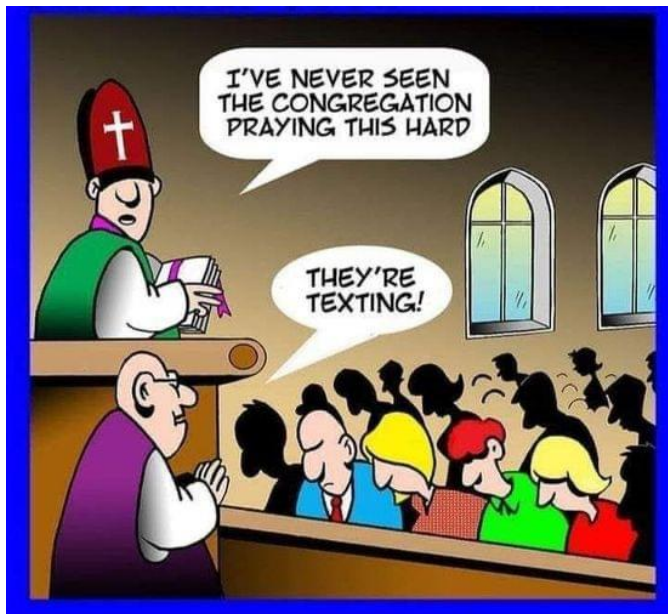
— Carol McLeod, *Just Joy Ministries*

And for those who have, let's say a more discerning sense of humour...



"Look at how much thinner we were in
these old pictures."





And Jesus said unto the theologians,
"Who do you say that I am?"

They replied, "You are the
eschatological manifestation of the
ground of our being, the kerygma of
which we find the ultimate meaning in
our interpersonal relationships."

And Jesus said "...What?"



Have a terrific week!

Blessings to you all!

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*Check out "David's Blog" on the Sauble
Beach United Church website.*

[https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-
blog/](https://saubleunitedchurch.ca/category/davids-blog/)

Church Services Online:SBUC: <https://www.youtube.com/live/dXrgVRuJKEo?feature=share>

St. Andrew's: <https://www.youtube.com/live/4I7FAxJOETU?feature=share>

Stewardship video: <http://bit.ly/32JT6UR>