

January

AGING *GRACIOUSLY*

A Newsletter for UUCGV Seniors and Near-Seniors
Honoring Duane Carr who exemplified living graciously and started an Aging Graciously group.

Gracious: Amiable, compassionate. Congenial, considerate. Courteous, good natured, loving, benevolent, big hearted, charitable, merciful, obliging.

Graciously Pausing

Now and then it's good to pause in our pursuit of happiness and just be happy.

Guillaume Apollinaire

We live in a time of rush, fast pace, and urgency. Even when retired, we have many tasks to be done and needs to be satisfied. Some of this is probably a holdover from working days. Without pauses this what daily life looks like in print:

getupfixbreakfastcleankitchenshopshopforgroceriesmeetfriendforlunchrakeleavesprepdinner

There are no pauses. No breaks. The advantage is that there is no time to think, the disadvantage is that there is no time to think.

The quote above is about chasing after happiness. However, wise people in the past have made the same statemen about spirituality. Working at becoming spiritual is an oxymoron. Developing a spiritual way of life is not about trying harder but just the opposite. It is about relaxing, being calm, not trying. As the wise ones say, "It will come to you. You do not need to chase it."

Take a walk with a turtle. And behold the world in pause.

Bruce Feller

Maybe imagine taking a walk with this turtle...



Clean Slate

January begins a new year. The rush of the holidays is behind us. But there is a mental slate. Things we remember off and on. Things maybe we would like to leave behind. Things we do that are not really satisfying. But they are written on the slate.

That slate is in our mind. It is our own creation, produced through the years. It is totally our own and unknown to anyone else. And it can be wiped clean.

Gurus, wisdom writers, and spiritual advisors have provided a way. It is to live and think in the here-and-now. The Stoics, philosophers and practitioners, embrace the notion that we can control our own lives and thinking. (Stoics are not unemotional; they have learned how to deal with feelings.)

The slate occurs in memory. The slate is about the past. Usually about people or events that involved strong emotions. Being in the past, there is nothing we can do about them. Through discipline we stop thinking about them.

The method is quite simple: focus entirely on the sensations of the moment, on the feel of the body, on the sights and sounds. This is exactly the same advice that is given for meditating. It requires non-thinking. If a thought or memory intrudes, simply refocus on the moment.

It is possible to get good at this. Practice, of course.

Snow

“There’s something beautiful about walking on snow that no one else has walked on. It makes you feel special.”

Carol Rifka Brunt

Proverb

One kind word can warm up three winter months.

Japan

Ponder

Silence, healing.

From Heraclitus the Obscure noted for his wordplay, cryptic utterances, and paradoxical philosophy. Also known as the “weeping philosopher” for his belief in the folly of humankind.