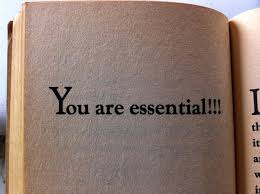
**Motivational Minutes on Self-Worth**

**(Also see Attitude and Thoughts.)**

1. **Your Heritage**

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**Quote of the day:**

“God loves you and is searching for you to bring you Home.” — Dana Bosley

**Reflection:**

When I read this story it reminded me of the Easter story.

*According to legend, this beautiful queen was captured and carried away and became a victim of amnesia. She became a prostitute in the streets. She didn't know her name or the fact that she came from royal blood. But back in her homeland, friends didn't give up on her return. An old friend believed she was alive and went to look for her. He never lost faith. One day while wandering through the streets, he came to a waterfront and saw a wretched woman in tattered clothes with deep lines across her face. There was something about her that seemed familiar, so he walked up to her and said, "What is your name?" She gave a name that was meaningless to him. "May I see your hands?" he pursued. She held her hands out in front of her, and the young man gasped, "You are the Queen! You are the Queen! Do you remember?" She looked up at him in astonishment. Then the fog seemed to clear. There was recognition in her face. The light came on! She discovered her lost self, put her arms around her old friend and wept. She discarded the tattered clothes and once more became the queen she was born to be.*

God searches for you in the same way. He uses every method possible to look for you and try to convince you of your heritage and your worth. And that is what Easter is all about finding your way Home and reuniting with God.

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1. **The Samurai and the Tea Master**

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**Quote of the day:**

“What you possess in the world will be found at the day of your death to belong to someone else. But what you are will be yours forever.”— Henry Van Dyke

**Reflection**

This is a longer story by Brian Cavanaugh that I thought was worth sharing.

Long ago in ancient Japan, a tea master, learned an important lesson in self-acceptance. That is, know who you are, where you are and what you are doing. As the story goes, this tea master was a traveling companion of one of the greatest samurai on a journey to a distant city. This samurai was greatly honored not only for his courage and skill, but also for his wisdom and understanding. His reputation was held in high esteem, even as far as the distant city.

The tea master was in awe of this samurai, seeing the respect he received from all the people along the journey.

Therefore, when they reached their destination, while the samurai was napping, the tea master slipped into the samurai's armor and went about the city to feel what it would be like to be a great samurai having the respect and esteem of the people. The tea master enjoyed his charade. The people greatly honored him, and he felt that it was possible for him really to be a samurai.

At this time, however, another samurai was living in the region. He had a reputation for being a bully and for being cruel and dangerous. He heard of the wise samurai's arrival and set out to find him. The cruel samurai soon found the other samurai, not realizing that it was only the tea master wearing the armor of the true samurai, and challenged him to a contest of skill.

The tea master was horrified! What was he to do? He knew of this cruel samurai, how dangerous he was as a swordsman, and he knew that he would surely die for his folly. Feeling deep shame, the tea master returned to where he and the wise samurai were staying, carefully took off the armor, and woke the sleeping samurai. He told the samurai what he had done and, trembling, asked forgiveness for putting on the armor and for dishonoring the samurai's reputation. The wise and understanding samurai forgave the tea master, but told him sternly that he, the tea master, would have to meet the challenge and that the cruel samurai would surely kill him, either for not being an able swordsman or for pretending to be a samurai when he was not one.

The wise samurai then told the tea master to prepare a proper tea ceremony while he thought of a way for the tea master to defeat the cruel samurai. For those who do not know, a proper tea ceremony, to be performed skillfully, requires great preparation, concentration on details, and a focused discipline. The ceremony quickly calmed the tea master, revealing him to be truly the master of his art. The wise samurai was deeply moved by the skill and attention of the tea master while preparing the tea ceremony, and in this he discovered how the tea master would meet the challenge of the cruel samurai. He explained to the tea master that the secret to his success would be not in meeting the challenge as a samurai, but in facing the cruel samurai just as he is now, as the master of the tea ceremony.

So the next day at the appointed time the two met for the challenge. The cruel samurai was dressed in his finest battle armor. His appearance was very frightening. The tea master, on the other hand, wore his own ceremonial robe, carrying the wise samurai's armor. Immediately, without even acknowledging the other samurai, the tea master gently placed the armor aside and began the delicate preparation for a proper tea ceremony for the two of them.

The cruel samurai laughed at this sight, but quieted quickly, observing the skill, concentration and discipline of the master of the tea ceremony. Soon the cruel samurai himself became frightened as he thought how great this samurai must really be, and wondered, "If he prepares a simple tea ceremony with such skill and precision, how great a swordsman must he also be?" The cruel samurai, now thoroughly scared, prostrated himself on the ground, removed his sword, placing it at the feet of the tea master, and begged forgiveness and mercy for his arrogance.

The tea master, heaving a silent sigh of thankful relief, forgave the cruel samurai, who quickly left the city. The tea master then expressed his gratitude to the wise samurai for teaching him the secret of self-acceptance-know who you are, where you are and what you are doing.

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1. **Keeper of the Stream**

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**Quote of the day:**

**“**Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things. I am tempted to think there are no little things.” —Bruce Barton

**Reflection:**

I hope you enjoy this post on significance. Each of us has our place to fill and we are all important no matter what others may think. I hope this story encourages you to know just how important you are.

*The story of the keeper of the spring is about a quiet forest dweller who lived high above an Austrian village along the eastern slope of the Alps.*

*The old gentleman had been hired many years earlier by a young town councilman to clear away the debris from the pools of water up in the mountain crevices that fed the lovely spring flowing through their town. With faithful, silent regularity, he patrolled the hills, removed the leaves and branches, and wiped away the silt that would otherwise have choked and contaminated the fresh flow of water. The village soon became a popular attraction for vacationers. Graceful swans floated along the crystal clear spring, the mill wheels of various businesses located near the water turned day and night, farmlands were naturally irrigated, and the view from restaurants was picturesque beyond description.*

*Years passed. One evening the town council met for its semiannual meeting. As they reviewed the budget, one man's eye caught the salary figure being paid the obscure keeper of the spring. Said the keeper of the purse, "Who is the old man? Why do we keep him on year after year? No one ever sees him. For all we know, the strange ranger of the hills is doing us no good. He isn't necessary any longer." By a unanimous vote, they dispensed with the old man's services.*

*For several weeks, nothing changed.*

*By early autumn, the trees began to shed their leaves. Small branches snapped off and fell into the pools, hindering the rushing flow of sparkling water. One afternoon someone noticed a slight yellowish-brown tint in the spring. A few days later, the water was much darker. Within another week, a slimy film covered sections of the water along the banks, and a foul odor was soon detected. The mill wheels moved more slowly, some finally ground to a halt. Swans left, as did the tourists. Clammy fingers of disease and sickness reached deeply into the village.*

*Quickly, the embarrassed council called a special meeting. Realizing their gross error in judgment, they rehired the old keeper of the spring, and within a few weeks, the veritable river of life began to clear up. The wheels started to turn, and new life returned to the hamlet in the Alps.*

Never become discouraged with the seeming smallness of your task, job, or life. Cling fast to the words of Edward Everett Hale: "I am only one, but still I am one.I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do.” The key to accomplishment is believing that what you can do will make a difference.

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1. **Make Beauty Out of Imperfection**



**Quote of the day:**

“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them—every day begin the task anew.” — St. Francis de Sales

**Reflection:**

*A jeweler brought a large and beautiful onyx to an engraver of precious stones. "See how clear, pure, and transparent this stone is," said the jeweler. "What a fine one for your skill, were it not for this one fatal blemish!" Then he showed him at one point an underlying tinge of iron-rust, which, as he said, made the stone almost worthless.*

*But the engraver took it, and with matchless skill and delicacy wrought upon the stone, carving a graceful figure. By most ingenious and patient use of his engraving tool, he fashioned it so that what had seemed an irreparable blemish was made into a leopard-skin, on which rested the foot of the lovely figure—the contrasting colors enhancing the beauty of the lovely cameo.*

This illustration shows us what to do with the tough things we face. We often think we can never make anything of our life when surrounded by discouraging circumstances. But it is possible to make our life all the nobler, greater, stronger, more beautiful—by means of the very things which we think have potential to ruin us. We can take difficult conditions and make them yield new strength and beauty in our character.

It is useless to fret over the difficult and discouraging things that confront us—fretting will never remove them, and it only weakens our energy and mars our life! But if we meet them with undismayed courage and persistent resolve, we will conquer them, and in conquering them we will find strength of character and noble worth in ourselves.

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