**2020 Meditation Moments compilation**

**Stepping Into the New Year**

**Quote of the day:**

* Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing. —Abraham Lincoln

**Think about at:**

I recently read an anecdote about a teacher who took her primary school students to the assembly hall to attend a presentation. As they waited at the foot of the steps leading up to the stage, she asked, “Is anybody good at jumping?” Quite a few young hands shot up.

“Could any of you jump from the floor here up onto the stage?” No hands went up this time.

“I can,” said the teacher, “and I’ll show you how.” Beginning at the foot of the steps leading up to the stage, she hopped onto the first step. From there she hopped onto the second, and so on until she reached the top.

As this story demonstrates, there are many things that can only be accomplished little by little, step by step. When a task looks daunting or the way ahead too steep, just take it one step at a time. This applies to looking into the future as well. Too often we try to foresee all scenarios, or we find ourselves worrying about what’s going to happen weeks or even months ahead.

Just take it one step at a time and trust God to help you.

\*\*

**Worthy**

**Quote of the day:**

* There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost. – Martha Graham

**Think about it:**

That quote reminds me of a story of an incident that occurred in North Carolina in 1995. Ten-year-old Lawrence Shields was picking through a bucket of debris in a gemstone mine when a rock piqued his interest.

“I just liked the shape of it,” he said. When he knocked off the dirt and grit that were clinging to it, and as he rubbed it on his shirt to polish it up, he saw that this was much more than just a rock. It turned out to be a sapphire. And not just any sapphire—a 1,061-carat sapphire!

And that’s how it is with each of us. Each of us is special, unique, one of a kind, and precious. Most of us are still covered with dirt and are unpolished but that doesn’t demise our worth.

What would have happened if Lawrence hadn’t found the sapphire and polished it up? It might still be lost to this day. So when we look at other people we shouldn’t focus on the outside. We should look at the real value that’s on the inside—where each one of us is a gem of incalculable worth.

Let’s start looking at others according to their real worth and not let any of their uniqueness go to waste. We need each and every one.

\*\*

**Appreciation**

**Quote of the day:**

* The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. —William James

**Think about it:**

That reminds me of a story I heard one time about the power of seeing and acknowledging the potential in those we interact with.

Many classrooms have a couple of troublemakers who make life challenging for their teachers, but one class in particular seemed to be made up almost entirely of troublemakers. Faculty regarded this class as delinquents, and virtually no one, including the students themselves, saw them as having any hope of turning out as anything but trouble in the future. That is, until one day they met their match in a way they never would have imagined.

From the first day that she stepped in as their teacher, the class was betting among themselves as to how many days it would be until she ran out of the room in tears. But in spite of their incessant attempts to give her a hard time, to their amazement, she was still hanging in there when the first month was over. She reacted calmly, coolly, and with a sense of sincere care for each individual. She seemed to see past their outward stunts and treated each student with an attitude of respect that was surprising, considering how little they deserved it.

One day she called each one to come up and get an envelope with their name on it. Undercurrents of apprehension rippled through the room as they returned to their seats, expecting some form of retribution. However, as each one opened their envelope, to their wonderment, they were faced with something that they had never encountered before. It was a report, but not a report on their bad behavior. Not a word of that. Instead, the teacher had studied them through the month and had seen the strengths and the potential for good in each one. She had managed to discover positive qualities in each individual student. Maybe it was being punctual. Maybe it was being kind to their fellow students. Maybe it was showing leadership qualities or ingenuity or creativity, even if it might have been misguided at the moment. Whatever it was, big or small, she had seen it.

The class was stunned into silence. How could she have found so many good qualities in the midst of their efforts to show how bad they were? It made them uncomfortable, but at the same time, little glimmers of smiles crept across their faces.

The amazing thing about it was that it was not a one-time thing! When the end of the next month came along, there it was again, and with more good qualities added to the “report.” Month after month, the teacher wrote encouraging and appreciative notes. Maybe the student had tried harder in some area or had misbehaved less often, but there was always something that pushed them gently toward the idea that they weren’t irreversibly destined to the inevitability of being a person everyone looked down on. As she kept looking for more to appreciate them for, they kept trying to provide her with more. It took time, but little by little she was inspiring them to see potential in themselves that they hadn’t expected to see.

The students began to make the effort to push themselves because they began to realize that maybe they could break out of the downward spiral that had become their expected lives. They started wanting to learn, even if just to disprove those who had displayed an immense doubt in their abilities. Their minds were finally focused on the good and the positive and trying to figure out what they could do better tomorrow than they had done today.

Other faculty members were so shocked at the transformation that she was asked to stick with this group of students for the rest of their high school years. Some of them went on to college and others pursued their dreams in other ways, but all loved this teacher who had changed their lives, changed their minds, changed their perceptions of themselves, and saved them from the self-destructive spirals that their lives were descending into.

All it took was a little extra time, effort, and care to see the good and potential, and acknowledge it. This is just one example of innumerable cases of what kindness, consideration, respect, and encouragement have done to change lives and situations.

\*\*

**Gratitude**

**Quote of the day:**

* Gratitude is a decision of the will, and if a decision of the will, the choice resides squarely with us. Deciding to be thankful is no easy task. It takes work.—Chuck Swindoll

**Think about it:**

I am reading a great book called A Thousand Gifts. It’s the story of a girl, who, when she was very little, watched her sister get run over by a truck in the family driveway. The whole family was broken by the event and never completely healed from the tragedy. The writer spent her whole life believing in God but not trusting His goodness, never really feeling happy or at peace, always searching for something to fill the emptiness she felt.

Then one day a friend dared her to find one thousand beautiful things in her life. She started keeping a journal of all the beautiful things she saw. It was usually little things like “a hummingbird dances outside my window” or “the smile of my little girl,” “the summer breeze,” “a stranger’s smile.” On and on the list went.

She realized that, as she began looking, beauty surrounded her daily. As she counted her way up to 1,000 gifts, she actually learned how to be thankful. Within weeks she realized that a deep happiness and joy had settled into her life.

If you feel like you need to strengthen your thankfulness habit, I would encourage you to start small. Start by seeking out the little things that make you smile: the sunset, a sweet apple, time with friends, the smell of clean laundry, the rush of a great video game, a perfect slice of apple pie, or a hug from your mom or dad. In time you will feel gratitude, or at least peace, regarding some of the bigger and more difficult things in your life. And you will have learned contentment.

I am focusing on strengthening my thankfulness habit. I am reflecting more on the beauty and seeking it out. It certainly is all around me. I know it’s all around you too. Why not try to make your own 1,000 gifts list.—Mara Hodler

\*\*

**Overcoming Obstacles.**

**Quote of the day:**

* “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”—Viktor Frankl

**Think about it:**

Maybe you’re discouraged; things aren’t working out for you. Here’s a story from the book Developing the Leaders around You, by John. C. Maxwell of someone who took the major obstacles and difficulties that life threw at him and turned around and used them as stepping stones to success.

In 1938 when Mr. Honda was at school, he took everything that he owned and began working on a special piston ring that he could sell to Toyota. He labored day and night to create this—often sleeping in his workshop. He even pawned off his wife’s jewelry so that he could stay in business. When he finally developed the piston ring, he presented it to Toyota and was told that it did not reach their standards. He was sent back to school for two years to improve the design. After this, Toyota gave him a contract.

Then, the Second World War began and he couldn’t get the concrete to build a factory and mass-produce his new design. He and his team created a new type of concrete to build the factory. Honda’s factory was bombed twice, and he had to rebuild it. When bombs dropped, he and his team picked up the empty shells and called them “gifts from President Truman” because they provided him with the raw materials for his manufacturing process. Finally, an earthquake leveled his factory and he had to sell his piston operation to Toyota.

After the war, a terrible gasoline shortage hit Japan, and Honda couldn’t even drive his car to get food for his family. So, he then attached a small motor to his bike to help him get around. Many people asked him to make one for them so they could also have a “motorized bike.” So many asked him that he wanted to open up a factory and make them—but he didn’t have the capital. So he wrote a personal letter to all 18,000 bicycle shops in Japan and told them of his new invention. He convinced 5,000 of them to give him the capital he needed to build his factory. After modifying the motor, it became an “overnight success,” earning him the Emperor’s Award. Honda today employs over 100,000 people all over the world, all because of Mr. Honda’s commitment to making powerful decisions and not giving up on his goal.

Mr. Honda once said: “Many people dream of success. I believe that success can be achieved only through repeated failure and self-analysis. Success is only one percent of your work, and the rest is bold overcoming of obstacles. If you are not afraid of them, success will come to you itself.” Today’s prosperity of Honda Motor Co. proves the truth of its founder.

What choices will you make today to be all you can be?

\*\*

**Win Friends and Influence People**

**Quote of the day:**

* “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” -- Anne Frank

**Think about it:**

It’s wonderful what a little encouragement can do for someone, and it’s even better when you’re the one doing the motivating.

That reminds me of a story from the book *Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. A store’s employee was always mixing up price tags, which resulted in customers complaining and added headaches for the manager. No matter how many warnings or reminders or even confrontations, she didn’t do any better.

The manager finally tried one last solution. He called her into his office and told her he was promoting her to “supervisor of price tag posting” for the entire store, and that she was now in charge of keeping all the items properly tagged. The title and responsibility paid off, and she took pride in getting it right.

Think about ways you can influence people in a way that brings out the best in them.

\*\*

**Benefit From the Mistakes of Others**

**Quote of the day:**

* You cannot live long enough to make all the mistakes. Learn from the mistakes of others.

**Think about it:**

Someone sent me these quotes in an email. There is no credit to who said them, I apologies for that. However, the wisdom in them is inspiring.

* In every mistake, there is learning, but not every mistake has to be your own. Just as society uses history to learn from the mistakes of earlier generations, so can you. Save yourself some time and frustration and look to those around you and learn from their experiences.
* By avoiding the mistakes made by others, you can create true success for yourself in a lot less time.
* Keep in mind that every person with whom you come in contact today has a perspective that is different than yours. Though you have much in common with others, there are many differences as well. Even those who agree with you have a different perspective than your own.
* No one else knows exactly what you know. No other person shares your unique set of experiences, just as you do not share the exact same experiences as anyone else.
* Your knowledge, your experiences, your opinions, your assumptions are not necessarily shared by others. Make the effort to sincerely understand, and to be understood. It will add value and effectiveness to every undertaking.
* It’s tempting to compromise and take a shortcut. It’s better to do it right. Life is too precious and too full of positive possibilities to cheat yourself out of even a moment of it. You owe it to yourself to do it right.
* Dream It, Believe It, Live It. The first step is to get a vision, a clear picture from God that you can see. The next step is to trust Him — to believe in faith that it will happen. And then finally, you take a step of faith and live out what God has promised no matter what your circumstances or people around you have to say.

\*\*

**Stop Looking For Things To Be Offended By**

**Quote of the day:**

* “Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at will change.” -- Wayne Dyer

**Think about it:**If it’s been said once, it’s been said a thousand times: we find what we look for. And when it comes to being offended, nothing could be more true. Some days it seems like we’re on the lookout for things to be offended by. We’re waiting for it. It almost becomes a habit and, like any habit, the more we keep at it, the more it becomes an everyday part of our lives.  
  
Fortunately, [habits can be broken](http://www.dumblittleman.com/2010/12/6-practical-tips-to-make-your-habits.html). If we choose, we can change our perspective. And this isn’t just looking at the world as if the glass is half-full, it’s making a conscious decision to look at our entire life differently. Instead of always being the victim and looking for what someone is “doing to us,” we can start looking for all the things someone is “doing for us.”

We could thank the neighbor’s dog for fertilizing our lawn, or the slow driver ahead of us for making us stop rushing. We could thank the texting driver for making us put our cell phones down, or the negativity dwellers for making us appreciate our positive attitudes, or the guy who’s always giving us grief for making us treat others nicer. In fact, we could thank all those individuals who offend us for making us stronger, happier and more content.  
  
Do this and the things that once irritated us, will now become our teachers, guiding us toward inner peace. Again, it’s all a matter of perspective.

\*\*

**Are Your Goals Worth Fighting For?**

**Quote of the day:**

* “You can only fight the way you practice.” -- Miyomoto Musashi

**Think about it:**

Once in awhile, a film comes along that opens your eyes in powerful ways. For me, the most recent movie to do this was "Cinderella Man." If you haven't seen it yet, I'll give a quick overview without giving away anything important to the story line.  
  
James J. Braddock was a boxer in the 1920's and 1930's, during the Great Depression. With employment opportunities so limited during that era, boxing was the primary means for Mr. Braddock to provide for his wife and three children. But even that was touch and go, and he had several difficult years just struggling to survive.  
  
After a streak of bad luck, he was given a second chance to make a comeback, and he took full advantage of it, fighting with all he had. Yet, he still had moments when he faltered, when his confidence was threatened, and he had to remember exactly what he was fighting for.  
  
During one poignant scene in the film, Braddock took a hard punch in the head and he was stunned for a few seconds. His strength began to wane, and he was on the verge of surrendering to his opponent -- when suddenly he saw images in his mind of his wife and children going hungry, having no money to pay the bills, and he knew that losing wasn't an option. He gathered his strength and will, and won the fight.  
  
Later, during a press conference, a reporter asked him what changed his streak of bad luck and made his comeback so strong. James said softly, "This time I know what I'm fighting for." When the reporter inquired about what that was, James said, "milk." His family's survival was a powerful motivator for him, as it would be for most of us.  
  
This movie was incredibly inspiring for many reasons, but one major thing kept jumping out at me, and that's the importance of having something worth fighting for. Isn't it true that a certain level of comfort breeds complacency, while hardship ignites a fighting spirit?  
  
Most of us are not fighting against a live opponent in the ring or economic depression. But our battles are still very real. The problem is that our opponents are less visible than Braddock's were. Instead of a man with gloves, we fight against our fear, our doubts, our temptation to give up when it gets too hard. But if we have a strong goal in mind, something that's vitally important to us, we will continue to fight for it. Giving up is simply not an option.  
  
Think about the goals you've had in the past - the ones you didn't achieve. Be honest with yourself about why you didn't achieve them. Did you give up because you thought the battle was hopeless, or were those goals just not important enough to you?  
  
I know that some of you still hold your unrealized dreams close to your heart. You haven't totally given up on them, but you're no longer actively working toward them. All I want to ask you is: are they worth fighting for? Even if the fight takes months, years, decades?  
  
If you can answer yes to that question, I urge you to take up the battle again. Don't worry about "how" you'll achieve your goals, no matter how impossible they may seem. Just lace up those gloves and dance into the ring, letting your determination glow hot and bright. It just might be the key that unlocks the door to the future you dream of. -- By James J. Braddock

\*\*

**Anger**

**Quote of the day:**

* For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Think about it:**

Think before you speak. Delay is a tremendous remedy for anger. You don’t need to delay indefinitely. If you’ve got an issue you need to deal with, you need to do so. Anger delayed indefinitely becomes bitterness. That’s worse than anger. Anger isn’t always a sin. Bitterness is.

If you respond impulsively, you tend to respond in anger. If you wait to talk about whatever conflict you’re dealing with, you’ll be more rational and reasonable when you do. The longer you hold your temper, the better your response will be. Give yourself time to think. That reminds me of a story.

Standard Oil was once one of the biggest companies in the world, led by the famous John D. Rockefeller. On one occasion a company executive made a bad decision. It cost the firm $2 million. This was the late 1800s, and $2 million was a huge sum.

Edward Bedford, a partner in the company, had an appointment to see Rockefeller. When he entered Rockefeller’s office he saw his boss bent over a piece of paper, busily scribbling notes. When Rockefeller finally looked up, he said to Bedford, “I suppose you’ve heard about our loss? I’ve been thinking it over, and before I ask the man in to discuss the matter, I’ve been making some notes.”

Bedford looked across the table and saw the page Rockefeller had been scribbling on. Across the top of the page was the heading, “Points in favor of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” Below the heading was a long list of the man’s good qualities, including notes of three occasions where he had made decisions that had earned the company many times more than his error had lost.

Bedford later said, “I never forgot that lesson. In later years, whenever I was tempted to rip into anyone, I forced myself first to sit down and thoughtfully compile as long a list of good points as I possibly could. Invariably, by the time I finished my inventory, I would see the matter in its true perspective and keep my temper under control. There is no telling how many times this habit has prevented me from committing one of the costliest mistakes any executive can make—losing his temper.”

\*\*

**Give Others The Space To Be Themselves**

**Quote of the day:**

* I've learned that everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it. --Andy Rooney

**Think about it:**

I know this is a big pill to swallow, but the reality is simple: most people aren’t out to get us. They’re not doing things to make us miserable and ruin our day. They’re doing it because they’re living their own life experiences. Yes, that sometimes means they’re inconsiderate, annoying, [unconscious](http://www.dumblittleman.com/2010/06/13-sure-fire-ways-to-raise-your.html), and not living up to our high expectations.  
  
But, guess what, we’re not always living up to other people’s expectations. I’ve certainly offended my share of people. I’ve rolled my eyes, said things I wish I hadn’t, been inconsiderate, unconscious and annoying. And while I’m not proud of it, I do know that I’m a better person today than I was yesterday, in the same way that the person who offended you today may be a better person tomorrow.  
  
The fact is, we all need space to be ourselves—to have good days and bad days, and to not always be at our best. We need the space to change, grow, and evolve, and to do it on our own time.

And the more we adopt this “big picture” attitude, the less demanding we will be of those around us, reducing the likelihood that we will be offended in the first place.  
  
And here’s the bonus: the more space we give for others to be themselves, the more space they’re likely to make for us. I know it’s a tough goal to stretch for, but it’s also one that could change the world. It’s called freedom and it’s a peaceful, energizing, and beautiful thing.  
  
That’s it…three small pills to cure what irritates you.  
  
Of course, it’s not that simple. If you really want to be cured from what offends you, you’ll need to stay on this prescription for the rest of your life. But, that’s a small price to pay for the [freedom to live every moment](http://www.dumblittleman.com/2011/12/7-secrets-to-making-this-year-best-year.html) with the knowingness that your days of being chronically offended are once and forever over.

\*\*

**Worrying**

**Quote of the day:**

* “Anxiety is the space between the ‘now’ and the ‘then.’”— Richard Abell

**Think about it:**

If we were to keep a record of all the things we worried about during a given period of time, we would discover—in reviewing them—that the great majority of our anticipated problems or troubles never come to pass. This means that most of the time we devote to worrying, even the constructive kind that prompts us to try to come up with a solution to what is troubling us, is wasted. Thus, we not only caused ourselves unnecessary mental anguish, but also took up valuable minutes and hours that could have been spent more profitably. To avoid this, it is often necessary to subject potential sources of worry to the coldly objective and analytical light of reason.

Once, shortly before a major concert before a standing-room-only audience, a member of Arturo Toscanini’s orchestra approached the great Italian conductor with an expression of sheer terror on his face. “Maestro,” the musician fretted, “my instrument is not working properly. I cannot reach the note of E-flat. Whatever will I do? We are to begin in a few moments.”

Toscanini looked at the man with utter amazement. Then he smiled kindly and placed an arm around his shoulders. “My friend,” the maestro replied, “Do not worry about it. The note E-flat does not appear anywhere in the music that you will be playing this evening.”

The next time we find ourselves in the middle of worrying about some matter, we might be wise to stop and ask ourselves what the odds are of the problem really coming to pass. Upon reflection, we may come to the conclusion that we can go on to something more constructive.

\*\*

**Limiting Beliefs**

**Quote of the day**

* “People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I do not believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they cannot find them, they make them.” -- George Bernard Shaw

**Think about it:**

Limiting mindsets and defeatist attitudes can hold us back from reaching our full potential.

Here’s a story from Norman Vincent Peale in his book, Power of the Plus Factor. Once, walking through the twisted streets of Hong Kong, I came upon a tattoo studio. In the window were displayed samples of the tattoos available. You could have a tattoo of an anchor or flag or mermaid or whatever. But what struck me with force were three words that could be tattooed on one’s flesh: Born to lose.

I entered the shop in astonishment and, pointing to those words, asked the Chinese tattoo artist, “Does anybody really have that terrible phrase, Born to lose, tattooed on his body?”

He replied, “Yes, sometimes.”

“But,” I said, “I just can’t believe that anyone in his right mind would do that.”

“The Chinese man simply tapped his forehead and in broken English said, “Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind.”

Once our minds are “tattooed” with negative thinking, our chances for long-term success diminish. We cannot continue to function in a manner that we do not truly believe about ourselves. Often I see people sabotage themselves because of wrong thinking.

We need to ask ourselves, “What limiting mindsets do I have about myself? Have I put myself in a box?” When you think or say, “I could never do that,” are you limiting the Lord? What if the Lord wants to stretch you and make you grow in that area? You could be stunting your own growth through mindsets that limit you and hold you back from going further than you have gone before.

\*\*

**Growth Plan**

**Quote of the day:**

* “People think personal growth is a natural result of being alive. Well, it’s not. Growth is not automatic; it does not necessarily come with experience, nor simply as a result of gathering information. Personal growth must be deliberate, planned, and consistent… I want to emphasize that personal growth requires a plan. You have to create a plan and follow it.” -- John Maxwell

**Think about it:**

Here’s more on developing a plan for personal growth. This is from the book Developing the Leaders Around You. Author John Maxwell.

Practical steps for personal growth: Set aside time daily for growth. There are two important concepts in this step. First, time for growth must be planned. Getting sidetracked is one of the easiest things in the world to do. Growth time that is not strategically planned into the day soon disappears because our lives are busy. People must find a time that works for them and schedule it into their calendar. Then they must guard that time as they would any other appointment. Second, the time set aside must be set aside daily—for no fewer than five days a week. Educators report that people learn more effectively in shorter regular sessions than long, infrequent blocks of time.

Besides having a daily plan, I also recommend going through materials during times that other people normally consider wasted time. For instance, whenever I travel I take along books that may not be as meaty as my daily reading but that have good material.

Apply quickly what you learn: Simply knowing a thing will not make it part of you. To do that, you must apply it. Each time you learn something new, it’s good to ask yourself, “Where, when, and how can I use this?”

Grow with someone: I have a number of people around me who share things with me and whom I deliberately share things with. When you share what you are learning with others, it increases your insight, builds your relationship with them, gives you a common vision, and holds you accountable. It also creates worthwhile conversation.

It is helpful to think about how you can change things in your life to bring greater fulfillment, fruitfulness in your work and service to the Lord, and progress for God’s glory!

\*\*

**Stand up for the truth**

**Quote of the day:**

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—  Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.--By Pastor [Martin Niemöller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Niem%C3%B6ller)

**Think about it:**

I think the quote is a very good reminder in today’s climate to be careful not to take everything at face value. It seems we are being lied to about the virus and how bad it is and so few people are speaking up for the poor who are having to endure the brunt of the restrictions unnecessarily. I recently received a letter from a friend of mine in Cambodia and was reminded of the above quote as if we don’t speak out for the poor, the oppression of freedom of speech and religion there will be nobody to speak up for us when they come for us. Thus this post.

“I find this “total lockdown” response to disease very strange, when for centuries mankind has been finding ways to survive a plague or outbreak. Are we now so afraid of death that we’re willing to do anything not to get a flu?

“And what about our human rights? Did anyone get to vote or debate about the best way to manage an outbreak? The reporting of it in the news is mostly negative, constantly changing and confusing too. We check in every now and then, but try to make sure our time reading, thinking about and watching God's Word supersedes time spent reading, debating about or watching bad news.

“In Matthew 24, Jesus was asked to describe what would be the signs of His return. One of the things He mentions is “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold….and many shall betray one another, and shall hate one another”. That intense emotion, rage, and anger is something I sense a lot these days. Folks getting so riled up at opposing points of view, and reacting so violently. I saw some clips from India of people being driven from their mosques and temples by police swinging rods and beating them. Apparently an attempt to enforce social distancing.”

In my opinion and suggestion to all the fear mongering is: Don’t fear. Trust God. Don’t buy into their lies. Stand up for the truth.

\*\*

**Being Intentional about Giving Back**

**Quote of the day:**

* “Getters generally don't get happiness; givers get it. You simply give to others a bit of yourself--a thoughtful act, a helpful idea, a word of appreciation, a lift over a rough spot, a sense of understanding, a timely suggestion. You take something out of your mind, garnished in kindness out of your heart, and put it into the other fellow's mind and heart.”--Charles H. Burr

**Think about it:**

We know that giving and generosity are not limited to finances. Many people are not in a position to give financially, but they are able to give of themselves by sharing time, attention, encouragement, and love with others. Making an effort to give of yourself by sharing time and giving attention to someone, by showing respect toward and being kind and helpful to others, is being generous. I really enjoy being around people who have a generous, giving spirit. I feel enriched by the time we spend together and am blessed as I recognize their consistent way of interacting with others (both friends and strangers) intentionally with kindness, respect, and generosity as they offer their service, help, time, or simply a listening ear.

I believe we can learn to be more aware of opportunities to bless others if we determine to live intentionally. We can do that in part by being more aware of the kind attitudes and generous daily activities that we want to focus on, until they become second nature for us. Along with making the decision to be generous with our finances, we can be generous with our time, attention, encouragement, service, etc., so we can help others live better, happier lives. We could look for opportunities for volunteering in our community—tutoring children, helping elderly neighbors, pitching in with busy parents’ errands, and the list goes on.

Here is some helpful advice on this topic from one of my favorite authors, John C. Maxwell. Intentional living is about approaching each day with the goal of adding value to others to make a difference in their lives. You can add value every day if you will. You must begin with your perspective. A life of significance cannot be achieved if you think of other people as obstacles that must be overcome. This means valuing everyone—not just those close to us. … People who live intentionally think about ways to add value. …

During a trip to Washington D.C., I challenged the two young children of one of my team members to think about how they could add value to people during the day. One of the kids decided he would open doors for people throughout the day. The other decided she would leave thank you notes for people to express her appreciation. Then, they went out and did it! At the end of the day, both children came back and enthusiastically shared with me how people positively responded to their intentional acts of kindness.

In addition to thinking ahead about ways to add value, people who live with intentionality are also on constant lookout for spontaneous ways to help others. They have an outward focus as they go through their lives, ready to do something that makes someone’s day. These actions don’t have to be big or expensive; small meaningful actions can make a big difference. The key is to open your eyes and be ready to seize opportunities as they present themselves.

To keep myself accountable to this, at the end of each day, I ask myself one question: “Did I add value to people today?” That’s a great question to ask yourself—and intentional actions allow you to answer “Yes.”

\*\*

**Politeness**

**Quote of the day:**

* Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you—not because they’re nice, but because you are. -- Roy T, Bennett

**Think about it:**

John sighed as he pushed his cart forward in the queue and glanced at his phone’s clock for the third time. *40 minutes already! How long can this take?* A technical issue had developed in several of the supermarket’s tills, and the store’s customers were directed to queue in front of the only one that still worked.

*And I only have a few items,* he thought, *I don’t know if I can still make it to the appointment in time. The afternoon traffic will get worse.—*His thoughts were interrupted by a commotion behind him, and he instinctively moved to the side as a burly, frazzled woman clutching an overloaded armful of groceries barged past. Complaining loudly about how long she’d already waited, she barreled her way toward the front of the line.

No one attempted to stop her. But as she nearly reached the cash register, a tall man in a gray suit held out his arm, blocking her path. The woman stopped, and by now, everyone in line was watching to see what would happen. “Madam,” the man began calmly, “all of us here are tired of waiting. Some of us have appointments to meet, some of us have children waiting to be picked up from school, and some of us even have flights to catch.” He paused. “There’s nothing any of us can do at this point. All we can do is wait patiently. Please return to your place in the queue.”

The woman looked around at the row of tired-looking customers silently awaiting their turn, then she bit her lip, turned, and slowly made her way back to her former position. Everyone breathed a silent sigh of relief that the situation was resolved. The queue continued to inch forward.

When it was the man’s turn, however, he turned around and called the woman forward to take his place. The woman nearly dropped her items. Customers shifted out of the way to let her pass. She stumbled her way to the front of the line, profusely apologizing and thanking the gentleman, who remained silent. She paid for her items and left, and the queue flowed smoothly forward from then on.

As John reflected on the situation that had just unfolded, he was reminded of a quote he’d read that morning in his devotional: “Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you—not because they’re nice, but because you are.” He had just seen a practical example of it. – By Li Lian