

*No theme...just random thoughts for 10 weeks!*

*Week 6 – Serenity through Compassion*

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord  
require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to  
walk humbly with your God*

Micah 6:8

Albert Einstein is the great physicist credited with the Theory of Relativity among other theories too numerous to mention in a TALK like this one. He is often considered one of the greatest scientists of all time, but did you know that he also liked folklore? At least, he did according to some commentators, and he is quoted in multiple ways by motivational speakers and preachers. Yes, I'm doubly guilty of keeping the lore alive.

The likelihood of you hearing or reading a direct quotation attributed to Einstein is high. One of the most likely supposedly was spoken during a conversation with a doting mother wanting her son to be a scientist. His answer varies depending on the story and the storyteller, but the response most likely is *"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales."* Indeed it is folktales in action, but I for one really like this version.

Einstein challenges us to expand our hearts by "widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." It's okay to be out of alignment with what the world says is advantageous, but take this moment to extend compassion to not only friends and like-minded people, but also to those who are not always agreeable or pleasant to love.

TALKs like this are intended to guide all of God's creatures to flow softly from compassion to serenity. Matthew quotes Jesus "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." It is easy for me to believe that the greatest teacher of all time is suggesting all humankind should be compassionate first, and follow the positive nature of compassion to find "rest for your soul." Rest for your soul in my opinion is serenity .

What are some of the images that come to mind when you think of serenity? Personally, I allow my mind to go to the pictures framed on our walls in our house. They are pleasant reminders of placid lakes, beautiful sun rises along the Atlantic coastline, sunsets on Lake Grapevine and all taken by my adventurous bride, Sandy. There is a personal favorite picture I snapped from the sixth highest of the Colorado mountain peaks, Uncompahgre. It didn't make the wall, but it brings personal serenity. Standing at 14,321 feet, I was facing northeast looking across the Colorado Rocky Mountains range with billowing white clouds against the bluest sky. Ahhhhhh, such serene memories.

Different images come to mind between casually pleasant sites quietly observed, photographed, and framed into what we now see through pictures on the wall. Other adventures that are more complicated based on decisions we made were not so serene. We lived in Orlando Florida the entire three years, eleven months, and sixteen days I served in the US Navy. On weekends, it was common for us to load our two sons and our bicycles with the attached child seats and drive East toward the Atlantic beaches. The destination was the "Space Coast" which included Merritt Island and Cocoa Beach. Our favorites.

There is a huge difference between peddling (more likely coasting) South down the beach. It was memorably pleasant and on occasion one or both boys took naps in their seats. So pleasant and so serene. Then there was the turn around to head back North. The uphill side eliminated all possibility of coasting. It was not so serene. What we learned is if we desire relaxation, we coasted South. If exercise was in order, peddling North was the answer.

Choosing serenity calls us to let go of trying to change things acting only through our human self. It is imperative to rise above any situation and live from our Christ center to let life work out. We know what actions to take, what course changes to make, and when to stop and rest. However, it is important to know there is no magic way to gain serenity and enhance compassion except through our imagination. Einstein would have suggested fairy tales, and I believe he is right about that.

Now is the time to reflect on someone or some group of people we might have cast out of our heart. Now is the time to resolve to stay open to love. Now is the time to know there is no one in creation who does not find their origin in God. Now is the time to know that as our circle of loving-kindness grows, we set our compassionate heart free. Now is the time to know through our serene moments compassion for all is set free to love.

Peace always,  
Ted