

I AM WISDOM ELIMINATES FEAR AND DOUBT

True happiness is to enjoy the present, without anxious dependence upon the future, not to amuse ourselves with either hopes or fears but to rest satisfied with what we have, which is sufficient, for he that is so wants nothing. The greatest blessings of mankind are within us and within our reach. A wise man is content with his lot, whatever it may be, without wishing for what he has not.

Seneca

Resilience

Wise individuals have a solid sense of what they can endure. They know just how much can go wrong and know life is still manageable. The unwise person draws borders for what they believe will make them content. The self-imposed walls are real and in most unwise minds can only be overcome with money, relationships, popularity, health, fame, and accomplishments. The wise person sees the advantages of all of these. The wise person knows he/she may, at a time of destiny's choosing, have to draw the borders right back and find contentment within a more bounded space.

Our families, our Church, our community, our country, and our world endured an entire year that seemed to say “No!” to every attempt to be social, worship together, travel at will, and even speak to our neighbor while leaning on the fence. Families were forced to remain apart in trying times. Just when someone we loved needed us the most, the barrier popped up and demanded we stay apart.

Personal experience related to my desire to be in the direct presence of people who needed my compassion and my prayers was thwarted by an unseen but deadly enemy...Covid 19. Although there are still restrictions, we are moving closer to what we think of as normal. Normal is, however, a word that can never be defined as it was just one year ago in families, churches, small groups, and event gatherings. Life will be different going forward. Because of that reality, I believe personal and group resilience will be more essential than ever.

Flexibility means we are all capable of recognizing that change now is simply setting a new normal for all parts of our lives going forward. The best resilience resonates with something deep inside the human spirit. We endure because our steadfastness touches parts of us that are hurting test the parts of us that say, “Maybe I’m not good enough for this.” There are parts of us hoping our future is not determined by the stars, but by our own blood, sweat and tears.

Resilience is accepting a new way of being, just as Martin United Methodist Church is doing now by presenting hybrid worship, group studies that occur both in the education building and

church sanctuary, while others are at home participating remotely. What a joy to have that flexibility.

The term the “new normal” was coined some fourteen years ago to describe a situation in which what was formerly atypical suddenly becomes conventional. The new normal frequently describes the realities of life, work, and worship under the COVID-19 pandemic. We know it can simply be a temporary new way of life that will fade away once culture and the economy solidify into recognizable working parts. Or we can accept the reality it could be a more lasting law of nature.

The truth is, we do not know for sure. Insecurity sets the standard. And in uncertain times, when so much is beyond our control, we have to return to the basics, to what we can control. Circumstances may be uncontrollable, but we do control our daily habits, choices, and mindset. When the world is upside-down, the fundamental basics I have noted on each of this TEDDY TALK series can help keep stress at bay and build resilience. Each has a proven track record of helping us weather tough times and find opportunity amid challenge.

Take a look at the changes in human and animal behavior as seasons change the weather conditions. Yesterday in mid-afternoon, I took Shaggy for a walk. We walked through all kinds of weather conditions from October ‘20 to April ‘21. Some was warm, but not excruciating heat, other walks occurred during the snow and ice. Never in any of those walks did Shag seek out the shade tree like he does in hot weather. Yesterday, just as during the summer, he ran ahead of me and laid down under a shade tree, panted, and waited until I reached his cooling spot. As I walked by, he popped up like he had been totally cooled and proceeded. Proceeded, that is, until heat overtook him and led him to the next shade tree.

Shaggy is a resilient animal, and I believe we can be equally durable. In times of anxiety, we should all go seeking our shade to refurbish, restore, and strengthen our health and positive attitude. Positive affirmations on behalf of our body and mind will enhance our involvement as supporters and worshippers.

Amen??

Peace Always

Ted