

Mindfulness . . . Stay in the Present . . . Take it slow . . . Put one foot in front of the other . . . Certainly good advice to achieve a calm & peaceful life.

Yet, God gave us a wonderful gift: our memory. Too often, we use it to relive negative things that have happened to us, to our family members, or to the world. But, this memory would be blank except for being fed by 5 other incredible gifts from God: our senses.

Tonight, let's use our memories to show our gratitude to God by reliving some good times. For each sense, I will describe my #1 memory. Then, I will have you briefly close your eyes & remember your memory.

SIGHT:

My memory: About 15 years ago, Joe & I spent our anniversary at a Bed & Breakfast in Lyme, CT. We brought our bikes so that we could enjoy the fall colors. The proprietors suggested that we go to a particular park. Directions in hand, we rode off. We were not prepared for the rocky, dirt road that wove into the park. Considering we had road & not mountain bikes, we struggled to walk down this path. It was such a long path - we talked about turning back. But, it seemed a shame, so we pressed on. We rounded a bend & knew that we were witnessing God's handiwork! There was a lake that was so still, it looked like a mirror. The surrounding trees were a color pallet of fall – a rainbow of oranges, reds, yellows – all perfectly reflected in the lake. We were the only ones there at that moment – total silence. It was a truly holy experience.

Your memory: Now, close your eyes for a moment. What's an amazing sight that is imprinted in your memory? Your mind has the details – relive it & let the happiness wash over you again.

SMELL:

My memory: Adopting our daughter was particularly difficult because we lived in CT, the adoption agency was in NY, & she was born in NJ. This resulted in 3 states having to sign off on the adoption. In the meantime, we got to meet her. We went to the agency &, for a glorious hour, cradled her in our arms. But then we had to give her back to the Foster Mom until we could officially take her home. It was soooo hard to leave her. But once in the car, I realized that I still had her scent on my hands! A small part of her was still with me. If you don't already know, there is nothing quite like a baby's smell . . . especially if the baby is yours!!

Your memory: Time for you to close your eyes again. Think of that #1 smell that instantly takes you to a special place & time.

TASTE:

My memory: This is a Christmas memory that dates back to high school. Two months after I started freshman year, my Grandfather died. My parents decided to build an extension onto our house and in my junior year, my Grandmother moved in with us. Then, I got to experience her magic: making Christmas cookies. This was not new – she baked them every year & gave away tins of cookies to friends & family as presents. But, that was the 1st year that I got to see them being made! There was one particular cookie that was my favorite – it was similar to a Linzer Torte but this was a recipe she brought from Hungary. She'd make the dough which was rich with cream & butter, roll it, & use a cookie cutter that she used only for these cookies. The tops needed a hole for which she used a thimble. After baking, the tops would get brushed with egg white & then sprinkled with finely crushed walnuts & sugar. They would become a sandwich with raspberry jelly (with the seeds)! It seemed to take forever until they cooled but then Grandma said I could have one. The word 'delicious' does NOT do it justice!

Your memory: Let your eyelids close. What food or drink is special to you? Can't you just taste it? Is your mouth watering at the thought? Isn't it amazing that our bodies can manufacture the experience while we are sitting here?

TOUCH:

My memory: Before I was 8, we lived in a 3 family house with my grandparents. My grandfather had his print shop in the basement so I got to spend a lot of time with him. In those years, my Dad worked during the day & went to college at night, so my grandfather was more of a father to me. He was never rushed. He cared about nature & taught me to live & let live. He grew pussy willows on the side of the garage. They felt so soft! Whenever I pet a cat or a stuffed animal, I think back to those simple times of learning about the natural world from my Grandpa.

Your memory: Again, close your eyes. What special thing has God given you to be your favorite thing to feel?

HEARING:

My memory: How amazing is it that you can hear just a few notes of a song & know exactly what it is?! And where you were or who you were with when it became special to you? For me, that song is Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme by Simon & Garfunkel. When I started dating Joe, he had an 8 track tape player in his parents' car. He only had a handful of tapes but the Parsley, Sage album was usually the one we picked. When I hear that song, in my memory, I am 18 again sitting next to Joe in the car & we're on our way to go bowling, play pool or see a movie. And, of course, we sing as well as Paul & Art!

Your memory: Your turn again. Take a moment & hear those notes that transport you to another place & time. Who are you with? How old are you?

Together, let's give thanks to God for these memories that we shared and for the ones we will make in our future!