From the Prez

Summer Lessons

Last week, on a foggy, wet morning, a small group of UU's met at Salt Pond for our kayaking expedition. Elizabeth parked her trailer in front of the driveway down to the launch spot, undid the heavy-duty straps, and I helped her lift her kayak off the trailer. We carefully set it down on the pavement perpendicular to my parked car. As she went to park her car/trailer, I decided to take my kayak to the water, so I backed out and pulled forward – and heard a ferocious crunching sound. Opening the door, I saw nothing impeding my car, so I pulled forward again – CRUUNNNCCCCHHHHH! Jonathan yelled at me to stop the car. We all gathered 'round to see what happened. Turns out I had driven my car over Elizabeth's kayak that I had just helped put down in that exact spot. (Can you believe it?!) We tried to pull the kayak out, but it was hopelessly stuck under my car. Fortunately, I had a moment of brilliance and suggested we jack my car up and, hopefully, extract the kayak. So, with Jonathan's jack, I lifted the car and Jonathan and Bina pulled out Elizabeth's kayak. (NO DAMAGE)

Lesson 1: Pay attention! Focus!

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The incident I just described left out an important part – the role of my inner critic. Am I someone that can mindlessly run over someone's kayak and see it as a funny story to tell? NOT A CHANCE! My inner critic clamored all over me: "You stupid moron!" "What an idiot!" - even though I knew that no one was injured and the worse thing that could happen was that I'd buy Elizabeth a new kayak. Nevertheless, my inner critic had a field day. Honestly, I still don't find it funny (Unlike Elizabeth who's still laughing about it!)

Lesson 2: Cultivate self-compassion. Mistakes are not the end of the world!

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The backdrop to this episode of mindlessness is that I had just spent a few weeks, again, deep in a state of "adrenal fatigue burnout" – characterized by various symptoms of mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion (like brain fog). This isn't the first time this has occurred after a period of intense drivenness and prolonged stress. This time, though, as I was recovering, I finally "woke up" and realized that I simply cannot keep doing this. The odd thing is that while this has happened before, I never really "got it." Now I really understand that I MUST take breaks – the lawn does not have to be mowed all at once. As the saying goes, "Perfect is the enemy of the good." Further, as Confucius said: "Better a diamond with a flaw than a pebble without."

Lesson 3: STOP! Take breaks. Rest and recover. Good enough is good enough.

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Fortunately, now that I have recovered my energy – again – I am determined to take it all less seriously, paced more slowly, spending more time relaxing and practicing a bit more kindness toward myself. What lessons have you all been learning this summer?

In peace,

Nancy