



Journal entry from 3/23/2020

It snowed here last night, not much but it came to remind me that March is a fickle month, winter reluctant to leave without a fight. I have lived through many years of snows. And I have driven through many raging storms on my way to speak at a conference, college, or offer a training somewhere. My memories of driving through the many snows of my life are speaking to me now. When driving through a storm on my way to speak at a conference in Superior, Wisconsin perched on Lake Superior in January a few years ago, the snow got more and more intense the further north I drove. There was no discerning the road from what was not road. It was a vast sea of white. There was no traffic, the night was desolate, dark, and deep, and the old joke northern drivers used in light hearted banter, “keep it between the telephone poles” was running through my mind. So, I broke the drive down. “Slow and steady”: “One mile at a time” or “make it to the next light I see further down the highway”; and finally, “the closer I get to the city the more likely the roads will be cleared a bit more, with more traffic”. I kept that persistent hope in front of me.

This is how I am working through this slow-moving storm called COVID-19. By breaking it down. I have today. What can I do today? What is my purpose for today? What can I do to reach out? What inspiration can I find to feed me today?

What good news can I share to brighten the day and strengthen the spirit of those who need to hear it? The good, even heroic stories are out there being played out every day aren't they? Medical staff, scientists, people who clean, first responders, yes, clergy and church worship teams, cashiers, truck drivers, maintenance people and so many, many more who roll up their sleeves to fight, each in his or her own way this battle. There is no greater 'Why' than finding a way to serve. We can find meaning and purpose in this battle by helping to lift each other up.

We are all in this together. We only wage this or any war together where no one is left behind, and it is only together that we are victorious. There is a great lesson for us to learn from nature as we confront the invisible enemy. Consider the mighty redwood trees. They can grow over 300 feet tall, and are massive and can live for thousands of years. You would think that they must have equally deep root systems to support their magnificent size, but you would be wrong. You see, redwoods grow in groves of other redwoods, and their root systems only average 6 to 15 feet of depth, a shallow root system. You see, the Redwoods growing together in groves are interdependent, having their roots intertwined with the roots of the other redwoods nearby, and together they weather nature's worst storms. Together they are strong. We need to learn from the redwoods. Together only together, intertwined, we will prevail over this storm. Be strong, be safe, stay well, and reach out.



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Well we find ourselves immersed even deeper into this pandemic, and the reality of it is slowly dawning on people, some of whom were in denial. There is much more activity on social media and along with it, more volume to some people's posts. Anxiety, worry and anger. Blaming, finger pointing. Non-constructive activity...the announcement of the first nurse dying from this on the front lines is tragic. Our medical personnel are scrambling for PPE's. The biggest fear for everyone is the unknown. The fear of the unknown has always been the worst, for it is human nature to fear uncertainty. The numbers of cases diagnosed, the grim numbers of those who have died grows daily and we wonder where it will end.

All any of has, all that any of us ever had is one day. Sure it is important to plan ahead, to pursue future dreams, and hope for better days, and we will someday have that. But for

now, all we can handle any of us, is today. Today we can love, today we can laugh, we can pray, we can play, and we can bring light into the dark desolate world of those around us needing that right now. I can't keep you from worrying about future days, but I can urge you to live as fully as you can today. Control what you can, help where you can, and love wherever you can. Today you can find a "why" to live for today. Your care has immense value to those who care about you. Being anxious can sever us from a life of meaning and purpose. Having a 'why', a purpose for living today is how we prevail. The most resilient souls are those who can find or bring meaning in the midst of challenging situations. Let us find our 'why' for today. We can do this...one precious day at a time.

In the midst of the grim news this afternoon there was a video clip of hundreds of apartments dwellers in Paris, who live close to a major hospital clanking pots and pans and cheering as loudly as they could to encourage the health care workers, heroically going to do battle with this invisible foe. The human spirit when given encouragement and filled with the spirit of God is truly an indomitable force. It always has been and will forever shall be. Love always prevails. Love never ends. Love, love, only love will win the day. And the greatest of these is, love. Go boldly forth in the courage of love.

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