

In It Together

October 2013

Hello, everyone.....

I was wondering what I would write about this month when I had an experience that of course seemed perfect to share, since I'm fairly certain many of us are experiencing the same kind of thing.

I was on my way to my sister's house recently and noted I had just enough time to pull into the market to pick up a few things and still make it to my sister's on time....so I did. As I was standing in the check-out line, absorbed in my thoughts and not really paying attention to anything or anyone, the man in front of me said, "Hi, Marty." I looked up and realized with surprise who he was. I had been so into my own thoughts I hadn't really seen HIM. This is a man with whom I always stop and talk. He's very sweet natured and though somewhat of a loner, he seems to enjoy sharing with me what's going on in his life. However, on that day I was feeling completely self-absorbed and told myself I was late, so I avoided getting into a prolonged conversation with him, even though he was waiting for me outside the market. I pretty much just breezed past him and made a few perfunctory remarks about the weather and got in my car and drove away, intent on "being on time"or so I told myself.

It wasn't until the drive home that it hit me how utterly self-absorbed I truly had been in that moment of trying to avoid having to interact with Bill (not his real name, of course) because I was late. I saw that scene again and realized I had hurt Bill's feelings by brushing him off. He had been wearing a smile when I came out of the market, which quickly disappeared when I breezed past him. I had failed an opportunity to truly see another person's emotional state and offer caring to someone who doesn't really have anyone TO care about him. I could have given him a few minutes of my time, which I know would have meant something to him since he is generally ostracized by the community and seen by most as a vagrant, a "loser". My sister would have absolutely understood and wouldn't have cared one whit that I was a few minutes late - we had no appointment to get to.....we were simply going to visit with each other.

I was forced to admit that it wasn't that I was late so much as I wasn't honoring HIM as someone important enough to be late FOR - MY need was to be on time and that's all that mattered in that moment. I had made THAT more important than another human being, and of course I cringed when I realized that. (The good news, though, is that I DID catch myself and saw the situation well enough to know I needed to work on being more present for others.)

Dixie has mentioned before in numerous newsletters that we never know how something we do or something we say might affect another human. Something as "inconsequential"

as smiling at a stranger can completely shift that person's life. I recall a friend of mine telling me that she went to her fiftieth high school reunion a few years ago. A man she didn't remember came up to her and thanked her for always being so kind to him in high school. He said he didn't have a lot of good memories about high school, but he remembered her in particular because she always took the time to say hello and smile and he had never forgotten her kindness. She HAD forgotten him and still didn't remember who he was after he left, but what struck me about her story is how her smile and caring touched that man deeply enough that he never forgot it even though fifty years had passed.....a perfect example of how the "small" things we do affect others.

And of course, something as "small" as brushing past someone because we're in a hurry can also affect them greatly. I wish I hadn't been so self-absorbed when I ran into Bill....however, I was - it happens to each of us. We get so busy with our lives and so focused on OUR moments that we don't allow another person into that moment with us.

I am NOT saying being self-absorbed is a bad thing, by the way - we all go through and need our times of internalization so that we can absorb and process whatever it is we've just learned or are still learning, plus we wouldn't BE in this dimension if we were perfect (although Dixie's Samuel once said to her "You are not striving to become Perfect - you ARE Perfection in the process of Becoming....and to Become, you must realize the Perfection that you are." - so I guess we ARE perfect and in the process of realizing we are). Few things are as important to me as caring about each other....and if we get to the point of being so self-absorbed we don't see another's need, then perhaps we should strive to reach outside ourselves and offer even the "smallest" of things, such as a smile or a moment of talking with a friend or an acquaintance who is lonely and needing someone to care.

For me, learning to live in Spiritual Integrity is of the utmost importance. When I catch myself making a "sin", for lack of a better word, all I can do is work on doing it better the next time. That's all any of us can do. My "sin" in this case was not being aware of another's emotional need. My "sin" was being thoughtless. I know many of us are committing that "sin".....it's just part of the world we live in right now - getting through each day/week/month becomes a greater and greater challenge for a lot of people. I've noticed a big increase in cars crossing over the center line of late, which to ME is evidence of a lot of people being so wrapped up in their personal challenges that they aren't paying attention to things they normally would pay attention to, LIKE DRIVING ON THE CORRECT SIDE OF THE ROAD!!!! Honestly, I am on high alert these days when I get behind the wheel of my car, constantly aware of what is headed my way.

Now it's time for me to be more aware of the people coming my way, and offering to them as I can.

I'm not chastising myself so much as I am sharing with YOU a reminder that if we find ourselves immersed in our own world to the point that we're not really seeing the people around us and recognizing their needs.....perhaps it's time to climb out of ourselves and see what we can offer to each other. God knows, we need each other more than ever in

these times! I'm going to work on being more thoughtful and more present for my family and friends.....my encounter with Bill was definitely a wake-up call!

Hoping your October brings much goodness your way and that there are far more treats than tricks for you this month!!!

Hold Onto Your Spirit,

Marty