

RANDOM THOUGHTS – PART 1

2011

This is the first day of what I hope will become a routine of mine: a thirty-minute walk, three times a week. I wouldn't want to overdo it and make it every day!.. Seriously though, I heard or read somewhere that it takes twenty-one days for a habit to form. Well, we'll see about this one! I've never been one to exercise, but lately an unappealing bulge of fat has made itself way too comfortable around my waistline! Fat never seems to cling where we'd like to... So, I was prompted to do something about my little problem before it gets out of hand. Walking as well as a better diet should help take care of it and anything else my sixty-five plus aging body could be hiding under its hood.

As I'm stepping slowly into a comfortable pace, I clear my mind of all the clutter I've accumulated over a period of time. Hopefully, this mental exercise will make room for new ideas and show me where to channel my energies from hereon. I've just finished writing a book for my three sons on the history of both sides of our families going as far back as their great-grandparents, and I chose Mother's Day this year to give it to them as a legacy. I know it's non-traditional for a mother to give a gift to her sons on Mother's Day, but the thought of sharing this labor of love with them on this special day was too hard to resist. Hopefully, this book will prove to be informative as well as entertaining.

Moving along... The strong smell of smoke coming from wildfires popping up all across our state due to an unusual long drought makes it hard for me to breathe this morning. It's hurricane season here in the south but we can count on the tips of our fingers the days we've seen rain so far. It seems that many more southern states are in the same predicament. We're witnessing an unbelievable destruction of thousands of acres of forest leaving homeless many families living on their path. I'm grateful for not being one of the victims and pray God to help them in their moments of hardship. The sound of a siren from an emergency rescue or fire truck also leaves me with a sorrowful feeling that always reminds me that my life is such a good one already.

Moving along... I forget for a while about the sad news happening around us as I watch a man stepping out of his home to start a sprinkler in his front lawn. He nods at me and goes quickly back inside. I often wonder how other people live their lives and what's going on behind closed doors. Different folks, different lives, obviously. I don't know many people in my subdivision, but I'm sure should a catastrophic event occur, we would all be there to help each other out. Watching the news on TV, I've seen it happened in other parts of the world, and I'm sure it would be the same in my own little town. We mostly hear about people doing evil things in the world, but I think we have to give some credit to the human race in general. My husband and I regularly watch the evening news on NBC, and we always look forward to their last topic "Making a Difference". Following the bad news nationwide and worldwide, it's always uplifting to hear about the many people making a difference in other people's lives.

Moving along... On the other side of the road an elderly gentleman, hose in hand, is watering part of his lawn that desperately needs it. He's wearing long brown pants with suspenders – quite uncommon nowadays -, a white short sleeved shirt and a cap. He looks frail to me but he had found a purpose this morning: to bring back to life a bare patch on his lawn. Hopefully I'll see some grass here in the weeks ahead... As I pass by him, we greet each other with a "Gooooood morning!", and I keep walking. I wonder if I'll see him again tomorrow. We never know at his age... I'm surprised though that I didn't start a bit of a conversation with him. I could have asked him a tip or two on how he stays in such good shape at his age. Perhaps I will next time I see him...if he's still around that is.

In my opinion, being sociable while minding my own business is certainly the right attitude for keeping a good rapport with my neighbors. However, I must admit that I sometimes find a certain pleasure in striking up a bit of a conversation with pure strangers. Whenever I'm in a mood for a little chitchat while I wait in line at a counter or sit in a doctor or dentist's waiting room, the person either standing in front or behind me or sitting on my left or on my right, is usually an ideal target. Obviously, people react differently to my approach. Some of them are not receptive at all and promptly look the other way or keep reading a magazine. When this happens, I can just read their mind: *'I don't know you lady and I'm not interested in knowing you either, so bug off!'*

However, there are those that reciprocate and get easily engaged in what I call 'my little dance', which is usually done on a short and non-personal level, the weather being my favorite subject. I found out over the years that there are more lonely people out there than we think. Obviously, they're mostly the ones that have plenty of time on their hands or live alone. At the post office the other day, I greeted an elderly woman who was also retrieving her mail from her box. We didn't know each other but she responded enthusiastically and kept talking a little longer than I had anticipated. As we finally parted, she seemed grateful for having taken the time to listen to her. Many more in dire need of human contact are out there, and we usually find them after we say a friendly *hello!*

Moving along.... A mailbox in the shape of a dog attracts my attention. I must say the thought that dog lovers live in that house is hard to resist! I like to speculate about people just by looking at the mailboxes in their front yards. The other day, I saw one in the shape of a fish. Guess who I thought the owner was? Yup! An avid fisherman. I saw another one with flowers painted on it. It was certainly not the man of the house who chose this one! A woman living alone or one wearing the pants in that household would be my guess! Ours is a plain white mailbox, so no one can associate us with anything, really. My husband and I are very private people. There's nothing wrong with that, but sometimes it's nice to open our door and let people in so they can learn a thing or two about us. And if they reciprocate, we can learn a thing or two about them, and we're not strangers anymore.

Moving along.... I now enter the Park of the Palms area, a Christian retirement community, and wonder if I'll ever live here or in a similar place one day. Years will tell... Getting old is not something I enjoy but there's a certain beauty to it. As long as my quality of life is good, I can't complain. I work less, my responsibilities are minimal now that I've finished raising my three sons, and I find pleasure in taking my time doing chores or anything else for that matter. But I'm not naïve to think that I won't have to deal with some health issues as years go by. That's life... I should then take one day at a time and enjoy it to its fullest, which is easier said than done for me...

Moving along... In front of a home, a sprinkler is on. It reaches part of the sidewalk I'm walking on, and I get this kid-like feeling of going through it but I don't, and I walk around it instead. What stopped me? The fear of getting wet? I really don't know... A kid would not have thought twice about it, and he would have had the time of his life. Why as an adult, it's sometimes difficult to be spontaneous? I know, I'm a grown-up and there are certain things kids do that adults don't, and vice versa. But in this instance, I felt an innocent urge to walk through droplets of water, but I didn't act on it.

A dear friend of mine is the perfect example of a person who has kept the stance of wonder and amazement in her life. She's truly what I call a kid at heart. Her spontaneity and great enthusiasm are somewhat infectious, I must say. She seems to get a kick out of what most people would consider not worth getting excited over. When she planned to transform part of her attic into a

special room for her granddaughters to hang out when they come for a visit, she got all excited about her project. She had such a blast choosing the colors for the walls, the rugs, the decorations, the toys, the dolls and books that would make their little corner a very special place. I must say that she gets as enthusiastic about a lot of things, and gardening is one of them. She always gives me a guided tour of her garden when I stop by her place and each time, she opens a window to her world of wonder. I always rediscover the beauties of nature that my daily routine seems to steal away from me. Her work as a Hospice caregiver could be a very depressing job but I believe her enthusiasm and caring attitude give her the ability to treat terminally ill patients like very few people could. I am mesmerized by her relentless dedication to her patients and her work. She's truly a very special friend.

So, on my way back home, I promised myself if that sprinkler is still on tomorrow, I'll walk right through it!

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