

Small Intentional Steps Forward



“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” - Lao Tzu

Over the holidays, we became caregivers for a dear family member, MJ. Living with and caring for her is teaching us to take a day at a time. We are growing patience, recognizing gratitude for little things, and trying to practice self-care.

Carrying tubes attached to our patient requires following slowly behind her as she plants one foot in front of the other. Small, intentional steps eventually get us to our destination. It is quite a change from the long, quick strides I usually take with pride. Those were the strides that got things done, got me places faster, and as a child, awarded me shopping trips with my Mom and Aunt (because I could keep up with them). Now I am learning the merit of slowing down, being mindful, and being present as I take smaller steps.

Together, MJ and I have incorporated a new morning ritual. We begin with “The Seven Steps of Morning” and add to the list as we step to the bathroom.

Our first step is that of gratitude – for the gift of another day of life.

Our second step is that of love – for the Holy One and all our dear ones.

Our third step is that of hope – for the possibility of growth in each moment.

Our fourth step is that of compassion – for all of creation and our deep connection.

Our fifth step is that of generosity – for all that shall be asked of us in this new day.

Our sixth step is that of laughter – for the joys that will refresh our heart.

Our seventh step is that of patience – for the difficult challenges that may arise.

- Joyce Rupp, Out of the Ordinary

As all of us live into our intention for 2021, life’s distractions and interactions tend to intervene with our best laid plans. The past year showed us how quickly routines and rituals change. I have noticed I am less attached to habits and more willing to let go and be nimble and flexible as routines are upended. I have discovered that even though it may take a while to find my path forward, I can navigate roadblocks and obstacles. Small intentional steps may feel too slow at times, but as Naeem Callaway says, “Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step of your life. Tiptoe if you must but take a step.” To take the first step and then the next step we may need support and encouragement. Who will you lean on to support you?

SO YOU CAN BE WELL...

- Ponder the direction you have set for this year. Adjust along the way. What is your first tiny step that will get you moving forward?
- Consider what is getting in the way of taking the first step. Name the obstacle and seek support to break down or work around the obstacle that is keeping you stuck.
- Practice “The Seven Steps of Morning” to provide space to notice and name the blessings before you.



Deacon Tammy L. Devine

Tammy shares her passion for health, healing, and wholeness through consulting, coaching, and retreat facilitation. As an ELCA deacon, registered nurse, parish nurse/coordinator, and ICF certified coach, she collaborates with faith and thought leaders to facilitate personal and communal growth toward living and leading well.