

SELF CARE 6/19/26 Friday Grind

Friday Grind #536

When cruelty becomes normal, kindness looks radical.

Today, I can choose to Be kind.

And here's the deal: it is the little things—the smile, the kind word, the helping hand—that are the difference makers.

They are the building blocks for healing. They are the building blocks for “re-humanizing”. They are the building blocks for restoring dignity.

Earlier, I spent time with a group at Leisure Manor. They give their time and energy to finding the right care for someone you love.

I am grateful for every single person who said “yes” to this vocation. Creating space for people, to be seen and affirmed. All built with the building block of the “little things”.

This is not easy. Today we began with this affirmation; in a world that needs compassion and kindheartedness more than ever, care of any kind—service, ministry, healing, presence—begins with self-care.

Self-care. And yet, this is not as “carefree” as one would hope.

This we know: With the storms of life, it is tempting to live reactively. Which means that we forget that sound and life-giving choices come from the inside, from the ground of mindfulness and well-being and self-care, where they have taken root.

Rabbi Albert Lewis tells the story of a man seeking employment on a farm; he hands a letter of recommendation to his new employer that reads simply, “He sleeps in a storm.”

The farmer is uncertain what to make of the note, but desperate for help, he hires the fellow. Several weeks pass, and suddenly, in the middle of the night, a powerful storm rips through the valley. Awakened by swirling rain and howling wind, the farmer leaps out of bed. He calls for his new hired hand, but the man is sleeping soundly. And so, the farmer dashes off to the barn, where he sees to his amazement that all of the animals are secure with plenty of feed. He then runs to the field, only to discover that the bales of wheat have been bound and wrapped in tarps. And when he runs to the silo, he finds latched doors and dry grain.

Only then does he understand the note, “He sleeps in a storm.”

The rabbi concludes, “If we tend to the things that are important in life, if we are right with those we love and behave in line with our faith, our lives will not be cursed with the aching throb of unfulfilled business. Our words will always be sincere, our embraces will be tight. We will never wallow in the agony of ‘I could have, I should have.’ We can sleep in a storm.”

Yes, this is easier to write about than to practice. And I am grateful for any time when I've allowed my body (and mind) the “catch up”—and time out of the storm. I smile as I write this, because there is something about self-care that feels selfish, and makes it a not-so-easy sentence to write.

Ahhh yes, when life feels heavy, we forget that we are all wired to be replenished. And, remembering... care of any kind, begins with self-care.

I do stand by that, more than ever.

Depletion and exhaustion, and being

parched, may feel rampant, but there is healing grace in receiving the gift of self-care.

Another good reminder that, without even knowing it—for every single one of us—there are times when we need space to be (and stay) emotionally and spiritually hydrated. Especially in a world that can quite easily, daily, feel like an emotional storm.

So. This week, let us embrace the power of pause. In other words, the permission be gentle with yourself.

And the permission to make (and honor) space(s) that can replenish and heal.

The permission to honor the healing power of sanctuary. Parker Palmer’s reflection, “Sanctuary is wherever I find safe space to regain my bearings, reclaim my soul, heal my wounds, and return to the world as a wounded healer. It’s not merely about finding shelter from the storm: it’s about spiritual survival.

Today, seeking sanctuary is no more optional for me than church attendance was as a child.”

This will change the questions we ask. Not, “What did you do (accomplish) today?”

Instead, we ask, “Today, where did you find sanctuary/peace, what made you laugh, to regain your bearings?”

And remember; this affirmation is not an assignment to achieve, but a gift to embrace. What made you smile today?

For me yesterday it was the two rabbits and young doe who sat nearby as I visited with someone in Assisted Living at Leisure Manor in Richmond, MI. Rabbits at our feet



and the young doe looking over the fence was special. And I can’t forget the variety of birds at the feeders.

Something to Think About

Does ever church reap what they sow? By this I am drawn to young people who prepare and participate in Confirmation and then where do they go? High School graduation happens and college and faith and practice, where does it go? Thinking back on families, where do the young people engage and if not why? They are wonderful community minded folks, good citizens, but is their faith thriving or will they wait until a tragedy happens and find need of prayer and God once again.