**Embracing Life**

**But I say to you that you should not resist evil.**

***(St. Matthew 5:39)***

**You have heard that it is said,**

**Be kind to your friend, and hate your enemy.**

**But I say to you, Love your enemies,**

**bless anyone who curses you, do good to anyone who hates you,**

**and pray for those who carry you away by force and persecute you.**

***(St. Matthew 5:43-44)***

**So that you may become sons of your Father, who is in heaven, who**

**causes his sun to shine upon the good and the bad,**

**and who pours down his rain upon the just and the unjust.**

***(St. Matthew 5:45)***

**Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

***(Romans 12:21)***

**We are each of us angels with only one wing. And we can only fly embracing each other. *(Luciano de Crescenzo)***

**Nor would it be good for us to be freed from the thrust of anxiety. For the struggle with our environment is a part of our heritage, a part of the complex adventure of being human. *(Ardis Whitman, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The best response to being offended: Everyone, apparently, is deeply offended, said Bill Maher. In the past year, Americans have claimed to be “shocked and appalled” by the insensitivity of Hank Williams Jr., Cee Lo Green, Don Imus, the Super Bowl halftime show, and just about every partisan utterance. Conservatives are sputtering with fury that 22 years ago, Barack Obama hugged Derrick Bell, a law professor who taught that we lived in a racist country. Liberals are out to drive Rush Limbaugh off the radio for calling a Georgetown law student a “slut.” Rather than trying to force people who offend us to “go away forever,” I have a better idea: Let’s declare an amnesty on feigned outrage. If you see or hear something you don’t like, “turn the page or flip the dial.” I find Limbaugh obnoxious, but I have coexisted with him comfortably by never listening to him, except when idling at a red light next to a pickup truck. Do we really want to live in a country where all colorful language and emotion have been drained from public discourse – where no one says anything that offends anyone? “That’s why we have Canada.” *(The Week magazine, April 6, 2012)***

**HIV and AIDS seemed to come out of nowhere in the eighties. Yet over millions of years, wild cats have learned how to live with a virus quite similar to one that's killing us. Lions, cheetahs, and other wild cats have harbored a similar-feline virus--and they don't get sick. There seems to be a balance between the host and the virus. With luck, maybe we can find a way to imitate them. *(Virginia Morell, in Discover magazine)***

**Why Danes are always so happy: Danes get little sunlight and pay extraordinarily high taxes, yet they are some of the happiest people in the world, said Nick Ulmi. Their secret, as we now know thanks to a flurry of books on the subject, is hygge (pronounced HOO-guh), loosely defined as the happiness that comes from snuggling with friends in candlelight, eating candies. Denmark burns through more candles than any other European nation, and Danes each eat about 18 pounds of sugar a year, double the European average. But how did they get this way? After all, other Northern European countries also have long, dark winters, conducive to hunkering down under warm blankets by the fireside. The secret lies in Danish history. The Danes' empire crumbled in the 18th century, and they lost control of land in Germany, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway. Rather than bemoaning their diminished status, Danes decided to embrace it and "identify with simplicity." Their defeat "was not deplored as a loss, but cerebrated as a gain." Delight in simple pleasures is now a national trait, indeed, it's a source of patriotic pride. Hygge is "the feeling that one is safe, sheltered from the world." After a rough 2016, perhaps we can all learn from the Danes in the coming year. *(The Week magazine, January 13, 2017)***

**Never despair, but if you do, work on in despair. *(Edmund Burke)***

**Difference is a blessing, not a challenge. We define ourselves by knowing other people. We know our world by learning about difference. What is the word we often use? Tolerance. Is that a positive notion? Not really. “For the time being, I will tolerate you”? I’m against that concept. It means difference is a threat. Difference is a blessing and you don’t tolerate a blessing. You embrace it. (Islamic scholar Mohammad Mahallati of Oberlin College, in BoingBoing.net)**

**About the only thing that can halt an outrageous fad among the young is for adults to adopt it. *(Doug Larson, United Features Syndicate)***

**Since human beings are fallible, the individual who cannot tolerate himself as fallible stands a slim chance of remaining on good terms with himself. *(Bonaro Overstreet, in Courage for Crisis)***

**False friendship, like the ivy, decays and ruins the walls it embraces. *(Richard Burton, explorer)***

**You cannot love anyone unless you also love his faults. *(Spanish proverb)***

**To end sadness, own your feelings and use them for learning, realizing sadness too is time’s illusionary force. *(Tom Scrima, in The Greater Joining)***

**If our anxieties are good for us, they also entail pitfalls no sensible person will ignore. They may get out of hand and interfere with successful daily living. Or they may loom so large that we flee from reality in order to dodge them. No one can dodge feelings of anxiety, but in living with them we can all learn a kind of wisdom that will lessen the burden. The first precept is: Don’t add to your real worries by piling on false ones. Everyone knows how things which are not of much importance can obsess us and blot out our clear thinking. Often it is not the big problem which throws us but the encrustations of little doubts and fears which we have piled on the bigger one, like barnacles on the hull of an already burdened ship. *(Ardis Whitman, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Embrace the fool within and reap some very positive rewards. The fool can jump outside the constraints of normal convention and shed new light. In Shakespeare’s Mid-Summer Night’s Dream and King Lear, the fool saw beneath the surface to the truth in every situation. In tarot cards, too, the fool is the first card of the deck. According to the Encyclopedia of Tarot by Stuart R. Kaplan, it can signify a new adventure, enthusiasm, initiative, spontaneity, new opportunities, unlimited possibilities, and pleasure. *(Terry Braverman, in New Thought magazine)***

**It is a natural matter for the golden frogs of Panama to remain in the mating embrace for several months until the female lays her eggs. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Once Handel, the great composer, found himself in desperate straits, his right side paralyzed, his money gone and his creditors threatening to jail him. But his suffering spurred him to the mightiest effort of his life. Writing feverishly, almost without stopping, he composed “The Messiah” with its immortal “Hallelujah” chorus in 24 days. If he had relaxed and forgotten his worries, the world would have been poorer, and so would he. *(Ardis Whitman, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A woman seeking counsel from Dr. George W. Crane, the psychologist,**

**confided that she hated her husband, and intended to divorce him. “I want to hurt him all I can,” she declared firmly. “Well, in that case,” said Dr. Crane, “I advise you to start showering him with compliments. When you have become indispensable to him, when he thinks you love him devotedly, then start the divorce action. That is the way to hurt him.” Some months later the wife returned to report that all was going well. She had followed the suggested course. “Good,” said Dr. Crane. “Now’s the time to file for divorce.” “Divorce!” the woman said indignantly. “Never. I love my husband dearly!” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**If you can’t change it, learn to love it. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**Namaste--”The Divine in me, salutes the Divine in thee.” *(Nona L. Brooks)***

**The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies,**

**probably because they are generally the same people*. (G. K. Chesterton)***

**When Barack Obama was 6 years old, he was the only foreign child in his neighborhood in Jakarta, Indonesia. He didn’t know the kids, didn’t speak the language. At first the locals were a little freaked out, says Zulfin Adi, who as a kid lived a block from Obama. “He was so much bigger than the rest of us.” So they decided to haze him. One day a group of children ambushed him and carried him to the local watering hole and threw him in. They had no idea if he could swim. But when Obama came to the surface, he was laughing. He could have broken free and crushed them anytime he wanted, but it was much better to play it cool, ride it out and make friends with his adversaries. *(Nancy Gibbs, in Time magazine)***

**We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey. *(Kenji Miyazawa)***

**When some foreign matter, often a parasitic larva, gets into its body, the mollusk forms a small sac around the foreign matter, isolating it, and then builds layer upon layer of calcium carbonate around the sac, imprisoning the invader forever and creating a pearl. *(Reader’s Digest Book of Facts, p. 276)***

**A pretentious poet reportedly lamented to Oscar Wilde that the reviewers neglected his poems. “It’s a conspiracy against me,” he cried, “a conspiracy of silence. What ought I to do, Oscar?” “Join it,” Wilde advised him. *(George Christy, in Reader’s Digest)***

**When we suppress any feeling or impulse, we are also suppressing its polar opposite. If we deny our ugliness, we lessen our beauty. If we deny our fear we minimize our courage. If we deny our greed, we also reduce our generosity. *(Debbie Ford, in The Dark Side of the Light Chasers)***

**Here then is the essence of abundant living: release yesterday, with its seeming failures; trust tomorrow, with its promises and its possibilities; embrace today, with its blessings and its opportunities. *(William Arthur Ward)***

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