

Meditation: LESSONS FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Two stories based on things I observed in my apartment at Drum Hill.

One night I sat for over half an hour watching a beetle-type insect scurry all over my bedroom floor. It was a fascinating show! That insect would run at full speed until it bumped into a barrier, such as my file cabinet or a wall. I could almost imagine a thought process going on, for instead of continuing to push ahead, it tried moving to the right or left until a path opened up for it to move forward again. I did wonder why it didn't watch where it was going, so as to avoid all the head banging! Once the insect disappeared under my closet door. Soon it reappeared – obviously darkness was not what it was seeking.

What I admired was the insect's patience, perseverance and problem solving. Sometimes my walker would catch against an immovable object or my Powerchair would end up in a tight spot and I would feel trapped. Remembering the insect helped me to seek a solution instead of bemoaning my situation. I am still learning as I recall watching that tiny creature run around my floor. It was time well spent.

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For two consecutive days late last fall, migrating Canada geese stopped for a meal on the grassy slope outside our windows in Drum Hill. One goose caught my attention: the one that was sitting down to eat. Why was it sitting, I wondered? Before long my question was answered. The goose got up and limped painfully to a new spot, where it sat down and resumed eating. The goose had a injured right leg! If I had not seen it move, I might have judged it (to my shame) to be lazy.

People as well as animals have different amounts of energy. For a time I boarded with a woman who had emphysema. Her doctor told her not to do anything standing that she could do sitting, and not to do anything sitting that she could do lying down. That dear woman certainly was not lazy! On the second day that the geese were at our outdoor cafeteria, quite a few of them sat down to eat. I can imagine that, with all the flying they had done, some of the geese were tired. Why should they stand to eat when they could sit?

As I continued to watch the lame goose, it suddenly stretched out its right leg, held that position a few seconds and then shook it out before putting it back in place. That goose is doing its physical therapy, I thought in amazement. Though I often think of God as the Great Physician, I had never thought of God as the Great Physical Therapist! So now I had a new name for God as well as a reminder that I, too, needed to work at my physical therapy.

If God takes care of the insects and geese that he made, surely he will take care of us when we are boxed in, tired, stiff and sore. God loves all his creatures, including us!

From the essay, "A Penny For Your Thoughts – 2"

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