

Stone Circle

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Moments & Blessings

By Dorie Croissant

Who would have ever thought that we (you, me, our families, our friends, our neighbors, our communities, our country, our world) would experience a year like 2020.

So much happened last year, some of which continues to this day, but this is not the place where I want to chart a list of those events. We all have our own long list that includes a combination of joy and wonder, as well as heartbreak and hardship. I believe there is insight to be gained from all the change. Unexpected blessings. Lessons learned.

Unexpected blessings ~ the gift of moments. Moments to meditate. Moments to pray. Moments to ponder. Moments to read. Moments to play word games. A slice of time to write letters, email, or call a friend. Motivation to organize a closet or clean out a cabinet. Time to bake or experiment with new dishes. Time to take a walk. Time to think. Time to reach out to others. And so much more.

More blessings ~ speaking of reaching out to others, I am grateful that my part in this Stone Circle group has been to keep as many of you as possible connected. Simply by sending out the weekly Insights & Energizers email and by forwarding to you the quarterly newsletters when they are ready for sharing. As well as sending you Jan's wonderful words of wisdom in what has turned out to be her weekly blogs. Please know that all your responses, questions, and replies have helped me stay connected. I have enjoyed searching for meaningful quotes and quips to share each week. Sometimes a random find, often times directed at a particular event or happening, and sometimes shared by one of you.

Each of you help add to the blessings and wisdom of Stone Circle. May you continue to balance the change in your world, reach out to each other, stay connected, stay safe, and be blessed in many ways.

Unexpected Blessings

By Arline Conklin

Unexpected blessings began with all the time I now had and decided to begin going through my old photo albums. I have so many albums

that I pick them at random and recently came across photos from 1997 that I'd forgotten about. My son had recently left to go to college at Arizona State when a dear old friend, that many of you know, Jean Morere, asked me if I'd consider flying out to Las Vegas where we could spend a few days touring the strip, then rent a car and drive down to Tempe, Arizona to visit Scott. The photos I looked at brought back so many memories of all the fun we had going to The Rio, The Mirage to see Siegfried & Roy's Magic Show, and Hoover Dam. And then driving down to Tempe and enjoying Sedona on the way, with its beautiful red rock formations and visiting the lovely chapel there, overlooking the mountains. Reliving these happy times was certainly an unexpected blessing.

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer,
in rings of sorrow and mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom,
energies and strengths
binding us and
guiding us into the future.
Each woman brings her gifts,
placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

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Wanting Hope For The World

By Jean Henry

When I saw that it was time to submit an article for the newsletter – I hesitated. I looked up the last one I submitted and it had some hope in it.

Well, hope can come in strange ways – strange places. I was leaving Target after picking up my new glasses. The young fellow behind the counter and I were discussing this (hope?). As I started to leave I was partway to the door to exit and the boy said “Mrs. Henry, try not to worry too much. My generation is quiet. Right now you don’t hear much from them. But wait, our country is going to be fine. We’ll not sit back. This will not happen. Be hopeful, we will make it safe and fine.”

Many times I’ve said “God where are you?” The very next day, I was watching a lecture on the computer about understanding generation XYZ. It was just what I needed to hear. The lecture was too long to write it all out but I’ll pick the high lights. The Y generation will be 75% of the work force, a larger generation than the Baby Boomers. Generation XYZ are very socially oriented. They say “different is good.” They are representing the new norm. They have global connectivity. They will be good Global Citizens. They think outside the box and are excellent multi-taskers. They are risk takers for the good of human kind. They ask more questions on social media. They are very up-to-date on technical skills. They see the small world we inhabit and make digital connections rather than face to face. They actually play games all night with their friends. Then friends from all over the world join in and they consider themselves Citizens of the Globe. It is an upside to what this generation is trying to navigate. We must support and help these young folks in any way we can. They are saying “we must do something different.”

I feel better now – not to brag but my grandbabies are entering the XYZ generation. I see it in them. They are good folks and will gladly save this mixed-up world.

Affirmation Corner

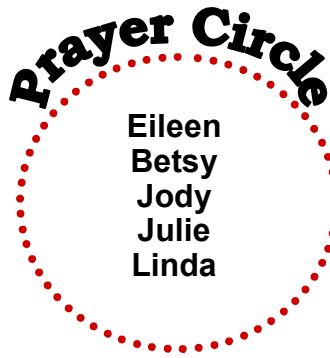
By Margie Gray

Challenges and Blessings

For me, identifying the challenges of living through a pandemic have been easier than identifying the blessings. I like to think I have an “it is what it is” or “it’s all good” perspective in life. This time has challenged my ability to do so. I’ve felt isolated, frustrated, conflicted, and discouraged. I think for me the biggest lesson or gift of the pandemic has been to remember to be gentle with myself. I’m not always the person I aspire to be, but I am doing the best I can in every given moment. These affirmations support me in continuing to grow in my ability to be my best self.

- ♥ I am filled and surrounded with light, love and positive energy now and always.
- ♥ I thrive in a loving and supportive universe now.
- ♥ I am connected with and supported by my higher self now.
- ♥ I am supported by all those healing spirits in the universe now.

I am clear that it is possible to heal and thrive even in the midst of so much dis-ease and suffering. We can look to nature for examples of healing. Improvements in air and water quality as well as the replenishment of certain species can give us hope for a bright future.



Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events and gatherings have been suspended for the time being. We will keep you posted as to when we can meet again in person.

Life with COVID

Because of these current life conditions, I am far more *cautious* when considering who and where I spend my together with others time and energy – which has become a very precious gift to myself. I am very inventive when it comes to being by myself; but I truly enjoy the interaction with others.

Dealing with COVID has heightened my awareness of hygiene – my own and especially others. At my office, when it is shared someone is going to the restroom, in my best whiny voice I loudly express “wash your hands.” Never did it mean more to each of us!

I purchase everything that Kills 99.9% Bacteria - sprays, wipes, hand sanitizer’s. I am very sure when the warm weather has me glowing again, I will seep bacteria-free sweat.

The pandemic has everyone looking at everyday life in a new focus – many decisions of what matters, what is worthwhile have caused transitions that are still rippling out. I discovered some people’s entire lifestyles came to a complete halt because of the self-quarantining. Some have had to develop skills like making coffee at home, no Starbuck’s. Many local businesses created on-line ordering and delivery. The Prime, FedEx, and UPS trucks making multiple deliveries at homes, and then the stack of boxes at the curb show an existence we could not have even had any concept of previously. Zoom, FaceTime, and text can only go so far.

Eventually, we will all have to leave the confines of our dwellings and experience the adventures of discovering an adjusted life and ways of being. In my heart, I know God has a plan – all I have to do is believe.

The Hug By Louise Frizzell Ambrose

Like so many things we take for granted, when something is unavailable to us, oh how we miss it, and wish we had appreciated it when we had the chance. We now step gingerly into this remembered action. We should not come lightly into these long awaited hugs. That incredible feeling of warmth and affection, the comfort of loving arms. Arms encircling us, pulling us close, holding us tightly. No words will be necessary, but they will come tumbling out anyway. A hug, such a strange but simple word, but such a universal symbol of caring, to be held closely, to fit together perfectly, to feel cherished. Our hugs will be prayers of thanksgiving that we have been given this time, this blessing of being together once again. That we have survived this pandemic, and have waited patiently to give and receive love in this glorious moment of a hug. So when we finally meet our loved ones, may we stop and think about what it all means, feel the feelings, take it all in, and enjoy.



By Virginia Strait



Stone Circles' Trees Gathering

On April 24, the Stone Circle ladies gathered under the magnificent 500 year-old tree in a park downtown. As one of our first events after the pandemic, we were pleased to see 16 ladies join us for the morning. The ladies, when asked "how they are" all responded how much they missed being with and seeing each other. It was a lovely morning enjoyed by us all.



The joy of being alive

By Dr. Betsy Williams

Covid only brushed Australia in comparison with other parts of the world. However, working in an aboriginal clinic with vulnerable patients during the initial wave was scary. All of my patients have so many medical problems and would have succumbed immediately to covid had covid appeared in Whyalla.

So I assumed my swallowing difficulty was due to stress. When I was finally able to have it investigated, months later, when covid bans on elective investigations were lifted, I was completely unprepared and shocked to learn I had cancer. Cancer has since then been my greater teacher as covid has not reappeared in regional South Australia.

Cancer brought the ordeals of chemo and radiotherapy to me and several times I came close to dying when unable to eat, drink, swallow, or even pee. Pain led to increasing despair when I found I could no longer do anything that I used to do in the past so easily. I have now had a stomach tube inserted, a post op infection, and severe pain that required over a month in the local hospital to clear. With a new round of chemo and a change in my medication, I am now about to go home, at long last, to our new house in Arno Bay.

I know I cannot work in the near future, perhaps ever, a daunting thought, which led to the move to Arno Bay following taking leave from the aboriginal clinic and my rural clinics in Lock. We have bought a little house in the scrub near the ocean. On day passes I have returned for walks and a chance to just sit quietly in nature. These times are simply precious and a reminder of what is important in life. My partner Ralph has stayed with me in the hospital and continues to help me with everything. Love is stronger than cancer or the fear of death. And nature is healing beyond anything I could imagine. I now spend my time with meditation or study.

More than anything else, I have learned that just to be alive is enough. And if you are reading this, regardless of what covid is doing around you, you too can celebrate with me the joy of simply being alive.



Tips For Living

By Jan Herrick

I opened my computer this morning to sit down and write a response to the latest newsletter theme. Instead of the expected item showing up on my screen something else turned up as I clicked to open the folder. It was something I had saved over a year ago. It was "Ten Mindful Tips for Living." I realized as I read them that they were the best advice possible for living through Covid.

Moreover, following them made the extended time at home less like quarantine and more like a respite that took away the regular distraction of the day. I realized that over this last year I unknowingly was following many of those ten items. I also discovered that when I strayed from them the restrictions placed on me from life in the pandemic became harder.

So... rather than try and paraphrase the list, I simply present them to you. In a pandemic or at any other time this is what I have learned to be true tips for living.

10 Tips for a Mindful Home

Wake with the sun

There is no purer light than what we see when we open our eyes first thing in the morning.

Sit

Mindfulness without meditation is just a word.

Make your bed

The state of your bed is the state of your head.
Enfold your day in dignity.

Empty the hampers

Do the laundry without resentment or commentary and have an intimate encounter with the very fabric of life.

Wash your bowl

Rinse away self-importance and clean up your own mess. If you leave it undone, it will get sticky.

Set a timer

If you're distracted by the weight of what's undone, set a kitchen timer and, like a monk in a monastery, devote yourself wholeheartedly to the task at hand until the bell rings.

Rake the leaves

Rake, weed, or sweep. You'll never finish for good, but you'll learn the point of pointlessness.

Eat when hungry

Align your inexhaustible desires with the one true appetite.

Let the darkness come

Set a curfew on the internet and TV and discover the natural balance between daylight and darkness, work and rest.

Sleep when tired

Nothing more to it.

—KAREN MAEZEN MILLER

From the "Do Dishes, Rake Leaves," in the March 2010 *Shambhala Sun*, lionsroar.com/do-dishes-rake-leaves



Part of Stone Circle's morning in the park admiring the trees is a half hour of solitude by ourselves. Jan captured a lovely picture of Jill as she enjoys the quiet time.

Stone Circle Thank You

Thank you again for your continued support of Stone Circle. We greatly appreciate your generous donations which allow our website and newsletter to continue reaching you and so many others. The pandemic has not allowed us to keep to our normal schedule of events and gatherings, which would have maintained our coffers, thus the importance of your continued support. Once again, a huge thank you to those who have been so thoughtful and generous!

Future Plans

We had such a wonderful turnout for
"In the Company of Trees" and
great enthusiasm for doing something else
now that restrictions are easing
and so many of us have been vaccinated.
I would like to try and plan a Stone Circle gathering
on either Saturday May 22 or 29
in the morning, finishing by noon.
Watch your email for date, time, and location.
I so look forward to seeing everyone again
as we gain such love and support from one another.

In the meantime be safe and well and
know that we are always together in spirit.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.