

## **Happy Marching forward All!**

As we emerge from the introspective and **meditative state** of winter, characterized by short days, biting cold winds, and the time clock adjustment, Mother Nature awakens with renewed vigor. She stretches her arms in a vertical pose and turns her face towards the rising sun, heralding the arrival of spring.

Amidst the awakening hearts and minds of those eagerly anticipating longer, sunnier days interspersed with occasional spring showers (**a cleansing of the old and nourishment for new life**), **fertile ideas of growth and connection emerge.**

Color and music permeate the surroundings, from the emergence of new life pushing through the soil to meticulously manicured gardens, thoughtfully constructed window boxes, and even the cracks in sidewalks. The air is alive with the harmonious sounds of bees and birds, as new life appears on trees that once stood bare.

Moments of **profound gratitude fill my heart** and **mind** as I reflect on the **abundance of blessings** in my life, particularly during the process of spring cleaning. As I pack away winter clothes, blankets, and decorations, I am reminded of the comfort and joy these simple items provided during the cold months. Additionally, I recognize the items that were once cherished but are no longer needed, now destined for those who will appreciate them.

**Are you ready for SPRING? Have you started or already packed away Winter items like clothes, blankets and decorations...making room for Spring?**

While going through this process, in appreciation for all the many blessings in my life and making room for more, the concept of mindfulness emerged.

One might ask “What do gratitude and mindfulness teach and benefit us on our journey, even when circumstances may not appear favorable?”

I pondered this question and recalled a common scenario:

Imagine entering the kitchen and discovering a mess left behind by someone who came in after you just finished cleaning the kitchen, made a mess and then left it that way. What would be your initial response?

For many, this situation may lead to grumbling due to a sense of disrespect or lack of appreciation, potentially escalating into an argument. However, when you consciously choose to acknowledge the role of gratitude in this equation, you may consider how grateful you are for:

- having someone you love to clean up after
- dishes to eat from
- nourishing food available for you and your loved one(s)
- a means to wash your dishes so you have clean dishes to eat off of in the future
- cabinets to house your dishes
- a home to house these dishes, cabinets and you...

I think that you get my drift. Certainly, this list could be expanded too so much more.

Your perspective has the opportunity to shift from irritation to one of love and appreciation, and perhaps now you might want to consider having the conversation with the person who left the mess when emotions are not high.

**How can you express your love for yourself and those around you with genuine heart? Here are a few ideas, always up to you:**

- **Set aside time for yourself and others.**
- **Give each other your full attention, staying focused without distractions.**

- **Show real interest in what they're passionate about, even if it's not something you're naturally drawn to, as it can help both of you grow.**
- **Validate their feelings about a situation by listening without judgment, offering a neutral perspective when they're processing things to gain a broader understanding.**
- **Let them choose where to go or what activity they'd like to share and join in to create memories together.**
- **Call or text them with genuine care and interest.**
- **Let them know how much they mean to you and what you appreciate about them.**
- **Discover their strengths and encourage them to develop them, showing them through your actions and words.**

Listen, Observe, Validate, Evolve

Until next Time, Love and Light for a Beautiful Day!

Rev. Tammy Decker