


A Week in Images and Quotes

September - 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
<p><i>If there is meaning in the past and in the imagined future, it is captured in the moment. When you have all the time in the world, you can spend it, not on going somewhere, but on being where you are. So I stretch out, close my eyes, and listen to the rain.</i> Robin Wall Kimmerer (Braiding Sweetgrass, p. 296)</p> <hr/>  <p><i>The biggest mistake is believing there is one right way to listen, to talk, to have a conversation - or a relationship.</i> Deborah Tannen</p>	<p><i>She wanted answers NOW! "Tell me what to do." I listened to her pleas I commented on my breathing practices. She continued, "Isn't anyone going to tell me what to do?" I could hear her anguish as I have felt in my own search For an ANSWER that isn't there. ELP</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>To learn which questions are unanswerable, and not answer them: this skill is most needful in times of stress and darkness.</i> Ursula K. Le Guin</p> <hr/> <p><i>Maybe there is no such thing as time; there are only moments, each with its own story.</i> Robin Wall Kimmerer</p>	<p>Brought to my attention by Pat: <i>We don't have to pretend to be fine when we are not. We don't need to push through and be strong. Gratitude is a soft landing place that requires us to be honest, open, and willing to look at everything we're facing and not turn away.</i> Alex Elle</p>	<p><i>It was clear to me how Dee, her essence, is still here. Her feelings and emotions are as strong as ever. Dee is still the wonderful, caring, loving person at her inner core.</i> Robert Hersherberger, <i>Diary of an Alzheimer's Caregiver</i>, p. 109</p> <hr/> <p><i>Part of courage is simple consistency.</i> Peggy Noonan</p>	<p>Learning Moment <i>Marsha did not want to enter the bathroom for her morning routine even with much coaxing on my part - - - so I told her that for whatever reason she was not comfortable in the bathroom, I would find another way to assist her. We stayed in the hallway just outside the bathroom and it worked OK with some minor adjustments.</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.</i> Twain</p>	<p>Even though Sir Ken Robinson is addressing a new mindset for education, I thought these two quotes are aptly connected to living with a spouse with a brain change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I asked Sir Harry Kroto how many of his experiments failed. He said about 95% of them. Of course, failure is not the right word, he said: "You're just finding out what doesn't work."</i> <i>It is said that the composer Gustav Mahler was sitting in his studio completing a new piano piece. As he was playing, one of his students came into the room and listened quietly. At the end of the piece the student said, "Maestro, that was wonderful. What is it about?" Mahler turned to him and said, "It's about this," and he played it again. If the ideas in music could be expressed in words, there'd be no need to write the music in the first place.</i> <p>(as found in the book <i>Out of Our Mind</i> by Sir Ken Robinson)</p>	

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SUNDAY

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The Caregiver's Journey

You will never learn all there is to know on
this journey you have entered.
You will discover some core values and truths
that will surely help you be centered - - -
To begin that journey - you do have a choice - - -
Hear that distant, inner voice ...
To become fully engaged in this one-of-a-kind process
you have to allow yourself full access - - -
To the wisdom you hear, and see and think
and take that glass and have a long drink - - -
Because it's never empty and it's never full;
you just have to know the pull - - -
Of contradictions, paradox and never-ending learning
that grip you hard and leave you yearning - - -
For how to support your very special one;
your journey has only just begun - - -
To unfold into a path that knows no end;
a labyrinth of sorts that is going to send - - -
You to depths unplanned and emotions so high
but also for strategies for where, what and why!

*This poem was adapted from one I presented to students
on the first day of a course I taught at CCSU.*

MONDAY

09

TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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My Beliefs

I believe in the power of collective wisdom.

I truly believe that the best minds to solve the current challenge
are presently in this room.

I firmly believe there is no "single" best answer to an extremely
challenging situation. It's a best guess at most.

I strongly believe that creative decisions to complex challenges are
developed by people who currently consider themselves to be
capable of developing creative solutions to complex challenges.

I sincerely believe that an individual's perceived negative behavior
is a message to us that is hard to grasp and has more meaning than
originally thought.

I intensely believe in the value that all individuals should have
access to the same quality of life as I do.

I often believe that my own life can be enhanced by learning more
from the people I support.

**I feel these beliefs are right for me to follow
at this point in my life.**

*Decades ago, I wrote this set of beliefs in my relationship with people with disabilities.
I realized how relevant these beliefs are in my role as caregiver to Marsha, as well.*

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SUNDAY

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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A Gentler Approach to Caregiving

As Marsha neared the end of eating her oatmeal for breakfast, she would not let go of the bowl for me to then give her a small container of applesauce in which I had placed her morning medicines. I was not going to tug the bowl from her but wondered what a gentler approach would be. First, I put the small container of applesauce on a small table next to the couch and told her that this was for her when she finished her breakfast. After about 5 minutes I sat down beside her and held the small container of applesauce in my hand and inched it closer to her line of vision. As I was doing this, I was completing my slow breathing practice for 15 breaths during which I thought of my next approach. Since Marsha was already engaged in scraping her now empty bowl of oatmeal, I transferred the applesauce from its small container into the bowl that had contained the oatmeal. She readily accepted this and then began spooning the applesauce into her mouth and I had SUCCESS,

I return to a resource from my bookcase: *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*:

- Tomorrow presents another opportunity for awareness, but it's never an opportunity for the same awareness.
- Do what you can with what you have. Nothing more is needed. Rick Rubin

WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

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FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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The quote below has been modified from "Words of Wisdom" I shared with students in my role as a college instructor in special education:

We are always in the process of getting better by selecting from among the hundreds of pieces of advice that seem to materialize out of the blue each year by "experts" whose backgrounds can, at times, be suspect. I believe striving for excellence raises us up to who we are: unique and different than any other caregiver. As long as we realize that we are not "there" yet, our own self-reflections are the best personal growth tool there is.

WHOLENESS

Meditation Card

The discipline of creation, be it to paint, compose, write, is an effort towards wholeness. Madeleine L'Engle

Wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life. Parker J. Palmer

I think many people need, even require, a narrative version of their life. I seem to be one of them. Writing memoir is, in some ways, a work of wholeness. Sue Monk Kidd

We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.

Marcel Proust

If we examine our thoughts, we shall find them always occupied with the past and the future. Pascal

Life is not what it's supposed to be. It's what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.

Virginia Satir

My yesterdays walk with me. They keep step, they are gray faces that peer over my shoulder.

William Golding

I would argue that nothing gives life more purpose than the realization that every moment of consciousness is a precious and fragile gift.

Steven Pinker

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SUNDAY

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I am currently reading this guide and found useful quotes as the authors interview specialists who interact with individuals with dementia.

Marsha: *I've got everything I need because of you.*

Ernie: *What a nice thing to say. Thank you!*

MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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WEDNESDAY

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10 Absolutes of Communicating through Alzheimer's

DON'T

Argue

Reason

Shame

Lecture

Say "Remember"

Say "I told you"

Say "You Can't"

Command/Demand

Condescend

Force

INSTEAD

Agree

Divert

Distract

Reassure

Reminisce

Repeat/Regroup

Do What They Can

Ask/Model

Encourage/Praise

Reinforce

As originally written by Jo Huey and quoted in the book: *Don't Let Dementia Steal Everything.*

THURSDAY

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- ... dementia does not destroy everything. Often something remains that is still wonderful. Out of the fog comes surprising wisdom.
- People with dementia need our touch and the sound of our voices even if they don't always know who we are.
- No one has ever faced your particular situation before, so feel free to improvise. Just do what comes to you as the right thing to do.

Pauline Boss, *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia*

FRIDAY

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There is a story in Zen circles about a man and a horse. The horse is galloping quickly, and it appears that the man on the horse is going somewhere important. Another man, standing alongside the road, shouts, "Where are you going?" and the first man replies, "I don't know! Ask the horse!"

As appeared in a book by Thích Nhất Hạnh: *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*

I wonder some days, "Where am I going in my daily experiences as a caregiver for Marsha?" I need to "ask the horse!"

On second thought, perhaps I need to "stop the horse" and practice mindful breathing. ELP

We shape our life by deciding to pay attention to it. It is the direction of our attention and its intensity that will determine what we accomplish and how well. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, who died on this date in 2015 - *It ain't over 'til it's over.*

SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

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You and your loved one are here together. You have the chance to see each other deeply. But if you are not fully present, everything will be like a dream.

Thích Nhất Hạnh
The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching, p. 65

The only person who can say they're happy getting old is someone who isn't actually old yet. Every day, I get less and less happy about that idea.

Nick Cave

MONDAY

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Kris Kristofferson died two days ago and I knew he would have left a useful quote for my current journey.

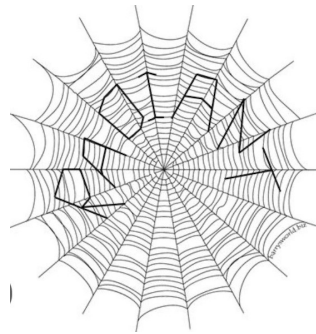
As soon as you learn never to give up, you have to learn the power and wisdom of unconditional surrender, and that one doesn't cancel out the other; they just exist as contradictions. The wisdom of it comes as you get older.

Kris Kristofferson

I want to keep learning, keep exploring, keep doing more. Jessye Norman

RADIANCE

Meditation Card



I am reminded of the great writer, Charlotte, who helped a friend in need.

It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer.

E.B. White – Charlotte's Web

We should not forget Charlotte's other profound words:

TERRIFIC
HUMBLE
SOME PIG

I needed a little levity today! ELP

- ... inside every old person is a young person wondering what happened.
- Not all questions are answered, but fortunately some answers are questioned.
- A good plan isn't one where someone wins, it's where nobody thinks they've lost.
- The presence of those seeking the truth is infinitely to be preferred to the presence of those who think they've found it.
- This book was written using 100% recycled words.
- Real education happens when you pick up a fact here, and another fact there, and put them together and get an insight.
- The shortest unit of time in the multiverse is the New York Second, defined as the period of time between the traffic lights turning green and the cab behind you honking. Terry Pratchett

LOVING KINDNESS

Meditation Card

A Gentler Approach to Caregiving certainly qualifies as "loving kindness."

- Our minds are the most engaged and vibrant when we honor complexity, learn stillness in turmoil, face doubt with confidence, and seek to know ourselves so that we might better serve others.
- Reverence – a feeling of awe for that which is greater than us and beyond our descriptive abilities.

Marc Lesser – Know Yourself, Forget Yourself