



Lessons from a Fall...

Back in the Fall I wrote a blog entry entitled, *Lessons from Afar*. Well, now, not to be cute, but this month's is *Lessons from a Fall...*

Much like last Fall, *It was a wonderful time*. We were with family, including in-law's and part of their extended family. Beautiful setting, great conversations and some fun skiing. New Year's Day, we awoke to thirteen inches of cold, dry powder – the kind you could literally blow off the fence rails. We'd waited all week for this. In fact, after a couple of great runs I texted my wife, Lyn, and said, *This is why we came to ski here*. WOW! Less than 2 hours later, I found myself in a ski patrol toboggan on the way to the ER.

After a handful of really fun runs in the deep, light powder, my son Drew and I decided to try something a little different. We skied down a ways and along a small cat track that had a fence below it. I got to the end of the fence, looked right, saw untouched powder and jumped in. I quickly discovered just how light and dry the powder was. "Small" problem... that thirteen inches of dry, light powder was all that separated the bottom of my skis from rocks... Yes, rocks. My skis caught on the rocks, and I spun around and tumbled. Immediately, I knew something was wrong. One of those *In-the-blink-of-an-eye* moments. It took a while to get to the ER, but the upshot was that I fractured my left knee cap. They put me in a brace, gave me some pain pills and sent me on my way... Oh, did I mention that we were in Colorado? Many of you know the challenges of holiday travels, particularly this year's holiday travels. Some 60-ish hours later I was home in my own bed. SO many things had to go right for me to get home safely and navigate this covid-era medical system to get surgery less than two days later! Grateful! I'll spare you all the details, but now, nearly 3 weeks post-accident, I'm able to write about some unfolding *Lessons from a Fall*.

Lesson #1: I can be self-centered in what I do. I can make it about me. My ski accident isn't just something I "suffer through" on my own. Lyn's life is interrupted for three months. Can I take other people into consideration as I make decisions moving forward? Another way to pose this question is, ***What's it like to be on the other side of me?***

Lesson #2: We've all heard the ditty *What doesn't kill you makes you stronger...* Well... As I've had plenty of time on my hands these past few weeks, I might re-phrase this as, ***While I wouldn't wish this on anyone (or myself...) I wouldn't trade this time for anything.***

Lesson #3: Those of you who are clients of FBC frequently hear "Mark's sermons." © Well, I'm being put to the test. Do I listen to my own "preaching"? One of my sermons is, ***The good is found on the far side of hard.*** Really, Mark? I'm finding the truth in this and hope to continue to do so as I have had to deal with some real physical pain and NOT being able to do what I have so often taken for granted... When we experience times of pain or imposed slow down/stop, ***we have a choice: get bitter or get better.*** It's easy to be bitter. As a friend said to me today, ***to grow you have to give something up...*** I guess we have to ***give up to grow...*** The hard work of getting better requires a sort of "surrender" to the slower pace; ***learning to be patient is required to be a good patient.***

One more... Lesson #4: Pre-decide. In the Fall I had the chance to mountain bike in Sedona. I rode in a way I had never ridden before... and had no "fall." Will I do that again? I had a great time with a great friend. In fact, he called me tonight and we talked about how alive we felt after each ride in Sedona. He asked if I'd decided not to ride there again... I was not looking forward to my friend asking THAT question... I need to say ***I made it unscathed once. I can live with that memory. I don't need to push my luck.*** I believe we must draw the line early and firm. ***If you wait to draw the line in real time, the line WILL move...***

I don't know about you, but for me, I want to, as I age, grow in wisdom to know what to do and what not to do... AND, then to have the courage to follow through with that wisdom. IF I follow my own advice, I'll be glad I did... and so will those closest to me.