



Lessons from afar...

My wife and I just got back from what has become an annual “unplugging.” I’ve shared with many of you how Martha, the Director of Operations at FBC, changes my work email password so that I can’t see work emails during this time...I know myself...

It was a wonderful time. Rest, renewal, refreshing...and lots of good hikes with great scenery. One of my objectives for this time was to learn how to sleep again. Seems odd, but my wife has been reminding me

Mark, take your foot off the gas... Don’t rush...Stop packing it in...

Well, when I don’t follow her sage advice, sleep is one of the things that suffers. Guess what? I learned to sleep again. Yay!

Have you ever had expectations for a trip or an experience, only to be caught off guard by what you end up experiencing, totally unexpectedly? This happens to me over and over, and this time was no exception. Two big lessons, totally unexpected, that I learned during my time away.

First, several months ago, Lyn (my wife) gave me what was for me, a new definition of

PATIENCE: Going at the other person’s pace.

I think I started learning this lesson during our time away. (Maybe you better ask Lyn. 😊) She is typically the one who bears the brunt of my impatience. We’d say we were going to leave for a hike at 11 and I’d get impatient with her, thinking, *We’re going to be late*. Mark, so what? Lyn would say to me, *We have all the time in the world. What’s the rush?* And, she was right? I began thinking, *What if the “goal” of this time away is to learn patience. If not now, when? What a better time to practice...Maybe I can change my old ways and develop a new habit.*

Wouldn’t PATIENCE be a good fruit in my life?

Maybe I inched forward a bit during this time away. Again, ask Lyn...

Lesson number two. I got bent out of shape by something someone else did (this time, not Lyn...). I was able to process what happened with a friend, and the friend shared what I often share with others:

Let it go!

He attributed positive intent to the other person. I didn’t...He was right. I’m a “One” on the Enneagram. (For those unfamiliar with the Enneagram, a good starting point is www.enneagraminstitute.com.) A One’s inner critic is never silent. One’s are seeking to improve themselves and their world constantly. So, I pride myself in “getting it.” Problems happen when I project “getting it” onto others, and that’s what I was doing in this instance. My friend basically told me, *That’s not your job. They’ll get it on their own.* He was right, and so I did let go...and guess what? What I was holding onto (the other person “getting it”), that “obstacle” that was getting in the way of a relationship – once I let go, the obstacle to relationship vanished and I ended up FREE to move forward relationally. What I thought was their problem which I imagined was “holding them back” – was in reality holding me back...I did let go of them getting it – and boy was I glad I did!

I’d love to hear about any of your lessons from afar learned this summer.