

Witness to Reconciliation
Why I Uninstalled My Stillness Buddy

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Once upon a time...I downloaded a little program that could help me stop...for 30 seconds, once every 30 minutes, to pause and reenter the present moment. Ironically, I looked forward to the peace and groundedness that it could offer me.

Once upon a time I sat down to reflect on my experiences of Reconciliation. In fact, to get started, I Googled it. Merriam-Webster told me that it is "The process of finding a way to make two different ideas, facts etc., exist or be true at the same time." Interesting, I thought...Like: Be here now, you are at home in the present, here and now I dwell in God and God dwells in me Be still and know...

And also...Go... now and make disciples, faith without works is dead, rise up shepherd and follow, this world is not my home, I'm just a passing through, be strong and courageous, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again, endeavor to persevere, hang in there, hold on... press on! And also...

Surrender, relinquish control, allow what is to be...Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding...Be wise as foxes, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Reconciliation... Like knowing -- I am a promise, as Bill and Gloria Gaither taught me how to sing as a child, I am a possibility. I am a promise with a capital P. I am a great big bundle of potentiality...AND I'm tired, I have spinal muscular atrophy and most of my friends with my condition have passed on already. I'm developing arthritis, I'm on my horse headed happily toward sundown...AND I'm staying engaged, I'm keeping a schedule, I'm wanting connection and meaningful consistent, contribution, it's 2014 and I've never felt so alive, so ready to rock.

I am what I am. I am what God has made me. I am created exactly as God wanted me to be...AND I'm not supposed to be like this...Jesus grieves with me through my difficulties...AND says Get up and talk. He says...

You are an egomaniacal jerk, you are the light of the world, you are an immortal diamond...you are a vapor, ashes...dust in the wind.

These were some of the thoughts I was having just before my stillness buddy chimed in. It started up. It wrestled with my dictation program. It blew away my notes...not unlike the high winds of a polar vortex. The program started up -- it was time to stop and relax and be still -- and the stillness buddy blew away my notes not unlike the high winds that blow over the Himalayas...

where the Tibetan monks eat their meals, chewing every bite about 30 times as a practice of gratitude and then swallowing... where they meditate for hours and painstakingly render glorious masterpieces. With sand they create delicately crafted mandalas -- bearing rich symbolism of beauty, purity, healing... then they allow the Himalayas to sneeze them away. What they endeavor to perfect is blown away as nothing in an instant...they enter the mystery and ministry of impermanence. Yet somehow their work, their practice seems to me of everlasting consequence...their joy cannot be taken away...their offering, their artwork scatters into the sky, never to be seen again, never to be forgotten.

So I uninstalled the stillness buddy...because despite saving and saving and saving what I was working on, it was unbearably unsettling to wait for stillness in this way, not knowing when or how the wind was going to blow next. I uninstalled the stillness buddy because I'm not a Tibetan monk...I want to be, and I don't want to be. I'm Randy, alive by the grace of the living God...grace upon grace upon grace...and like you, and not at all like you...I'm in the process of finding a way...to let God hold together...all that I cannot. And if it's all right I'd like to ask you as a beloved community of Christ, to bear with me just a little bit longer...because I'm almost finished here...and I'm just getting started.