

Small Talk – October 15 2021
By Michael Small

In times of many choices, freedom, and challenges it is helpful to be in conversation with others – with each other. I encourage you to read the words of Anne. They are helpful as we make choices this day!

Meanderings – Follow Your Nature
By Anne Brady Cronin

I love fall, it is by far my favorite season. All the summer people are clutching their sunblock and gasping right now and I'm ok with that. Fall is my season. I want to hike, camp, cook, stew and can, and all the things that take me to a space of nature, creativity, and abundance. Fall is where it's at.

As I get older, I certainly become more aware of the things that make me feel full on the inside and what does not. It's very rarely getting a thing, a physical possession, it's always an experience. Yes, some of my experiences certainly require material goods, but my excitement about the goods is always based on my association to what fun thing I'm going to have using it. Recently, I acquired a new pair of wool hiking socks. They're bright freakin' orange with fuchsia trim. Yes, you read that correctly, bright orange and fuchsia, and I'll complete that with lime green branding to boot. I love them. They make me happy just to look at them. You know what makes me happier? The feel of them on my feet as I cram them into my hiking boots to go hit the trail for an afternoon in the woods. This is bliss, my friends.

Our world right now would have us distracted by all the fear, worries and problems and side, and such. I am going to propose something many of you may seem downright irresponsible. Ignore it.

What would happen if we spent more time feeding our spirit? What will happen if we spend our focus doing the things that bring us joy, or helping others? Will the world disintegrate if we leave our phone and go for a walk? Pick a pumpkin? Roll in the leaves, or share a meal with friends? I think not.

The media seems to want us to believe that the world will end, and we'll be behind the proverbial 8-ball when it happens if we're not tuned in constantly. Guess what? It won't.

*Google and other tech sources have honest to goodness goals about wanting to get people to check their phones every several seconds. Check out *The Social Experiment* on Netflix to see more.*

Folks, we are inherently drawn towards ease and pleasure. It is hardwired into our brains. Not kidding. Doubt me? Think of some of the most basic human desires and functions: sleep, food, sex and now tell me I'm wrong. This isn't rocket science. We're

wired to find things that make us feel good, so small wonder the more we watch TV, are on social media, listen to the news, the higher our stress levels and anxieties are. There are more people on antidepressants, heart medications, and anti-anxiety meds than ever before in our history. It's not hard to figure out that our current way of living isn't working to our benefit.

So, let's stop.

Stop right now and write down a list of 10 things that make you happy, or bring you joy and fulfillment. Right now.

Now, at least once a day, do one of those things.

When you find yourself getting caught up in negativity or fear, stop. Give yourself permission to focus on what makes you feel good, instead of being led astray by things that don't. You won't miss out on anything that won't be there waiting for you when you go back to it. Ideally, you'll desire less energy spent on negativity and let your natural state of ease and pleasure take over and lead you to more things that make you happy and feel fulfilling.

Let's take our focus back to what's natural. Let's have some ease and some happiness. Now, I've got a crazy bright pair of socks to go enjoy. Maybe I'll see you on the trail.

Forever the journey,

Anne

Thanks Anne, I will write that list. Perhaps we should share our lists with one another.

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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