

Stone Circle

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Where Joy & Change Intersect

By Dorie Croissant

If the truth be told, most people do not like change. They are not comfortable with it. Change smacks of jumping into the unknown of what will it look like, what will it feel like and how will it affect me and my family and friends. And frankly, how will it affect the wider circle.

I sort of like change. I look at it as a time to do something different, or a time to do something I usually do but do it in a different way. With eyes wide open or through a different lens, so to speak. This whole 2020 craziness is full of change.

I have been finding joy in the small things. Like going to the grocery store and suddenly finding an item on my list that I have not been able to find in a few weeks or even months. Joy! Or picking up a good book to read and discover that I actually have time to read it completely through in one or two days. Joy! The fun of having a conversation with a friend regardless of the time of day because I have nowhere else to be. Joy! The surprise of finding packets of yeast in my mailbox because one of my nieces and one of my sisters mailed some to me because they found it in their store when I couldn't. Joy! The wonderful experience of spending a few hours making a crumb cake with the yeast using my Grandmother's recipe, which had been recently discovered. Joy!

Joy and change do intersect. At the craziest of places and in the craziest of times. I need to remember to give myself the opportunity to embrace the change so I can experience the joy. There is a Helen Keller quote that goes like this, "Joy is the holy fire that keeps our purpose warm and our intelligence aglow." I found this to be a powerful quote in the midst of everything we have going on in this world right now.

Spring Awakening By Mary Wales Sydney, Australia

Out of the grey days of winter, coupled with the pandemic, has come spring here in Australia. Spring brings new growth and with that the enrichment of all things living. More joy this spring as the little flower buds poke their heads out to say hello, giving me newer life and encouragement to embrace.

PEACE

*Women have gathered in circles
since the dawn of history
for birthing,
to share story,
at cisterns for washing,
at fires for warmth,
at wells to draw water,
in embraces of profound joy,
in prayer,
in rings of sorrow and mourning.*

*With hands grasped, we gather our
collective wisdom,
energies and strengths
binding us and
guiding us into the future.
Each woman brings her gifts,
placing herself
as a stone in the unbroken circle.*

© Janet Herrick

Joy

Mary Columbo Reichert

I once believed that joy would grab me around the waist, pick me up off my feet, twirl me overhead then drop me back down exhausted, overwhelmed and smiling. I suppose that can still happen but I find joy in seemingly ordinary things more often.

I smile when I see the man in a business suit eating an ice cream cone; or the little boy-- whose backpack is almost as big as he is-- bouncing his way to school with an older boy holding his hand and keeping pace.

I relax as I witness the robins take turns at the feeder and the squirrels contort themselves to try to get to the seed without dropping to the ground. I enjoy watching the bunnies that use my lawn for their lunch buffet!

I sigh when I receive an unexpected hug or compliment or greeting card; or skip chores to read a book with a happy-ever-after ending; or take time to savor a really good piece of chocolate.

I see the moon from my driveway, and the first evening star and realize that I don't have a wish because I'm content with where I am and who I am.

Gently and silently, joy has found me.

Affirmation Corner

By Margie Gray

Live Simply

Fall is my favorite time of year. I especially enjoy the change of colors as the trees turn beautiful shades of orange, gold and red. Taking a walk in the crisp fall air is replenishing. On those walks I always find simple treasures. The soft velvety leaves of the clover. Beautiful purple blooms on a wild flower. A fascinating fungus in the form of a mushroom. The dazzling contrast of bright orange leaves against the blue sky. Little birds flitting about sweetly chirping. The grace and power of a Heron or Egret taking off and rising from the water's edge. Watching the passing clouds. Listening to the breeze as it stirs the leaves. Taking in the gifts Mother Nature has for me.

Affirmations take me to a place where I am open to receive the gifts and messages of nature.

- ♥ I am filled and surrounded with Light, Love and Positive Energy now and always.
- ♥ I gratefully receive and accept gifts from the Universe now.
- ♥ I am cradled in the arms of a loving and generous Universe now.

Affirmations and recognizing the beauty that surrounds me is grounding. In those moments, I find that simplicity is key to finding the joy in life.

Stone Circle Sadness

Please keep Jody Donovan and her family in your prayers. Jody's husband, Joe, died at home on September 22, with Jody and two of their sons at his side.

Jody has devoted many years to Stone Circle. She is a member of our vision team and has actively helped plan our calendar of events many times. The Donovan's have also graciously opened their home to our members for weekly studies and many gatherings.

Prayer Circle

Jody
Lucy
Betsy
Julie
Mary
Linda

Please let us know the names of those you would like to have included in our prayer circle.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming events and gatherings have been suspended for the time being. We will keep you posted as to when we can meet again in person. See page 8 for information on the Labyrinth Walk.

Finding Joy

By Margie Gray

When I am uncertain of what's next in my world and feel anxious or uneasy, I know that it is time to lean into my core beliefs. I am clear that all is in Divine Order. I trust that the Universe is loving and supports me. I focus on what I am committed to creating in my life and gratefully receive the gift of even the smallest joy.

- *Cooking a favorite dish
- *Reading an inspiring book
- *Reorganizing a drawer
- *Sending a note to a friend to tell them how much I appreciate them
- *Taking a walk in nature
- *Doing something for someone else is always uplifting for me
- *Meditating
- *Starting a Gratitude Journal

Joy isn't something that happens to us or that exists outside of us. It is something that lives within us. Clearing the clutter reveals the joy. It is always there. When we turn our focus inward rather than focusing on what is going on around us, that is when the journey to finding sustaining joy begins.

Small Joys

By Joanne Gizzi

Animals are such amazing creatures and beloved members of so many families, undoubtedly one of the best medicines in life. Here is a lovely quote from a very old issue of "Best in Care", a publication of Florida Hospital (now Advent Health):

"Animals are a blessing from nature that enhance our well-being in numerous ways. They give unconditional love, social dimension and activity."

Morning Blessings

By Arline Conklin

Every morning I go outside and just listen to the birds. It is relaxing to hear them and look at my lovely blue flower bushes. Plumbago I think they are called and some mornings they are fully blooming & so pretty.

Then I look out at the pond in the back to see what water birds have flown in and sometimes the wild turkeys are making their journey around the area. God blesses us with so much nature to enjoy. All we have to do is go outside and observe it.

The 2020 WOW Award

The recipient is presented the award and the words on it explain why she was chosen. They state her name followed by... “who exemplifies the qualities and attributes of a women who embraces her eldership and is Sage-ing not merely Aging.” This is what Stone Circle is all about, supporting and empowering women to become the individuals they are meant to be. Since 1999, I have personally witnessed how women coming together, encouraging one another, leads them to continue to learn and grow. This growth allows them to express themselves and be instruments of positive change in themselves and one another. I am so proud of these women and what we have accomplished together. I am even more proud to call these women friends.



Although we will not be gathering for a luncheon this year to surprise a deserving woman with the WOW award with the applause of those gathered, it will still be awarded. We have a larger presence than just those who come to the monthly gatherings. There are those who participate in additional activities, trips, or retreats. We also have women near and far who contribute to the Stone Circle Newsletter. When I say far, I mean women in other states and even in other countries. We may never know specifically how what is said or done will touch someone. I do know is that it makes a profound difference to countless women. The credit goes to these countless women.

This is precisely why this year the WOW award goes to a woman who has consistently written words of wisdom and inspiration for the Stone Circle newsletter. She has shared her challenges, joys and sorrows, her work, her loves and her heart with us for a number of years. We have grown to love her even though we have not met her personally. I feel especially privileged because I met her in 2014 on a trip to Dharamsala India where we became fast friends. She lives in Australia and after returning to our respective homes I introduced her to Stone Circle's online presence and invited her to write for our newsletter. The rest is history.

I am proud to announce that this year 2020, the recipient for our Stone Circle WOW Award is Betsy Williams. Betsy is a doctor in Australia. She has worked as part of the Flying Doctor Service that delivers medical assistance to remote regions in Australia. Most recently she shared her skills with an Aboriginal Women's Clinic in South Australia, but her heart is in Cambodia with her kids in The Green Gecko Project. She has volunteered with them every October for many years. Betsy, you inspire us and you are truly a woman of wisdom who embraces your eldership and is Sage-ing not merely aging. You are our 2020 WOW recipient. Thank you for being you and being a part of our circle of women.

Stone Circle Thank You

Thank you again for your continued support of Stone Circle. We greatly appreciate your generous donations which allow our website and newsletter to continue reaching you and so many others. The pandemic has not allowed us to keep to our normal schedule of events and gatherings, which would have maintained our coffers, thus the importance of your continued support. Once again, a huge thank you to those who have been so thoughtful and generous!

Joys in the Midst of Change

By Jan Herrick

It is so interesting that as so much of what was considered my normal life was taken away, I've discovered the importance of so many things that may have been overlooked or under appreciated. I think we have all discovered that it really is the little things in life that truly give us joy.

The discovery begins with opening my eyes in the morning to my sweet puppy (not really a puppy anymore) snuggling her head into my hand to be sure I am awake. Nothing like a loving wet lick to begin your day.

Feeling the three feral cats I feed each day curl around my feet. They arrive for breakfast and dinner as well as snacks. The back yard is a lounging safe zone for them at least when the dog is not there.

The smell of brewing coffee and the chance to casually sip it as my partner and I begin the day.

Playing with my dog at the dog park has become a real highlight of the day. We have gotten into a humorous play routine that always makes me laugh, as I cheer her on.

Laughter itself is a tremendous joy!

Sunshine is brighter, air is fresher and flowers are prettier when we stop and notice.

I am back in my childhood when I ride my bicycle in the evening for exercise. I love the wind in my face as I peddle along.

In the midst of all the changes I find myself smiling with my eyes over my face mask when I get groceries. Even more joyous when people return the greeting.

Keeping in contact with friends and contacting those at a distance more often is an added bonus and joy.

There are so many things during the day, all the small joys that keep us all going in the midst of change. We just have to be aware and notice.

Lena's Joys

Remembered from what Lena Moriarty shared

When Lena heard the newsletter's topic she replied:

I feel joy each morning when I place my two feet on the ground.

When I receive an unexpected phone call and when I am able to talk to a friend or relative on the phone.

When I receive a letter or card or even when I send a letter or card to someone.

It gives me joy to bake for others to enjoy.

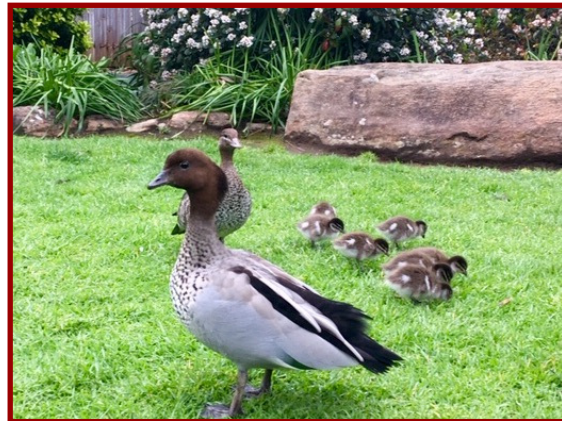
It gives me joy to meet with my craft club ladies & to see friends at church.

Small Joys Amidst Change

By Dr. Betsy Williams

- Everything changed in my life as soon as I was told that I had cancer. A complete shock, other than a little difficulty swallowing, I felt completely well, swimming, doing yoga, bush-walking on days off, no pain. My parents died in their nineties and there is no family history of cancer whatsoever. I'm a non smoker, non drinker, vegetarian most of my life, and exercise regularly. It must be a mistake, patients have cancer, not me.
- Over the next few days, we went to Adelaide where the diagnosis only became worse. A rare small cell cancer that has already spread through my lymph nodes and bones. Inoperable, but sensitive to chemotherapy and possibly immunotherapy. Suddenly I am no longer working, away from home and my usual routine, being a patient in a strange medical system, meeting doctors I have never met before, trying to make decisions as I look at my PET scan, glowing like a Christmas tree.
- Staying at the cancer lodge, doing daily chemotherapy, nausea, fatigue, losing all of my hair....I ask myself how much longer I will be alive? It is an ongoing nightmare, but I am not able to wake up from it. My partner is absolutely shocked and devastated but has taken time off work to be with me through it all.
- Small joys, actually amazing joys, are going for swims in the university swimming pool near the hospital. Walks in the Botanic gardens and Japanese gardens. Cuddling with Ralph, feeling his warmth, love and reassurance. Seeing spring blossoms, baby ducks and birds nesting. Sunshine and warm breezes. Emails and phone calls full of love and support from friends, near and far. The simple joys I have so often taken for granted. Life now is also so simple. No more worrying about all of the usual concerns. What matters now is just to be alive, no matter what, no matter where. Just being alive and able to take in all that is around me. To love and be loved. And to still try to find ways to benefit others.

"When I am hungry, give me someone I can feed.
And when I am thirsty, give me someone who needs a drink.
When I am cold give me someone to keep warm.
And when I grieve, give me someone to console."
Mother Teresa



For a while now...

By Virginia Strait

I have been aligning with “being in gratitude” for a while ... Along my way, I have discovered there are many wonders and beauty everywhere – all I have to do is refrain from just looking and *really see - be in the moment* with what is and around us **all the time**.

Even getting stuck in traffic, allowed me to watch baby goats frolic in a yard. Would I have noticed before? Yes, I touched the cat; now I really do *connect with* his soft purr, while I do the petting? I now appreciate how soft my hair feels after getting caught in a sudden rain shower.

I have come to be spoiled that Publix steams the shrimp that I toss into a pan with a box of potatoes to bake for “Shrimp au gratin.” I reveled in the discovery I can recycle the St Augustine grass runners that were not staying where I prefer, so that they could be transplanted into the naked spots of my neighbor’s front yard, pushing out the weeds as the grass fills in. I now keep a box of doggie treats to share with the increasing number of walking neighbors as they pass on the sidewalk in front of my home.

I have become more aware of the simple wonders of everyday ... The variety of people I encounter, the power of a smile, makes me so much more grateful to be here and with YOU now.

Joys Experienced in the Age of Change

By Jean Henry

A few years ago, I was told that I have an adjustment disorder, meaning that I had trouble dealing with change. Well, for years after this, things have happened one right after another. I realized how little control I had except for my choices. The serenity prayer became my mantra. I was so lucky to be able to see joy in so many things. Even in the midst of this medical, political, economic mess I was able to see joy. I was able to see our Creator in nearly everyone. Then it became more difficult to see this joy. My ability to believe has been somewhat dealt a blow. I have trouble seeing an untruth or exaggeration. This makes me sad. I will no longer be someone who lives with a false front or believes in the things I believed before. This is all part of Covid19. I will no longer be so naive or be a Pollyanna. I will live one day at a time with the serenity prayer and good friends. I will believe in truth. I can no longer let anyone else steal my joy. I may disappear for a bit, but by-God, I will do my very best.

While I walked downtown the other day, this sweet-small-old-man (my age to be truthful) somehow appeared and said “Hi, how are you?” He asked me if I had seen the new store downtown. We chatted a bit more. As we said goodbye, he said “We are far too young to get this you know?” I sensed he was what we would see in our Creator, with brilliant eyes like Santa Claus. Sometimes for me it is good to see a bit of fantasy. It helped my saddened heart and gave me great joy. I looked to the heavens as I walked home. I also thanked whoever is in charge of this mess and the great Healer.

I feel we will be all OK in the end. We will have a lot to do. We don’t want to go backward. I want to go forward and have a more simple life. I want to help create a kinder world for all. I hope all of us can see the change we need to make. Perhaps this is what our Creator wants us to do. We all have free-will. I use it in the moment and try not to hurt anyone. This is the biggest thing I have learned from Covid19.



Labyrinth Walk

Saturday, October 24, 10:00AM

Woodlawn Cemetery Labyrinth

Sadly, it has been months since Stone Circle has had a gathering. For this reason, we hope that you will consider joining us, with precautions, to walk the Woodlawn Cemetery Labyrinth. This walking meditation can be reflective, prayerful, relaxing and rejuvenating. Please bring a mask and arrange your own transportation. Take this opportunity to experience the Labyrinth for the first time or again with like-minded women friends.

Please call Jan if you are planning to come.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stone Circle operates as a nonprofit entity whose presence seeks to enhance the feminine milieu for women of the 21st century. We truly rely on the generosity of friends and those who participate in programs.