

OPENING WORDS

Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind. Henry James

(http://thinkexist.com/quotation/three_things_in_human_life_are_important-the/11023.html)

CHECK IN

TOPIC

The genesis of this topic came during a shopping trip to Anderson, in which, horror of horrors, our heroine finds and buys clothes at *Hamricks* and comes face to face with a lesson on arrogance, tolerance, kindness, forgiveness, and wisdom.

Background: It is not only with advanced/advancing age that my rock solid belief in my parents' wrong-headedness (and therefore my own right-headedness) has been shaken, it has happened many times before. There is nothing like a little change in perspective to force one to rethink one's most dearly held opinions (or prejudices).

Sometimes it's the move from childlessness (or petlessness) to actual parenthood (or ownership) that does it—remember the many times we've said “NO child (dog, cat) of mine will ever.....” and then had to eat our words.

Sometimes it's a change in geography: “I'd NEVER live in _____, those people are crazy (stupid, mean, ugly, lazy, etc)”;

or a change in livelihood: “I wouldn't do that for a million dollars!” You perhaps have your own examples to share with us.

Where do those feelings come from; how do we recognize them in ourselves or deal with people in the face of them; how do we make them go away and become wiser human beings?

Since covenant group meetings always have words of wisdom to prompt our thinking, here are some I especially like:

Arrogance: When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years. Mark Twain (attrib. in error)

Tolerance: What is tolerance? -- it is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly -- that is the first law of nature. Voltaire

Kindness: When I was young, I used to admire intelligent people; as I grow older, I admire kind people. Abraham Joshua Heschel

Forgiveness: The more you know yourself, the more you forgive yourself. Confucius

Wisdom: Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom. Theodore Rubin

CLOSING WORDS

We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations. Anais Nin

(http://thinkexist.com/quotation/we_do_not_grow_absolutely-chronologically-we_grow/341873.html)