

Living *YOUR* Dash through Spiritual Spring Cleaning

Lent is the season before Easter ... 40 days (not including Sundays) from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. Lent mirrors the season of Advent in that Lent prepares us for Easter the way Advent prepares us for Christmas. Lent is a great opportunity to dig deeper in all aspects of our faith: prayer life, worship life, mission life, education ... you name it. Lent comes from the Latin meaning *to lengthen* and refers to the lengthening of days in the springtime.

During this season of Lent we are encouraged to grow and deepen our understanding, awareness and relationship with God, as we understand God. Each week there will be suggested readings, thoughts for journaling, prayer considerations and experiences for outreach. It is hoped that these tools will provide an engaging and empowering way for individuals to *Live Your Dash* through a process of examining your own life for “spring cleaning” and spiritual practice.

Live Your Dash

Make Every Moment Matter

by Linda Ellis

The line etched into a headstone
between the dates of birth and death
represents each step we take on earth
... and every single breath.

To many, it is but a hyphen ...
making time between the years,
but in that little dash, is a lifetime
of laughter, love and tears.

We each create the legacy
our dash will someday represent
and decide if the life we're given
is truly lives ... or merely spent.

Some deem themselves successful
if they can spend in large amounts,
but how you live your only dash
is all that really counts.

Because success should not be measured
in what you will buy, or own,
but in the pride you feel
in the person you're with
... when you are all alone.

Time steals our days and hours
before we recognize the theft
and we live each day not knowing
how much of our dash is left.

The responsibilities of daily life;
the bills, the job, the cash
affect the way we choose to use
this important little dash.

Life uses special moments,
much life a poet uses rhyme
to engrave upon our hearts and souls
single, precious blocks of time.

We often over look these gifts,
thought we may not mean to do it;
we walk right past a special moment
instead of walking through it.

These memories in the making,
are happening now and happening here;
if we don't take the time to make the time,
they quickly disappear.

To experience each moment,
to laugh ... to love ... to live ...
to learn just how much to take from life
... and just how much to give.

For when our time on earth is ending,
we won't remember every day,
but we will recall those moments
we chose to live along the way.

Consider your lifetime as a novel-
you, the sole author and creator,
writing and living every chapter
for those to read and cherish, later.

Will they say you lives your dash
with worry, stress and chatter
or know you seized
every chance you had to:
Make Every Moment Matter?

First Week of Lent: *Never Again*

Then God spoke to Noah and his sons: “I’m setting up my covenant with you including your children who will come after you, along with everything alive around you—birds, farm animals, wild animals—that came out of the ship with you. I’m setting up my covenant with you that never again will everything living be destroyed by floodwaters; no, never again will a flood destroy the Earth.”

God continued, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and everything living around you and everyone living after you. I’m putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth. From now on, when I form a cloud over the Earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I’ll remember my covenant between me and you and everything living, that never again will floodwaters destroy all life. When the rainbow appears in the cloud, I’ll see it and remember the eternal covenant between God and everything living, every last living creature on Earth.”

And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I’ve set up between me and everything living on the Earth.” Genesis 9:8-17

God promises through the sign of the rainbow to *never again* destroy the earth by flood. When God sets the rainbow in sky, God is setting down the weapon of destruction, putting it to rest. What is it in your life that is destructive and needs to be put to rest? What is harmful in your life that you need to say “never again” to?

Practice: Journal about the stuff that is harmful in your life. Maybe there is more than one thing, and at this time, you can’t put it all to rest, but what is one thing you want to say **never again** to. Possible suggestions: negative thinking, over eating, over working or another habit, or maybe it’s something greater, such as fear of commitment, fear of rejection, etc.

As you pray this week, remember the rainbow. Remember God’s covenant. Remember God’s steadfast love endures forever.