

9th February 2021

FOCUS

“You can’t depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.”

Mark Twain, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court

Though I usually dress “casually”, I wear a shirt on a Sunday so that, in one way at least, the day feels different from the rest of the week. Last Sunday, the cuff of my shirt was too tight for my chunky watch. So I put the watch in my pocket. As a result, I lost track of time! After looking at my bare wrist for the umpteenth time, I realised I must do that a *lot* normally. Simply put – as I’ve written about before – I’m more driven by time than I should be.

So, when I was reading a book I’d been given at Christmas, a section caught my eye. The book is *The Laddie, the Mowdie, the Tod and the Cuddie, (The Boy, the Mouse, the Fox and the Horse)* by Charlie Mackesy (and beautifully translated into Scots by Matthew Fit). It opens up a wonderful world of imagination and insight that we would all be the better to spend some time in. Here’s the piece that took my attention.

“I’ve learned hoo tae be in the present,” said the mowdie.

“Hoo?” spiered the laddie.

“I finn a quiet neuk an shut ma een and tak a braith.”

“That’s guid, and then whit?”

“Then I focus, ken?”

“Whit dae ye focus on?”

“Cake,” said the mowdie.

“I’ve learned how to be in the present,” said the mouse. “How?” the boy enquired. “I find a quiet corner and shut my eyes and take a breath.” “That’s good. And then what?” “Then I focus, you know?” “What do you focus on?” “Cake,” said the mouse.

Being in the present and not worrying about time, is something I need to do more often. When I stop depending on my eyes and get my imagination in focus, am I not the better for it? Prayer, meditation, mindfulness, reflection, contemplation, thinking ... give it any name you choose for now, but get to the heart of the purpose – and the benefit.

So, I’m off to “finn a quiet neuk”, shut my eyes, take a breath, and focus on ... well, I’ll have no idea until I give myself space and stop worrying about time. It might be God, or it might be cake, you just never know!

A prayer for today

Lord, if I find a quiet place, will you join me? Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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