

23rd March 2024

Slow

**"My point is, life is about balance. The good and the bad.
The highs and the lows. The pina and the colada."**

Ellen DeGeneres, *Seriously ... I'm Kidding*

In a moment of madness, I joined an all-male dance-troupe for a charity function – *The Dancing Dudes*. I'll not divulge the song we're dancing to, so I don't spoil the surprise for those who'll be at the show. But as I'm no great shakes as a dancer, I've been working ever so hard to keep in step with the other fourteen men who were daft enough to sign up.

It's an *ensemble* piece. We have moves to learn so we can do it together. But it isn't like that in all of life, nor should it be. The 19th century American essayist Henry David Thoreau wrote this in *Walden* in 1854:

If [we do] not keep pace with [our] companions, perhaps it is because [we] hear a different drummer. Let [us] step to the music [we] hear, however measured or far away.

While there are times, necessary times, when we move in step with others – as with *The Dancing Dudes* – Thoreau is right. In our uniqueness, we will, at times, march at a different pace because we hear the beat of a "different drummer". If it's our music, that's what we keep pace to.

So, in our reflections on "quick" and "slow", the hurriedness of one might be destructive to the other. The stillness of one could be anathema to the other. The beat to which we dance individually will determine how we are driven to hurry, and when we need to slow down, when we give ourselves to busyness, and when we let rest and silence restore us. You will know what's right for you, as I learn what's right for me.

But we have this in common – we *all* need a balance between being quick and going slow – "the pina and the colada", as Ellen DeGeneres suggests. Whatever the pattern of our steps, it's crucial that we seek a wholesome balance. The Greek playwright, Euripides, wrote:

The best ... thing is to keep a balance in your life, acknowledge the great powers around us and in us. If you can do that and live that way, you are really wise.

"My point is, life is about balance." Quick or slow, slow or quick, slow-slow-quick-quick-slow, whatever routine we have to perform, we *can* be really wise and get the balance right. And me? After my exertions with *The Dancing Dudes*, I'll be off for a *long* lie down!

A prayer for today

"Dance, then, wherever you may be ..." I'm trying, honest! Amen