

“Be gentle to yourself!”

I’ve said this many times, often without any additional information. Part of that is because being gentle to yourself can happen many ways, depending on each person. And part of that was simply an oversight on my part—I just figured ideas would occur to people. So let me try to make up for my blunder by giving some examples.

When someone close to me dies, my typical daily routine takes a pounding. First of all, my thoughts are distracted. That, in turn, leads me to forget to do things, confuse dates, and generally spend more time and energy on just about every task. I have to make it through the shock to be able to focus my attention. My appetite and my sleep are affected—either eating more or eating less; sleeping more, or sleeping less.

Because I’m not doing things well, I’m inclined to get down on myself. I become my own worst critic. If I have a list of 10 things to do, and accomplish 9, I get upset with myself that I didn’t do the 10th thing! This is where “being gentle” comes into play.

At night, I compare what I wanted to get done with what actually happened. I make a list for the next day, and go to bed. In the morning, I get up and look at the list again. If it’s too ambitious for how I’m feeling, I trim the list. Sometimes “being gentle” becomes, “never do today what can be put off til the morrow”.

I expand travel time by a third to a half. This allows for late starts, and extra starts after I retrieve the items I left behind, like my wallet. It also allows for missed turns and brain freezes. The best example of this is when I went to a funeral in Cambridge Springs, by way of Union City. I drove through Waterford, then took the wrong fork in the road, and went to Union City. It dawned on me that I wasn’t where I wanted to be, took a different road to Mill Village, and got back on the correct road to Cambridge Springs. It turned out to be a beautiful day for a drive.

That’s what I mean by “being gentle”—realizing I’m not functioning at my best, adjusting to it, and not yelling at myself about it.

I also find that if I’m gentle and forgiving towards my self, I’m more likely to be that way towards others.

Take good care, and I hope this helps.

