

What We Already Know

Take Time To Care For Yourself

Sometimes we simply need to be reminded of what we already know. Maybe you can speak to this truth from personal experience. A number of years ago, a rabbi named Edwin Friedman wrote a book entitled "*Friedman's Fables*," published by The Guilford Press. In summary, one of the fables, named "*Caught in Her Own Web*," is about a spider he calls Ms. Muffet, who had just spun the perfect web.

Friedman reminds his readers who may be unfamiliar with spider webs that it is not possible to introduce symmetry once a web is spun. The perfect web must be produced on the first try, and that's as rare as bowling a 300, or pitching a no-hit game. Thus, it's something to be treasured.

Well, once Ms. Muffet realized she might have just spun the perfect web, she had to check it out. She started to meticulously examine every inch of the web, looking for the slightest imperfection. However, upon closer inspection, no defect was found. It was wonderful.

About the time Ms. Muffet had finally convinced herself that the web was indeed flawless, she felt a tremendous jolt as the entire web began vibrating. A large fly had foolishly circled into the web and now was feverishly flapping his wings in an attempt to get loose. His efforts to free himself threatened to tear a hole in the web. If this were to happen, the treasured symmetry of the web would be lost. Ms. Muffet was furious!

In no time Ms. Muffet traversed the network to where the bug was trapped. The fly thought he was a goner and prepared to die. Then something strange happened. In a few seconds, the fly found himself free-falling through the dark, enshrouded in a cocoon of sparkling floss. Ms. Muffet had surgically removed the fly and deftly spun replacement filaments for the web.

She had barely recovered from this near miss when the web took a second jolt, and a third. Two mosquitoes, focused on a human prey below, had failed to see the web, and now they were stuck. Seconds later, much to their confusion, they, too, were falling free. Ms. Muffet had saved her web once more.

So it went throughout the night. Flying creatures of all sizes and shapes repeatedly hit her web. "*These dumb, clumsy bugs are going to ruin all my work*," she said to herself. With each jolt to the web, she would spring into action, free the intruder, and do a quick repair. The work went on and on.

Just before sun-up, the air stilled, and, in the early light of dawn, despite the fury of the night's bombardment, the web remained intact. Ms. Muffet's work had held. Nothing was left in the web, except a small curled up ball in the lower right corner. It was Ms. Muffet, who had died of starvation.

It seems to me that the moral of the fable could be: while work is good, it's also important to take time to care for ourselves. Yes, that's something you already know, but sometimes, we simply need to be reminded of what we already know.

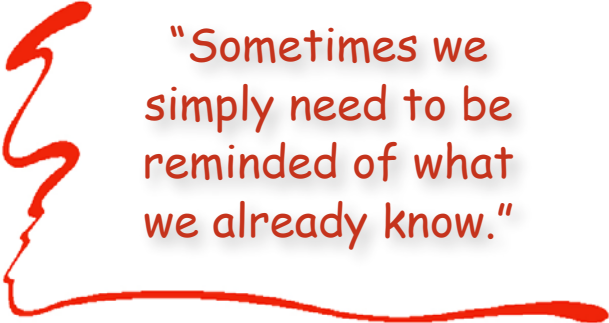
Work is a good thing. The Bible is clear that God planned for us to work and that work brings with it rewards. In Proverbs, we can read that the lazy person - the one who won't work - is going to go hungry. Yet, for those who are willing to labor come the fruits of groceries on table, a roof over our head, clothes on our back, and the opportunity to be a blessing to others.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:11, we find Paul's admonition to "*...aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your hands.*" (NKJV) While

there is no question that work is good, some of us take it to the extreme. We're working 40 to 50 hours a week, or more, in our office. We're active at church, serving on at least one committee or singing in the choir. We belong to the Gideons International, the Rotary, or some other service organization. We're always running here or there, doing this or that. Our days are jammed packed with some activity or another, and our to-do list gets longer every time we look at it. This hectic pace just shouldn't be. It's important for us to take time to care for ourselves.

This involves slowing down and taking time to rest - physically and emotionally. Follow God's command of observing a Sabbath and resting on a regular basis. Take time to nurture yourself - especially spiritually. Read the Scriptures, pray, and fast. Spend some relaxed time with those you love.

I know you know this. But sometimes we simply need to be reminded of what we already know. Take time to care for yourself. Don't end up a casualty of your own work.



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May the Lord bless you.