

Growing Down

By Joan Mish

I've become involved in a six-week course about environmental challenges. It has challenged me to be aware how important taking care of our earth is for our next generation who is growing up now. We were not aware when we were growing up how the earth was changing environmentally. Now that I am growing *down* I know that less is better than more. I don't need the latest and greatest of anything.

I'm growing down to reach our grandchildren with some ideas that they have forgotten. It's eye-to-eye contact with friends that is so important. With all the technology our children and grandchildren use, I have noticed how little eye-to-eye contact is made. Notice in public spaces very few people chatter any more for they are texting someone or talking to them on the phone. My assignment for this week from this class I am taking was to make eye contact with someone and give them a compliment daily. And listen to what they have to say.

An interesting encounter happened to me a few weeks ago when I was at the Oktoberfest luncheon. I didn't see anyone I knew so I sat down with fellow who seemed to be alone. We made eye-to-eye contact. Now being from Wisconsin, you can't eat brats without beer and I had asked them in Blossoms if I could get a beer at the luncheon. They laughed at me. But they did serve beer for an extra \$2.75. But then I realized I forgot to bring any money. But this nice guy next to me insisted on paying for my beer! How generous and kind.

Another kind eye contact event happened to me at the grocery store on Friday. Somehow my wallet dropped out of my purse and this kind guy noticed it and pointed out to me where it had fallen. Eye contact once again is important and so are smiles.

If you want 2019 to be your Growing Down Year, don't sit on the couch. Go out. Make a change. Smile more. Be excited. Do new things. Throw away what you've been cluttering. Unfollow negative people on social media. Go to bed early. Wake up early. Be fierce. Don't gossip. Show more gratitude. Do things that challenge you. Be brave.

It is growing down when we no longer chase after being rich. We know that there are many things we have no need for anymore.