Making Peace with My Strengths and Weaknesses

*By Liz Gibbons*

The idea of comfort zones seems to imply that you are stuck or in a rut. But it may be that comfort zones are also a necessary part of our life. It is beneficial to have a comfort zone to retreat to in order to recharge your batteries if your life is very challenging. On the other hand, we don’t want to rely on our comfort zone so strongly that we never take chances. We need to find a balance.

Because I am an introvert and was shy as a child I avoided certain activities such as having to give speeches or lead something. Those were way out of my comfort zone. I hated to be called upon in class to give an answer. However, although I am not a leader one of my strengths is that I can be a productive team member

Counterbalancing my introversion there is a part of me that likes new adventures. My husband and I seemed to move to another part of the United States about every ten years. While living in Rochester, New York, we got tired of all the snow and long winters. We decided we could live anywhere we wanted and got out a map of the United States. While deciding where to live we obtained a one year loan from the local bank and put it in a savings account. Then we paid off the loan every month form our monthly income, and by that means we were able to force ourselves to save extra money to be able to make the move. We moved to Colorado Springs with our two sons, who were 10 and 13, not knowing anyone there or exactly what we were going to do. We took the chance, and it worked out well. We loved being in the mountains. Subsequently we lived briefly in Phoenix and Fayetteville, Arkansas, before landing in Atlanta.

Many years ago my weaknesses propelled me to take the Dale Carnegie course, and at the last class I somehow won the award that is given at the end of the course. I can’t remember what the award was based on and reflecting back I am still amazed I won it. I even went on and became a graduate assistance for the Dale Carnegie course.

What I have finally determined is that I have used my strengths fairly well. I worked to improve my weaknesses where I could and recognize that certain fears have kept me from doing some things I may have enjoyed doing. Even so, I really have few regrets. At this stage of my life I am thankful I can live in a place that provides opportunity for me to pursue my interests and innate curiosity and yet hunker down in my comfort zone when I want to.