

Squirrel Talk

By Mary Jane McCormick

Last week, I was sitting on my lanai perusing several books I had received as a result of a visit to Amazon.com. I often start with reading the 'Forward' and the 'Afterword,' usually called the Prologue and Epilogue. Even in books with hundreds and hundreds of pages, an author usually has something more to add to the story. This prompted me to think of 'afterthoughts' as one way we take in life events, process these, add our unique perspective and carry experiences into our day.

As I sat in the warm sun, deciding what to write about this topic, a squirrel interrupted my musings. She had climbed up the pine tree outside my condo and was making quite a fuss with her squawking and chirping. I assumed she was sounding a very important message to her mate or maybe her babies. As I looked around, there was no other life form in the vicinity and no evidence she had seen me.

She carried on for several minutes, causing me to feel compelled to answer her cry. As I began to imitate her clicking sound, she immediately stopped her noise, darted her head in all directions and spotted me behind the screen. I continued my 'squirrel talk' as she walked to the edge of a very precarious branch to get a closer look. Her dark, penetrating eyes locked onto me like a heat-seeking missile. We stared at each other for what seemed like an eternity and then our gaze was broken by the sudden appearance of a neighbor walking her dog.

As I continued to browse through my new books, I came across a timely quote: *"All endings are also beginnings. We just don't know it at the time."*

—Mitch Albom

Afterthoughts can take an experience and weave it into a new beginning. My visitation with this furry creature reminded me of the wildness of the universe; one where animals live naturally in the landscape always present to where they are.

This encounter continues to nudge me to reflect on how domesticated I am as I slip into the ready-made roles and routines that make up my days. At times, my life becomes so streamlined I forget to visit those wild places within me.

Life's afterthoughts can unleash imagination, which will take me to those places where wonder and awe live. And this new beginning is a powerful reminder that this world goes far beyond my limited perception.