

Irritation

By Pete Clark

If one chooses to let mental or emotional irritation be a part of life, irritating circumstances will be found everywhere one goes and in everything one sets out to accomplish. The old saw that "Patience is a virtue" is ever so true. Without patience, irritation abounds, adding to the stress of any pet peeves that one may experience repeatedly, creating an iceberg to rip the hull of one's Titanic.

Standing in line can be irritating to me, if I empower the activity to do that. Sometimes, when I go to my pharmacy to pick up prescriptions, an immigrant who speaks little English and can probably read or write no English, is at the window, trying to communicate with the pharmacist. The wait can be long and the situation can be very irritating, if I empower the negative aspects of the moment, but I refuse to grant that empowerment. I know that if I do not have time to wait, I should not be standing in the line. While the scene acts out, I am reminded of my great good fortune of never being forced to emigrate due to repressive government, natural disaster or strife.

A very bad part of being peeved or irritated, which ever you prefer to call the condition, is the increase in heart rate and blood pressure that comes with it. Every time those vital signs shoot up, there is a risk of heart attack or stroke. Both can kill and stroke can cause severe brain damage. That bad things do not always happen to someone else is a lesson I learned early in life. Be cool. Let meaningless irritations be just that, meaningless.

Unfortunately, I had other lessons to learn, the most profound of which was that I could have severe bleeding ulcers, without experiencing pain. I had arrived in the break room one morning, before going to work and everyone there told me I looked terrible and should go home. I finally agreed and went to the Back Office to tell my supervisor I was leaving. When I stepped through the door, my supervisor's mouth dropped open: she never said a word. When I got to my doctor's office, he took one look and said go straight to the emergency room, so I went home to make sure my cats had plenty of food and water. The waiting area of the emergency room was filled with sick or injured people, but I was on a gurney in less than ten minutes. My body required eight bags of blood and had no iron left in its bone marrow. My hematologist told me I should not have survived and that I had received a gift granted to extremely few people. My high blood pressure had dropped back to normal and I no longer needed the medications for treating the condition.

I truly believe my laid-back approach to life's little problems has helped stay me on the green side of the grass, allowing me to know the people and enjoy the work of the Windsor Gardens Writers Group.