

## Becoming like Cheese

A lot of things must age before they become mellow like cheese. I think that is happening to me. I have become calmer in situations that would have set me off in a rant years ago. For instance, I went for a test this week. This test uses dye which I am supposedly allergic to, so I must premedicate with Benadryl and Cortisone. My neighbor Jo took me to the hospital for the test which takes about an hour. On arrival I went up to the reception desk and told them who I was and that I was preregistered, and paperwork was done. The first young man who called me over merely told me to wait where I had been waiting prior to him calling me up to his desk. The elderly woman at the desk took my name and began looking at her sheet for my appointment. She then started repeating my name, JoAnn, JoAnn, as she looked at the sheet. I said, my name is Grace Epperson. She repeated JoAnn Ellison. I then said my name again and she said JoAnn Epperson. The woman in the line to my right yelled, "I'm JoAnn." This seemed to get her attention as I said, "I'm Grace." She then kept looking up Grace Ellison. I gave her my name again and she finally found it. Then we discussed a wheelchair because I do get short of breath walking. There was a wheelchair sitting right there but for some reason she did not want to take the last one so left the desk to wander about, I think I saw her looking in the Gift Shop, for a wheelchair, she finally came back and took the one sitting in the lobby. Then we were off to the Lab waiting area. That was uneventful and after over an hour of waiting, the Lab Tech came to take me for the test. When we arrived at the actual Lab, I explained to her that I had premedicated but with the wait I wondered about the effectiveness of the Benadryl. She asked me why I would premedicate for a Calcium test. I said, "I'm here for an Angiography." She said your appointment is for a Calcium test. I said, "That is not the appointment I made and showed her the order form. She said she would make phone calls. After a while she came back and said the problem was solved, they would do both. It took some time for them to find a vein and utilized an Ultrasound to find it and we were off and running. I then had to have more Benadryl and then Nitroglycerin because my heart wasn't beating strong enough. I did what I had to do while joking with the people and laughing at the mess-ups. When they took me back to the lobby, my poor neighbor Jo had been waiting patiently although she did have then call and check to see if I was okay. Then I thought what has happened to me. There was a time where instead of being pleasant and smiling about it all, I would have demanded action and raised the roof at the incompetence. Heads would have rolled. Letters would have been sent. It dawned on me that I have mellowed. I think God has taken a feisty, ready to demand action, righteous woman and turned her into mellow cheese. He is giving me a tolerance for mistakes, at 86 I've made a few. I don't think I am like this in all situations, I get upset and angry about cruelty, hungry children, people who are unkind to others, and all sorts of injustices in our world but I think God doesn't object to that. In fact, I think that God wants us to react to the injustices of this world with righteous anger. To protect the vulnerable, to love and nurture children, feed the hungry, to help our neighbors, to help when people are subjected to injustice, to help victims of disasters. To use our anger and respond with action, kindness, and the love of God. Maybe this is why I have lived so long and survived so much; God is still teaching me his lessons.

1 Corinthians 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude; it is not self-seeking.

Dear Lord, thank you for the lessons you teach us in our daily lives, for the love and forgiveness you give us, for all the blessings of this earth and the people that inhabit it. Be with us each day, may we feel your strength, your love, your patience. Be with those who are suffering from Hurricanes and floods, and earthquakes. Be with those who are hungry, may we share our bounty with the less fortunate. Be with our church, may we reach out to those needing help and to those who seek to know you. Guide us in our quest to be the hands and feet of Christ. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and keep him safe. Watch over his family. Be with our staff and leaders, guide them as they lead our church. Be with those who are grieving and those who are ill. In Jesus name, Amen.

Grace Epperson