

Testimonial  
Maple Grove UMC  
August 8, 2021

Yesterday evening, I was driving by myself. I happened to pass a Bob Evans Restaurant. I noticed the time was about 7:30 pm. It was after 6:30 pm, the Fasting expiration time for my Tuesday's Rule of Life. At that moment, the hunger pains flared, triggering - Go into Bob Evans, go now, do not wait and drive anymore. No other customers were in the restaurant. A friendly waitress, whom you could tell was an experienced seasoned professional, came and took my order. After the practice of Fasting for the Rule of Life, I have learned having my first meal be a lighter meal rather than a heavier one works better for me. So, I ordered breakfast for dinner, eggs sunny side up. When the nice waitress served my meal, she said, "I am so sorry. One of the sunny-side-up yolks broke open a bit. Would you like me to have your meal remade?"

I paused for a moment. My heart was thinking, why would she believe the meal needed to be remade? And the way she said it, I could tell she was genuinely feeling sorry, but for what? An excellent-looking sunny round yolk with merely a tiny insignificant trickle. How small, but somehow big to her? But, why? Then that audible voice, that is not audible, but oh so audible, I heard, "She has been yelled at and mistreated many times by customers for, yes, a small, cracked yolk. Look in her eyes."

After realizing my pause was starting to appear strange, I turned towards her looking up at her eyes, "No. You kidding, please, it is perfect! I am sorry for my pause. I wasn't even considering whether I wanted the meal remade. Truth is, my pause or hesitation was because I was thinking about you felt a tiny cracked yolk would require a whole new meal to be remade for me. May I ask you, do people actually make you take the meal back for a new meal if the yolk is not just perfect every time?". She said, "All the time. So many times a day. All-day long. The egg can be remade; the toughest part is watching how upset, so many people get, even getting so cruel, if their egg yolk is not perfectly round. Even when remade, I watch them let it ruin their entire time while here, even when with children." I want to emphasize; she was not speaking in an ill will manner or tone of her customers, not at all. She was conveying in her tone, through her verbals and

non-verbals, that she clearly and sincerely was more concerned about them (the upset customer) and still cared about their well-being long after they had left the restaurant. I looked at her, and I said, "You're a good person. I am so sorry to hear. And know, I hear you, and I can see you genuinely still care about them. I was a waiter years ago, so I know what it can mean. Please know I see you. More importantly, He sees you..."

That immediately opened and led to a larger, more meaningful, purposeful conversation about the spiritual discipline of hospitality, other spiritual disciplines, treatment of strangers, and our calling as humanity for God, self, and others. She smiled after a lengthy discussion, and then she left me to finish my meal (actually start it). As I was about to leave, I requested my bill. She said, "There is no bill for you, please; your meal is on me. Our conversation is what I so needed to hear and experience. This was a blessing. It is my way of saying thank you." Then a prayer of thanksgiving is appropriate at that moment. I was surprised, not ever expecting or even thought of her paying for my meal. I then snuck back and placed the estimated cost of the meal on the table plus a good tip, as her total tip for her graciousness and hospitality.

Win-Win for all, with the integration of the Spiritual Disciplines for Spiritual Formation by utilizing the knowledge grounded in and from our personal experience in our Rule of Life and this class. The individual practice moving outwardly "integrating and moving from individual to corporate in practices; Not how I, but how do we notice" and being mindful of assessing and knowing "when is the proper time to disclose the information about a practice" while seeking and "looking beyond the surface for the hidden wholeness of God", for God is everywhere in the details of our lives (PPT).

No, it was not in a church setting or a structured small group; it was in a Bob Evans. But that is where it happened. And similarly where it has been happening. And that is apparently where it is meant to happen, too. It was not me; it is God. We corporately walked away feeling better, blessed, and more hopeful by the experience. Interestingly, this kind of interaction has been happening quite often lately over the past several months. I do not believe in coincidences.