

SENIOR SCAPE

By Christina Doyle

Beautiful June, holidays planned, ending of many programs here in Aurora Seniors' Centre and a certain quietness may overcome us all.

Things may either be gearing up or slowing down, whatever the reasons you may have, it's time to enjoy the outdoors. Try if you can this month to make your life as simple as possible, finding refuge in nature is a healing experience.

As sunny days approach, find yourself a good book, a favourite magazine, prepare a healthy sandwich, fresh berries, bottled water, a blanket and head for the park.

Make the most of these days of enjoying nature by sitting outside just a little longer especially, if you can be near a brook or a beautiful waterfall. In the stillness of the warm sun, slowly eat your lunch or dinner and gaze upon the beauty that is in front of you. Search for the simple things in this life to make you happy, to help you find peace, to help you quiet your mind from all the anxiety and hurts you may be storing.

If you can drive, look for waterfalls this June and earmark them on your GPS.

A study in the journal of Environmental Science and Technology gave a definite link that exposure to nature improves mental health and that these individuals seemed happier than those who had very little access to nature. This June, promise yourself, to walk more, even just one more step, eat fresh foods rather than fried or in a box, smile, be content with what you have right now. Don't say "oh my goodness what am I going to do today?"

Allow yourself to say? "Absolutely nothing!"

A very dear friend of mine is a piano teacher who is in her 80s, who often calls me just to have a chat and I so enjoy listening to her gentle manner. After a particular conversation, she said, when I feel sad and lonely I just go and play my piano and feel so much better.

It's alright that we can't always be up, so to speak, in our mood. Sometimes those days, no matter how beautiful they are outside, it just seems a storm is brewing inside of us.

Why, I am not sure, and I am not a psychologist but I think moods are a normal part of life. The key is not to get lost in them or overtaken by those blues. When those negative thoughts, a feeling of sadness overcomes you, have something planned for yourself. Say to yourself, when I feel down, I do this and it helps me.

If you are searching, ask a friend, what do you do when you feel down, you shouldn't feel surprised to see that many happy people sometimes get down, but somehow we have found our path to happiness.

? Exercise: It may be a simple walk outside, or tuning into some music that allows your mind to quieten and allows you to breathe a deep breath or sigh.

? Live in the now, and focus on today and let go of the past and what may come to pass.

? Social Isolation: I know being alone isn't easy but if you can at all possible, come and volunteer your time even for an hour or two. The Aurora Centre thrives because of the countless and dedicated volunteers who provide us with so much. If you can't come to the Centre, think of where you are living, there may be an opportunity to give a little of yourself. Your time will be so appreciated by those around you and the feeling of contentment will help with your sadness.

? You may need some spiritual food, go to church, or pray at home, you must learn to let go. We are merely passengers in the car and we never are the driver but we certainly can make positive choices for ourselves.

? Positive Affirmations: Say to yourself, I am worthy of joy, I deserve to be happy. Value yourself, you are needed in this world.

Our life is what we make of it, we have spent many an evening during the winter months waiting for these days of sun and warmth. It's time to fill your soul with beauty and health.

Be of good cheer, and take a proactive and positive approach to living your life with grace and beauty. You are so worth it! Enjoy your life NOW!