



Checking In

Here we are at the beginning of a New Year. It is a time to reflect on life, right? Usually at this time of the year we make all kinds of resolutions to be more physically fit. We are all well aware of the importance of regular check-ups, but in the last weeks of 2016 I was reminded of the benefits of regular check-ins? In this reflection, I invite you to take a different look at what it means to be healthy, a perspective gained only by checking in.

Most of the time we keep up with our busy lives pretty well, but occasionally we feel overwhelmed by the day to day obligations of life. I like to think I have a balanced life and I am quick to give advice on how important it is to maintain balance, so recently when I began to feel very out of balance I found it difficult to admit. The onset of physical pain and noticing my mind could not rest were my first clues. What was going on? Then I realized it had been a while since I had checked in with my spirit. I mean a thorough check-in with my spirit.

What is a check-in? It is taking time to breathe while looking at your day to day activities at home, at work, in the community, and with family and considering what things you should keep and what things you should let go. In addition, it is asking questions like, how do my activities and obligations support my spiritual health and are there things in my life that are damaging my spirit? Don't stop there though. Checking in is wondering, when was the last time I learned something new? Life is about growth and if we are not growing we die inside.

Life being "status quo" or "going through the motions" is not good enough. It is impossible to keep a flame burning without adding oxygen to it. In the same way, it is not possible to keep your spirit burning with desire if you do not take time to breathe. I often think about being on an airplane and being instructed to put my own mask on before helping others. I realized I had set my mask down and was trying to help others without breathing in newness of life.

I began to separate the various aspects of my day to day life and made 2 lists, keep and let go. I asked myself whether or not I was growing from the list of things I put in my keep column. If I could not answer

yes, they were moved to my let go column. Once I completed my lists I then had to figure out how to let go of those things that no longer fueled my spirit. Some things were easier to let go of than others, just like in letting go of material things, the sentimental value of our work, our clubs, our groups, and our activities can cause us to stumble as we try to let go. I didn't need to let go of much, but it was important to let go of a couple of things and I made sure I altered my schedule to allow for more frequent down time. Not necessarily more down time just more evenly spaced, a strategy to prevent burn-out.

I realized I had put far too much value on my own abilities and in doing so lost track of what I God was calling me to do. When we lose sight of the reason we do the work we do, the reason we volunteer, or the reason we cherish our relationships, we are no longer an instrument of God's peace. We take on too much. We begin to believe that no one else can our job and we begin to think we are in control. Well, I am not! Are you?

As the New Year begins I recommend you resolve to check-in with your spirit from time to time. Breathe. Pause. Listen. Oh, what you can learn from your inner spirit by simply checking in!

Questions to ponder:

- When was the last time I checked in with my spirit?
- What do I need to let go of in order to keep my spirit fired up?
- What can I learn to do differently in my life?
- How can I be God's peace to others?
- What new skill or hobby can I learn?

May God's Peace Be With You,
Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL, Spiritual Care Coordinator, RAMC

[Guess what my spirit has
talked me into learning!]



Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6