

The courage to think small

By Asenath Back-Chamness, Okehampton Quaker Meeting

As a Quaker I own a copy of *Advices and Queries*, which is a little red book full of thought provoking messages about humanity and life. A quote from this book during every Meeting for Worship, upon which people may reflect if they so choose. As a result of growing up with this book, I have acquired a certain fondness for what I deem interesting quotes, which normally have an almost poetic tone to them.

My favourite quote at the moment is,

“Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go; it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.”

Alice M. Swaim

For me this quote highlights and reminds us that a large easy gesture does not have the same meaning as a small well thought out gesture. Personally, I find this can be applied to many aspects of our lives. It can be applied to the ever growing over-indulgence of consumerism at Christmas. Surely a well thought out present that is possibly homemade has more meaning attached to it, than a store bought bottle of bubble bath that just fills the obligation that presides over society at Christmas. I also believe that over consumerism extends to the rest of the year as well. This means an over-use of natural resources and growing landfills.

So to me this quote reminds me to have the courage to do something small, to recycle as much as I can even if it seems insignificant, to eat that extra piece of fruit or one chocolate bar less. As all little things add up into something larger and more meaningful: like a healthier world and a smaller waist!

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