
Letters to A Young Episcopalian: Self-observation

This letter is part of a series of fictional letters by Canon George Maxwell intended for Episcopalians young and old who wonder what it means to be faithful in the world today.

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Dear Anna,

I saw a funny meme recently. The picture showed five young adults standing with their backs against a wall, each at least six feet from the next. They were all head down and on their phones. The caption read: "Social Distancing? We've been practicing our whole lives."

I laughed as I thought about how true that is. You intuitively understand technology in a way that I never will. I can handle the basics of my phone and laptop, but if even the slightest thing doesn't do what I was told it should, I am completely lost and more than a little frustrated!

I realize, though, that your technological savvy is not protecting you from the losses of having to spend your spring semester at home. I know you miss the energy of being with your friends in person and the comfort of your routines. I also suspect that you may be feeling like you're in the movie *Groundhog Day* now that everyone is living in the same confined space all day, every day.

It might be interesting to pay attention to those feelings.

You might, for example, take ten minutes each evening to review the day. Notice those moments that have particular energy for you and your reactions to them.

When recalling a pleasant moment, ask yourself what was good about it? Where were you when it happened? Who were you with? How the moment might be similar to other moments you can remember?

When recalling an unpleasant moment, ask yourself what prompted your reactions to it? What got to you? What was it really about? Does it remind you of other times when you had a similar reaction?

Write your reflections down in a journal and then see what patterns emerge.

It might be a good way to take the next step on your spiritual journey.

You can't get to know yourself without getting to know God, and you can't get to know God without getting to know yourself.

Your affectionate uncle,
Ames