



RECHARGING

I'm writing this on the first sunny spring day, following weeks of snow, rain, cold and grey skies. All of us have been struggling to sustain our spirits and energy. This led me to think about sources of renewal.

I was struck by how much better I feel after spending time outside, working in the yard, enjoying the fresh air and sunshine. I know that I am energized by being outdoors. I always feel better when I've been able to work in my garden. As I age, it seems that I am even more strongly affected by sunshine and warmth. A walk around the block on a sunny day can transform my afternoon.

During those long, dark winter I have a hard time getting the motivation to go for that walk, forgetting how good it makes me feel. What recharges you? Is it being with people? A phone call with a friend? Alone with a good book? A long walk or bike ride? Knitting? Gardening? I think it's wise for all of us to know the things that restore our energy.

I recall reading Susan Cain's book, *Quiet*, in which she explains that introverts are recharged by being alone while extroverts recharge by being with people. What recharges me may have the opposite effect on you, and the things that recharge us may change over time as our interests and abilities change. How can you adapt to get the same pleasure from related or new activities? Perhaps you once went for a long run but the knees can't take it anymore so you switch to walking. Or you're surprised at the depth of pleasure you get from being with your grandchildren, or from learning the art of woodcarving. It's important to know what your own needs are. It's also a good idea to have more than one battery in your pack.

One thing that makes winter so hard is that it's difficult to access many of the first-defense rechargers, so have some back-up ideas. What makes you feel better and more energized when you can't get outside? Try some activities that are known to release endorphins, as these are known to not only block pain, but to produce a feeling of well-being.

Now that Spring is here, try to set aside time to explore a range of new and familiar activities so you can identify what your own rechargers are. Remember them, because they'll come in handy when the short grey days return once again.

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