

Traveling Companion: A bit of pottering

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While on vacation, I spent a considerable amount of time pottering around. It had nothing to do with pottery but everything to do with the idea of pottering. I'm not sure how the idea of pottering began. I have never engaged in the creation of pottery. All I know is that it takes time; it goes through different stages of firing and cooling, of painting and drying before the finished product can be admired or enjoyed.

Often, when we go on vacation, we rush from place of interest to place of interest, from meal to meal, from photo snapping to photo snapping, from someone's preplanned schedule to another deadline. We rush through things but do not enjoy them. We pack so much into our scheduled day that we experience nothing. We see so many things but enjoy little. We even bring our cell phone with us in case we miss any important call; are unable to participate in an important decision making process or are not available for a so-called emergency situation. It is no wonder when we return from vacation, we often return more stressed than we started, more tired than before we left and less happier than when we departed for vacation.

During my vacation, I sat by the dining room table, sipping tea, looking out at the blanket of the early morning being unfurled. Outside the French doors, a bunny rabbit sat amid the tall sparse grasses. He looked at me watching my every move. His ears, like giant antennas, were ever ready to pick up any threatening sound. I observed him for a long time as he nervously plucked at the tall grass. Minutes later, he darted across the back lawn to safer territory.

If I view the commercials during the evening news, I get a better perspective on the tensions and trials which people endure who cannot or will not potter around. The commercials promise quick relief from tension, stress, headaches and the things that hinder a person from really enjoying life.

Pottering around is seen as a waste of time. Sometimes, we find ourselves with nothing to do; no appointment to keep, no place to be; no person to see; no task to perform or no phone call to return. At such times, we often feel guilty because we have time and nothing to do. We feel guilty if we just potter around. We say to ourselves that there is some thing we should be doing and, because we cannot put a finger on that "some thing," we cannot tolerate just pottering around. Such pottering seems so ineffective, so unproductive, wasteful of our time, when we could be more productive and effective in the use of our time.

In life, we accumulate lots of friends who often become acquaintances. We yearn to make friends but end up not having enough time to enjoy life with them. We end up making friends but don't have enough time to be their friend.

I remember reading a story where a Jewish woman indicated that her race invented guilt but that Catholics developed it more fully. We feel guilty for pottering; for doing nothing that might seem unproductive; for wasting time; for knowing that we should be doing something else instead of just being a potterer.

So many people retire without having pottered during their working years. On retirement, they become bored because they do not consider themselves productive any more. Without the opportunity to potter around, they die slowly inside and outside.

Now, have you pottered around lately? If you haven't, then maybe reading this article I wrote about pottering around, one day, will help you do a little bit of pottering yourself.