

This Week in Kailua-Kona: Maintenance



We walked past an air conditioning service truck. Vance asked, are you installing a new air conditioner today? His answer? “Nope, only maintenance!”

What are you maintaining today? What takes priority—sanity, sobriety, self, or sanctuary? Should we settle for a bit of paint and new

caulking around the window sill and forget about that stupid crack in the concrete slab beneath the family room?

Family and friends become not so much what we were given by birth or choice, as what we are able to maintain. Forgiving is a main highway to relationship maintenance, and make no mistake about that one. A friend wrote yesterday. Ann told me she had a copy of my 1981 doctoral dissertation on forgiveness. Did I want it? Well, no—but her email was a good reminder for Vance and I to *keep* the idea, not the book.

Many increase alcohol or drugs to dull relationship or spirit slippage. We become slugs or move around the planet on planes or ships without being moved in our spirits. But we don't have to shrink-wrap our remaining time with fear. It's not a maintenance requirement. We can age with grace without knocking this or that off our lives and hedging ourselves with precaution.

These days I do a fair amount of neuropsychological assessment. I test a person's mental faculties while holding one wet finger up to the wind. See what's blowing my way. Bethyl and I are both Medicare providers, amongst other health insurers, so we see a lot of fellow seniors.

Maintenance for us often means keeping our calm while the memory slips away, body parts groan and hang lower, and our once smooth face looks like a road map to Wrinkle.



Hugging is good medicine for emotional maintenance. Did you know we need 4 hugs a day for survival, 8 for maintenance, and 12 for growth?

Scientists say hugging is a form of communication as it can say things you don't have the words for. Nicest thing about a hug? You can't give one without getting one.



