



Lessons from Geese

"Lessons from Geese" is adapted from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 Organizational Development Network and was based on the work of Milton Olson.

Fact 1: As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 72 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson: *People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.*

Action: Surround yourself with people who make you feel supported. Allow yourself the time to connect with others who have gone through similar experiences. Seasons Centre is a wonderful support you have given yourself.

Fact 2: When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson: *If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We are willing to accept their help and give our help to others.*

Action: Do not hesitate to ask for help when you need it. You can also rely on the support of your child/ren. Allow them to help out with household chores or making lunches. Try to be self-aware of when you are tiring so you can reach out for support.

Fact 3: When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson: *It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents and resources.*

Action: Lean on the supports and resources that others have to offer. Allow them to make you a meal or take the kids out. Let people do the things that they can do, so you have more time to do the things only you can do.

Fact 4: The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: *We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement (to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the heart and core of others) is the quality of honking we seek.*

Action: Celebrate all success, even small ones. Positive self-talk and encouragement goes a long way. You can do this. You can work through this.

Fact 5: When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of the formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch-up with the flock.

Lesson: *We will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.*

Action: Though it may be challenging at times, don't lose touch with the supportive relationships that you have. Notice when others are trying to be helpful and nurture those relationships together.