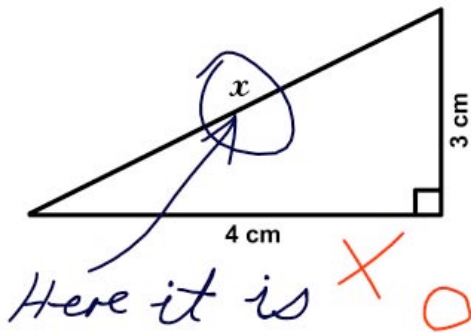




3. Find x .



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PUT THE PENCIL DOWN...

In the course of a discussion earlier this week, someone commented that often "we act more like human doings than human beings." I certainly get caught up in connecting my self-worth with my productivity. And, of course, the HUGE down-side of that is work-a-holism, over-commitment, stress -- perhaps leading (or contributing) to significant health problems.

This attitude of "do till you drop" is a cultural disease that often finds roots (or support) in particular readings of religious texts. But I would venture a guess

that those "particular readings" are not necessarily representative of the whole tradition. Every major religion of which I'm aware counsels taking time for relaxation, for reflection, for retreat. Self-care is critical for a whole life, one in which personal relationships are nurtured, involvement in the community is vital, and communion with the divine is more than constant petition for fulfillment of our own desires.

Equally as toxic, or perhaps part of the same disease, is living life as if it were an exam. This is the time of the quarter when DU tests itself: students have to finish several exams within a certain time frame . . . and then faculty have a similar time crunch to grade those exams (a testing process in itself, and not always enjoyable!). Can we perform well? If I mis-answer the questions, or mis-grade the final, am I really worthy of being here? Am I worthy at all?

I believe, of course, that we are worthy simply by being. And, I would argue, that all of the great religions support that, either explicitly, or implicitly. Since all religions teach compassion for others -- and that compassion is rarely tied to the productiveness of those others -- we, even if, or when, not productive, are worthy of divine compassion--and, by extension, the compassion of others AND ourselves.

So, now we enter a period of time when, for many of us, writing papers or exams is behind us. Even for those of us who remain at DU, ensuring that the business of the University moves forward, we will have several days at the end of the year when the campus is shut down. And, then, it will all begin again far too soon. May we all, then, during the coming weeks, seize this opportunity to "put the pencil down", stop the exam, cease efforts to increase productivity, turn a little inward, and simply BE. BE with our families and friends. BE with ourselves. BE with the Divine. BE.

Blessings,

Gary