

Dropping Stuff

By John R. Morella, Ph.D.

Don't you hate to drop things? I do.

How many times a day, a week, a year, do you drop stuff? Could be your toothbrush, your morning pill, the coffee spoon, a coin, an earring, a contact, a pencil, a sheet of paper, the T.V. remote, a credit card----whew, and it goes on and on during your day. And guess what? Gravity exists, so don't expect it to float back into your hands. You have to bend that back, droop that neck and pick it up. Drop, pick-it-up, drop, pick-it-up!

Spilling is a first cousin to dropping, and because liquids seek its lowest level, it ends down there, where I've got to stoop and clean the mess. Those of you who have small children, multiple the spill factor ten times.

And what happens if I drop something that is breakable, the stuff I pick up is many-fold with it's shattered pieces---longer stooping, and more time on my knees. Sometimes, I find myself saying a little prayer while in this position.

Dropping stuff has a domino effect. Follow along please. I have been dropping stuff for years and let's assume you are over thirty years old (did you ever see a teenager pick up a penny they dropped, or the clothes off their bedroom floor). O.K., back to this domino thing. After thousands of times dropping and picking up stuff, I develop a strong dislike toward this human fallibility. I curse under my breath, doesn't matter, it's still a sin---check the ten commandments list. My spouse, boss or friend, tells me to "get a grip." We argue. Then a comment is made that starts off with, "kiss my buttocks," and pretty soon I'm in "anger management" classes or in a confessional booth, discussing that commandment list.

No, it doesn't stop here, that domino continues to tip over the next one. After thousands of drops and pickups; my back and neck aches, and blood pressure elevates. Off to the doctor I go. He writes a prescription that causes side effects that makes me too relaxed, and guess what? I'm now dropping stuff twice my normal rate. So, I see a chiropractor. I'm manipulated, cracked, and spinal stretched and on my way out, I drop my car keys, pick up a quarter someone dropped (reflex response), and drop my sunglasses.

I remind myself, the words of Epictetus, the famous philosopher, "It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters." Really neat philosophy, huh? Well, Epictetus, I gave it a try, and I still perceive dropping stuff, picking up stuff to be a pain of my human existence.

So, I surrender to the God-of-the-Drops, and form an image of the day I no longer drop things. It's not a pleasant image, as I recall the expression, "he just dropped dead." At last, I don't have to pick me up. At that moment, paying my taxes and the drop-and-pick-up rituals, end.

Amen brother and sister, amen.

