

And...ACTION!

Chris and I both went to The College of Wooster, where we met. When we were there, a directory was created with pictures and a few words about each freshman. I am not certain if it had an official name, but most of us called it “The Baby Book.”

We were contacted months before we came to school in the fall and asked to provide five words or phrases that described us. I remember that the request came while I was still working on a sheep farm in Iceland, and I can picture myself cleaning in the barn as I thought deeply about what five words would perfectly describe me. What I remember including, since I loved to read and write and hoped to be an English major, was the phrase “word lover.” What it said in the Baby Book was “world lover.” That had a couple of strange meanings possible, and I cringed. At least my entry was not like the one for Chris (which I looked up immediately after I met him during freshman orientation). His had three words: shy, quiet, musically. Musically? Whatever it means, that is not Chris. Nor is he shy and quiet.

Never put all your hopes into being understood by your words or what you say about yourself. As someone who still puts a lot of value and self-worth into words, I must be reminded of this regularly. Actions speak more loudly and truthfully than words.

When the Apostle Paul was writing to the church in Corinth, he was addressing a problem of competition around gifts and abilities. “I can speak in tongues, so there.” “I am very generous, which shows that I love more.” He stressed that all gifts come from the same Spirit and all are needed. He also talked about “an even better way: love.” Love. There’s a word for you. As I learned, you cannot simply say about yourself, “I love others.” Words can be misunderstood and empty. How do you act, interact, and take actions to care for and build others up? That’s where the love is.

Jesus lived love. Paul urges us to strive in that direction. A practical guy, Paul. But he believed and trusted in faith, hope, and love.

by Rev Karen Oehl

*If I speak in tongues
of human beings
and of angels but I
don't have love, I'm
a clanging gong or a
clashing cymbal.
...Now faith, hope,
and love remain—
these three things—
and the greatest of
these is love.*

I Corinthians 13:1,13

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