



# RENEWNEWS

*RENEW helps people who juggle work, family and community commitments sustain (or regain) their enthusiasm, effectiveness and purpose.*



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## Thinking Small

Linda Hawes Clever, MD

Really, folks, it feels too fast and loud out there. Too much frazzle. Too many screeches and accusations. There is no universal quick fix, yet perhaps we could do some spot welding.

I got to thinking about little things we could do to tame the superheated dark flows that threaten to engulf us. What can we do in an instant (or so) that would brighten the world around us?

How long does it take to wave? Or smile? Or say, “Thank you?” Small amount of time; big glow.

Awhile back, a Conversation Group came up with some *15-second solutions*: breathe deeply a few times · have a snack · uncross everything – open up · call a time out · stretch · count to 10 · stop whatever you’re doing · hug. Well, one person did say, “Scream!” The results? Relax. Be calm. Feel better. Psychologist Janet Meiselman adds that a brief pause can save a lot of pain if you ask yourself, “*Is what I’m about to say going to be helpful or harmful?*”

While I was thinking small and thinking about peace, light and serenity, Danusha Laméris’ mother, Natasha, sent one of Danusha’s new poems (to be published soon in *Bonfire Opera*). With Danusha’s permission, here is her big poem:

### *Small Kindnesses* by Danusha Laméris

I’ve been thinking about the way, when you walk  
down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs  
to let you by. Or how strangers still say “bless you”  
when someone sneezes, a leftover  
from the Bubonic plague. “Don’t die,” we are saying.  
And sometimes, when you spill lemons  
from your grocery bag, someone else will help you  
pick them up. Mostly, we don’t want to harm each other.  
We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot,  
and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile  
at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress  
to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder,  
and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass.  
We have so little of each other, now. So far  
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.  
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these  
fleeting temples we make together when we say, “Here,  
have my seat,” “Go ahead—you first,” “I like your hat.”

## RENEWing Non-Profit Leaders



In late September, 20 nonprofit Executive Directors and CEOs gathered at The Jesuit Retreat Center of Los Altos for the kick-off of the Center for Excellence in Nonprofits' 2019 nine-month Leadership Institute training program. As she has for over a decade, Dr. Linda Clever led a one and a half day session designed to help these leaders find and maintain the strength and resilience they require to run their organizations *and* have a whole healthy life. In response to warm-up questions, Linda covered topics including values and competing values, setting and keeping limits, allocating time, saying no at the right time and in the right way, the importance of pausing, the traits and tasks of leaders, awe, health tips, and friendships. The course featured case studies, robust conversations and opportunities for the leaders to unwind and connect. One participant commented on the evaluation, “*Best leadership anything—and I’ve been to a lot.*”

Renew also offered two multi-session programs this past fall. Two Conversation Groups<sup>®</sup> at the Sequoias Portola Valley held the last of their six meetings this September. The Groups wanted to continue meeting, so RENEW began two new series in November.

Stanford University’s Health Improvement Program offered a RENEW four week series, “Align Your Time”, addressing issues of time pressures, time shortages, how to prevent being “too busy”, and how to expand time. We are finding that poetry often moves people forward, so reading poems was part of the homework.

### Inside RENEW

In early October RENEW’s Board of Directors, a high-powered group of savvy health professionals, met to discuss program opportunities, plans for the future, expanding the Board and finances. Board members approved the idea of augmenting RENEW’s reach via a convener development program.

**board.....**  
**meeting**

The Board also agreed that, considering demographics, our increasing work with elders and their professional caregivers makes good sense. In addition, feedback from RENEW programs shows that other groups are also interested in “more”, as Dickens’ Oliver Twist would say. For example, women with young families feel pulled in many directions and wish to find focus and meaning via RENEW. We welcome your ideas! Email us at [lindahclevermd@gmail.com](mailto:lindahclevermd@gmail.com) or [ccaufield.renew@gmail.com](mailto:ccaufield.renew@gmail.com).