Read quote on page 83 of Benedict’s Toolbox – Sit in silence, then summarize.

Man who spent vacation in a lawn chair next to his plot at the cemetery.

* Cultivate awareness enough to embrace transformation – positive change and growth.
* Difficult to *really* do.

Story about Tim and fort making in the forest – packing lunches in the morning.

* Differing project visions (similar to small group projects)
* Hard work, long days
  + Throughout this day:
    - I was snippy, passive aggressive, and short
      * My stomach was in a knot; body was tense, I continued like nothing was wrong.
      * Never doing anything overtly wrong, but teetering on the edge through snide remarks and lack of effort. (Obedience)
    - All of the sudden, Tim gave up. He was done – understandably.
      * I was fuming.
      * Walked through the woods, to the house in silence (one of those heavy silences like in car with parents after…)
      * Tim handed me the drill and I….
    - That was the tipping point. It was then I knew this was *my* problem.
      * Out of line.
      * Tried to rationalize it with non-sense.
      * He stormed inside. I froze in that spot.
        + Initially angry, then frightened, then disappointed, then embarrassed, and ultimately sad.
      * Didn’t see Tim until dinner…silent through the night. Avoided each other.
        + Siblings (Stability)
      * Next morning, I woke afraid our project was over, unsure about our plan for the day. Our routine was disrupted.
        + I went downstairs, packed my lunch and headed to the forest.
        + I found him there…working.
        + Worked in silence, then I apologized, and ran my mouth about everything that had gone through my mind. – Nervous talking.
        + We laid some ground rules, made me laugh a bit
        + We continued on – obeying the ground rules from there forward
      * Humans – let ourselves down.
        + Sister Chittister Says - We are made for greatness – full of love, empathy and potential.

Empowered to change the world for the better, but first need to focus on ourselves.

Remember who we are, what we value, and align our minds and actions with this.

Conversatio – full, honest awareness, forgiveness, recommitment.

Benedictine Vow of Conversatio –

* Asks us to wake each morning and recommit to being the best version of ourselves.
* It invites us to be open to welcoming a variety of perspectives in our community.
* It challenges us to take time alone and together in silence to reflect and pray so that we are more open to see God’s grace in our selves, others, nature, and life in general.

St. Benedict’s Rule structured monks lives to always remember that death is at the doorstep.

* Rise each morning with prayers of new life, Easter, new beginnings
* Prayers throughout the day remind them of their purpose (for work, for life, as individuals, as a community)
  + A meaningful life doesn’t always mean a happy life.
* St. Benedict asked that we keep our own deaths in mind, so that we may **“run while we have the light of life.”**
* Go to bed each night after thinking about their days, what went well and not.
* Evening prayers are to lay their burdens to rest.
* Cycle, rising again each morning to new life.

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What does that mean to me?

* While morbid, I take this as an empowered and enlightening way to address life.
* There is no better time than NOW to approach our days with purpose.
* Tomorrow, we begin the Lenten Season
  + A time to prepare for Easter.
    - Prayer – Time in silence and prayer – connecting with self and God.
    - Fasting – Time to give up that which may hold us back from being the best versions of ourselves. – Habits, mindsets, views
    - Giving – Time to give our time, attention, and maybe possessions to others