

Maggie's Musings

Small Shards of Glass

April, 2006

During the course of a 2 week period last summer I experienced 8 flat tires on my road bike. Sometimes they came while riding and sometimes I would come out to go for a ride and find a flat tire.

I would patiently or impatiently, change the tube and carefully check the tire for any thorns, nails or glass that might be causing the flat. I never found anything that would cause the flats. And they kept happening. After the 8th flat I decided I needed help. Something wasn't right and I wasn't finding it and I was getting tired of the flats!

I took off the tire and took it to the local bike shop and handed the tire to the guy behind the service desk telling him my woeful story. He immediately took the tire and bent it in half and began looking at places in the tread. I had never done that nor had I ever thought to do that. He kept bending the tire in new places and with each bend he found several tiny shards of glass that had imbedded themselves in the somewhat worn out tire. He explained that I couldn't find them by feeling around on the inside of the tire. The reason they could cause a flat when I couldn't feel them was because once the tube was fully inflated the tube would then come into contact with the small glass shards.

He suggested a new tire, which I immediately bought and haven't had a flat since!

As I left the bike store I thought about how finding those small shards of glass might be a metaphor for other aspects of my life. Where are the "shards of glass," the parts of me that I can't find because I don't know where to look? What are those places that I would prefer not to see? What are the traits that cause "flat tires" in my relationships and create disharmony with others and within myself. Then I wondered, who would be the "expert" that could help me find the "shards of glass" of my personality so that I might see them, acknowledge them and find ways to change them.

I realized that I have lived with those "experts:" my mother, father, brother, husbands, and daughter. They have been my "experts." They have been the ones who have been able to show me where my "shards of glass" are. I have just never appreciated their wisdom and "expertise." I realized that I am a better listener these days and less defensive.

Now I can hear their words and because of that I can find those "shards of glass" in me. I can hear their comments as new information that is helpful. Information that might prevent me from getting "another flat tire" in my relationship with them. I am blessed to have such wonderful experts in my life.