

UU Church of Vancouver  
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### **Reflection on the Theme by Brett Raunig**

Good morning, I am a biologist by trade and in past reflections I have shared stories and contemplation on our relationship with the independent web of life. I bike to work every day and work on issues related to living in harmony with the world around us. Today I would like to share an experience I had while riding home from work one day. This experience helped me contemplate the human aspect of our world and our relationship with the people in our community. This experience opened my eyes to ways fear and bias can shape how I react to the people around me.

It was a normal workday and I hopped on my bike and started pedaling home. My bike commute is about 10 miles. I often use my bike ride to contemplate my day and to relieve stress. I had ridden about 3 miles and was deep in my head processing the day. As I scanned the road in front of me I noticed a woman waving her hand and acting strange about 50 yards in front of me.

I kept pedaling and when I got close to her, she frantically asked me if I had a cell phone. I panicked and said no and kept riding. As I rode through the stop light down the road, I began to contemplate what I had just done. After I got through the light I decided to turn around. I rode back to where she was waiting for the bus and because of embarrassment told her I was mistaken and did have a phone. I dug into my bike bag, got my phone, and asked how I could help. She explained she was worried she had missed the bus and asked if I could help her find out when the next bus was coming.

I often take the bus and I dialed the C-Tran next ride number for her and let her know that the bus was on its way. She was very appreciative and thanked me for the help. She was concerned that she would be late picking up her daughter from daycare. I assured her the bus was only a few minutes away and walked through when she would arrive at the daycare.

I think about this interaction often and wonder why I initially told her no. I celebrate turning around to help someone. But at the same time, I contemplate my knee jerk reaction and the fear and bias that could have swayed me to not help someone. What about the subtle biases or judgements that I am unaware of? I forgive myself for that knee jerk reaction and I'm glad I'm here with you today. I find peace here - this is a place where I can examine these things in the search for truth and justice for all.