

## ***On Falls and Falling***

By Kurt Ewen

I have fallen more times than I care to remember – much less, share – over the past two+ years. Luckily, for independence's sake, most falls leave scares only on the psyche. Actual scares, with E-D visits in tow, breed questions, worry, and well-intended suggestions. Heartfelt intrusiveness has my friends, family and colleagues sounding like a short German woman I know.

Falls have dates and outcomes that caregivers monitor for frequency and unpack for lessons for me to learn. Falling is a personal experience that most caregivers tend not to ask about, but it distinguishes those that do. Falls in aggregate are a harbinger of accentuated physical decline, breeding caution and fear in me. Falling is a fleeting, pre-verbal, and surreal awareness of the human condition in its isolated frailty.

As all momentary, unvarnished glimpses of human mortality do, falling leaves scar tissue on the psyche. The scaring's itchiness invites deeper appreciation for who we are as human beings. This itching requires mindful awareness of my vulnerability as the price for holding off numbing. Numbing resulting from reality denying tendencies in all of us: forgetfulness, laziness, pride and consumption. Numbing hermetically seals our frailty from view, robbing us of the opportunity to humanize our humanity.

There is a necessary synergy between falls and falling. Not seeing the falls for the falling lacks an appreciation for the necessary connection between body and spirit. Not seeing the falling for the falls underestimates how alone we each are in the frailty we must confront. As in all things, both the journey and the destination matter for those who fall and those who care for us.