

Start Each Day with Gratitude



Look to this day...

The sun is rising over Nipawin hospital. I sit gazing at the exquisite dawn of this northern Saskatchewan day, my unopened journal in my lap. It has been a long and sad night for my daughter Nicole and I, sitting by my mother's bedside as she lay dying. We have been sharing these final days with my sister Ann, brother and sister-in-law, Greg and Elyse, and other family members.

Last night was a particularly restless one for mom, as she struggled to find comfort in her pain filled body and fear filled heart. A sense of desperation filled her voice as she called for a drink and realized she couldn't see. "I can't see" she called out weakly, and then, "I like it when I can see". The nurses put ointment in her infected eyes and we tried again to make her comfortable. We don't know if she will see again.

I open my journal to record my blessings, as I do daily, and write: *"I am so grateful to be here now at this life giving time, I am grateful Nicole is here, I am grateful that I had my mother for 83 years, I am grateful for my daughters, their husbands, my grandchildren, for being healthy and having so many opportunities, for this sharing time with family."*

I bow my head in gratitude.

Gratitude is expansive. It reminds us of what is really important. Even now, months after my mom's death, I hold grief in one hand and joy and gratitude for her life in the other. I am reminded that even in her last days, in morphine induced states; she would sweetly say 'thank you' for each small act. She was eternally grateful.

Reflection: If you don't have a gratitude practice, try it today. What are you grateful for?

- Notice throughout the day that positive thoughts such as gratitude ease your breath and keep you open. Similarly negative thoughts constrict your body and your breath.
- Express your gratitude to others and enjoy their reactions.
- Resources: Start a gratitude journal. Write in it daily.
- Read *Attitudes of Gratitude: How to Give and Receive Joy Every Day of Your Life* by M.J. Ryan. Conari Press, 1999.

One of the incredible truths about gratitude is that it is impossible to feel both the positive emotions of thankfulness and a negative emotion such as anger or fear at the same time. Gratitude births only positive feelings—love, compassion, joy and hope. As we focus on what we are thankful for, fear, anger and bitterness simply melt away...” M.J.Ryan. Tools - The Organizational

Learn to Be In Silence

In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness.

—Mahatma Gandhi

True silence is the rest of the mind; it is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.

—William Penn

See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence.

See the stars, the moon, and the sun - how they move in silence.

We need silence to be able to touch souls.

—**Mother Teresa**