

Amen

Category: Gratitude

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Gratitude? I'm measuring it in numbers these days.

Two inches of hair now sprout from the bare patches on top of my head. To be honest, when I look in the mirror first thing in the morning, I don't feel all that grateful. An unfamiliar shape stares back at me, one that looks a bit like a tufted titmouse. That's the front view. The rear view resembles an abandoned bird's nest swirling around the crown.

I should feel grateful that my hair is growing back and even more grateful that I didn't lose all of it during my course of chemotherapy last spring. Back then, I should have been measuring gratitude in milliliters as the toxic chemicals designed to prevent recurrence dripped slowly into my child-size veins. And, in "rads" (radiation absorbed dose) as the beams penetrated my smooth, bare breast. But, somehow, the word "gratitude" never came to mind.

"We caught it so early," every doctor said. Great. But who can process such good fortune in the middle of the shock and fear of a new diagnosis? Lacking a crystal ball, I couldn't (and still can't) look into the future and feel grateful.

And yet, I've seen enough suffering in my personal and professional life that, in my most rational moments, I can recognize and acknowledge that right now, in this moment, I feel well and just as healthy as I've ever felt in my seventy years.

And, for that, I am extremely grateful.

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