

Life Is Good, Even When It's Not

Category: Gratitude

written by Pam Montgomery | November 9, 2021

Each morning when I wake, my first thoughts are of gratitude—for the soft bed in which I lay, deliciously warm as I pull my down comforter around my shoulders.

Yes, I may also be experiencing nausea, diarrhea, neuralgia, an acne-like rash reminiscent of my teenage years covering my face and bald head, and the permanent swelling in my left arm from lymphedema. The side effects of cancer treatments seem endless. But I *do* have a soft bed and a warm comforter, and I know there are those in the world suffering the same things, *and worse*, without warmth or a bed.

When I open my blinds, I'm met with new beauty each day. Fall leaves drifting softly to the ground. Fresh-fallen snow glistening under the sun. The shade of green seen only in the spring. One day, I even saw a bald eagle, perched majestically atop a dead-looking tree. Another time, two spotted fawns, foraging for food in the neighbor's garden with their mothers. I'm grateful for all the beauty in the world.

Most importantly, I'm grateful for the people in my life who remember me on my difficult days, as I journey through cancer and its treatments, with kind notes, flowers, herbal tea, homemade carrot cakes. I'm especially grateful for those who dare to pick up the phone and call me, even when they might not know what to say.

To some, gratitude might seem simplistic, even Pollyannish. It certainly doesn't have the power to take away the pain. Yet the soft bed and warm comforter are every bit as real as the nausea and lymphedema. I find I'm happier when I focus on the positive truths in my daily experience rather than the negative ones. It gives me a healthy frame of reference to better deal with the things I'm not so grateful for.

In a nutshell? Happiness is a grateful heart. And yes, I even go so far as to hang a tree on my wall with leaves on which I write what I'm grateful for each day. When it fills up, I put a new one up and start again. Childish? Maybe. But it helps me to remember and focus on the positive truths in my life. Life is still good, even when it's not.

Pam Montgomery
Bountiful, Utah