

Nightly Words of Thanks

Category: Gratitude

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | November 1, 2021

As a little girl, I ended every day reciting the “Now I lay me down to sleep” prayer. As a septuagenarian, I continue the nightly practice of praying—emphasizing my gratitude for all the people who have enriched my life.

I thank Grandma, Ma, and Dad—the three adults who raised me. My paternal grandmother, widowed at twenty-three when the 1918 flu pandemic claimed her husband, taught me that I have an inner core of strength and resilience that will enable me to overcome even the most devastating events. Ma, who was denied her dream of becoming a teacher because her immigrant parents refused to send her to college, made sure I received the education I needed to become a teacher. My beloved dad reminded me that a cup of hot Ovaltine or a three-scoop cone of Glen’s custard, combined with the ability to laugh at the absurdity of life, would carry me through any stormy times I encountered.

Every night I also thank my son and daughter—caring adults who call me daily to make sure I am okay, who share my interest in traveling to “imagi-nation,” and who love me despite my many failures as a single parent.

I give gratitude as well for my brother, his daughter, her husband, and their daughter, my Princess Ella the Enchanting. They add quantity—and quality—to my small nuclear family of three, giving me more people to love.

And without friends, my world would be more sepia-hued than colorful. I am grateful, too, for the individuals who open their arms and hearts to include me in their lives.

In addition, I thank my former students—the ones who called me “Edel”—for enriching my teaching years by turning our middle-school classroom into one of invigorating discussions, creative projects, and respectful teamwork. I am grateful to my current students, too, who have welcomed me as a member of their families.

And, of course, I am grateful that no serious illness has forced me to rely upon my village of people to help me survive my days.

Despite the messiness of our world, the people in my life ease my angst and prevent my aloneness from disintegrating into loneliness. They keep me mentally healthy, even when I am dealing with the aches, pains, and potentially life-altering diseases associated with aging.

I know that people who have people are the luckiest people in the world.

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