

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, partially obscured by a layer of clouds, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The light reflects on the surface of the water in the foreground. In the distance, dark silhouettes of mountains are visible against the bright sky. The entire image is framed by a thin, dark orange border.

THE JOURNEY OF GRACE

Edited and Compiled by Heather K. O'Hara

The Journey of Grace

A Collection of Thoughts, Reflections and Inspiration
from the readers of Heather O'Hara's newsletter, "A Touch of Grace."

Edited and Compiled by Heather K. O'Hara

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The Journey of Grace

Dedicated
To those who write
And those who read,
To those who follow
And those who lead,
To those who are still
And those who are growing,
To those who are learning
And those who are knowing,
To those who give
And those who receive,
To those who rejoice
And to those who grieve,
Whoever you are,
Whatever you do,
The Journey of Grace
Is the story of "you."

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Introduction

by Heather K. O'Hara

Being an inspirational author and poet, as well as the publisher of a worldwide newsletter brings me together (on many levels) with people from all over the world that I might otherwise never have known.

I feel extremely blessed to be able to do the work that I love doing, while making friends along the way. Friends, who started out as strangers, but quickly became my unstoppable partners in illumination. With hearts made of gold, the readers of my newsletter, "A Touch of Grace," have added more to my life than any of them will ever know.

We are a diverse and truly "connected" bunch! When one of us cries, the other is there offering a happier story for us to hold on to; when one of us falls, the other is there offering a hand to lift us up; and when one of us celebrates, the other is there to expand on our joy and share in our happiness. And, yes, even I am surprised by this amazing group of people – the readers of my newsletter – who continue to accompany me on this remarkable journey, as we all learn to become better floaters and flyers.

Compiling their thoughts, reflections, original poetry, articles, favorite quotes and stories into a book is my gift to them... sharing it with the world is their gift to you... and your gift to us, is your enjoyment of this beautiful collection of courage, wisdom and grace.

When asked where I go to be uplifted, my answer is always the same: To those who make my life and my work an ever-expanding, fulfilling and extraordinary experience – I turn to my readers, many of whom have become very close and treasured friends. They are my light. Their emails; their heartfelt expressions of appreciation; their letters, notes and blessings; and their constant support and belief in me is what inspires me to continue creating, to continue writing, and to continue giving more and more and more.

It is an absolute pleasure to do the work that I do. And, as cosmically ironic as it may sound, what I create, write and share with my readers is small in comparison to what I receive from them... true comradeship in

reaching out to a world that I truly believe is getting better and better every day – no matter what may *appear* to be happening on its surface.

The Journey of Grace, although it may not always be apparent, *is* the story of our world. A world filled with people who care about one another and accept one another, as we continue to help each other become the best that we can be.

May you find enormous inspiration in this very special book; a book by the people who most inspire me . . .

Love & Light, ... Heather K. O'Hara

“If there is a book you really want to read,
but it hasn’t been written yet,
then you must write it.”

– Toni Morrison

The Journey of Grace

James Allen

Favorite Quote submitted by Aaron Taylor

Circumstances do not make a man,
they reveal him.

Pedro Avalos

The Miracle of Success ©2006 Pedro Avalos
www.PedroAvalos.com

The Miracle of Success

These days success is a hotly debated subject. Nevertheless, people haven't realized that the real pathway to success is an internal process. As soon as you develop the consciousness of prosperity, this energy spreads out to your exterior world, imparting the Midas touch to everything you perform.

Many people have discovered unconsciously that certain systems of behavior are conducive to beneficial effects. They don't force anything; they just proceed with patient expectation. The result is a quiet life, with plenty of abundance. This is not very weird. The laws of the Universe are neutral. You don't need to analyze, accumulate a lot of data, present the best method, create the hypothesis and propose the solutions. The way of the Universe is simple, but at the same time it encompasses vastness.

For example, if you smile in front of the mirror every day, and if you really enjoy the moment of relaxation, believing you are an extension of the creative force of the Universe, and then spend your day confident that everything is going to be okay, you will magically start to experience wonderful events in your life.

You didn't propose a specific strategy, you didn't devise an elaborate plan based on the most aggressive principles of science; you just started rejoicing in the face of good events. Why is this so? The minute you start behaving in a natural way, being still, just expecting miracles, not trying to find your own solutions for events, you are consciously or unconsciously giving the Universe all the power to do things according to its laws. At this moment you are opening the flood gates of opportunity to your wildest dreams. Yeah, it is so, because you follow the law of lightest sweat; like a seed, you just plant it in the ground, and after a certain time it sprouts out effortlessly. The Universe is in charge.

Start every day with confidence and creativity. Expect and perform miracles. Don't decide what's best for you; just live and trust the perfect

universal laws. Don't worry if events don't seem to be developing favorably or as you would expect them. Remember, the best things emerge from chaos. Don't even have faith; just wait for the glorious realization of your dreams. Remember, if you trust the Universe, and have entrusted to it the power of fulfilling your dreams, it will. And it doesn't depend on you – it arises from its own perfection.

Be still and expect miracles. In this way, you will become a performer of miracles.

Claude T. Bissell

Favorite Quote submitted by Tim White

Risk more than others think is safe.
Care more than others think is wise.
Dream more than others think is practical.
Expect more than others think is possible.

Marcia Breitenbach

The Magnificent You - Music & Lyrics ©2005 Marcia Breitenbach
www.themagnificentyou.com

The Magnificent You

Awaken now to your beauty,
Don't hide behind fear anymore,
Release the you that wants to fly free, the Magnificent You.

Along the way, you have learned
That some part of you was unworthy, (am I good enough?)
Release these lies, embrace yourself and fly free, the Magnificent You.

Chorus:

Dare to dream the most wonderful, marvelous, Biggest Dream,
Throw limits out the door. (You can do anything you dream!)
You are worthy and loveable, capable, beautiful,
Breathe in, (Take it in) Breathe out, (This is You)
You are Love, you are loved, you are Love, you are Love.

I'm sure that you have grown weary,
Of fighting invisible foes,
Step into your power, and you can fly so free, the Magnificent You.
You can change your beliefs,
For this you need faith and persistence, (Don't give up your hope)
Rewrite the script that you live by and fly free, the Magnificent You.

Chorus:

Dare to be your authority, wisdom is just inside,
So choose what adds to your life.
You must listen to your inner voice, it is calling you,
And trust (It's your truth)
Then act, (Step by step)
You are Love, you are Loved, you are Love, you are Love.

Lee Carroll

Submitted by www.mansinnerjourney.com

The Lighthouse

The lighthouse is anchored on the rock, no matter where it is built. Sometimes the lighthouse is rebuilt in other areas as the weather and conditions change - same lighthouse - same lighthouse keeper - always anchored in the rock. The lighthouse is there to do one thing, and that is to shine the light. The purpose of the light is often varied. Sometimes it's a warning, sometimes it's there to attract attention, and sometimes it's there to guide. Whatever the purpose, it's always anchored in the rock. Those who built and operate the lighthouse know something that others do not: They know where the rocks are - where the trouble is - and they are there to guide others around these things.

When the light is able to help steer ships into the harbour safely, the lighthouse rejoices! When this happens, however, the lighthouse keeper does not go over and have a party with the captain of the ship. Instead, the keeper silently rejoices and continues to shine the light. Most captains who reach port safely due to the light of the lighthouse never know the lighthouse keeper. The lighthouse keeper doesn't publish a statement telling others that he saved the ship! He is silent and continues, often alone, anchored in the rock.

For those ships that did not look up to see the lighthouse, and who wound up on the rocks in disaster, the lighthouse may be saddened. But the lighthouse keeper does not go over to rescue the ship. The lighthouse keeper does not take responsibility for those who end up on the rocks!

The lighthouse keeper does not go into depression about the event and dismantle the lighthouse due to the ship that didn't look to see the light. NO. Instead, the lighthouse has one purpose, and that is to shine the light, shine the light, shine the light. Do not take responsibility for those who do not heal. Don't take responsibility for those who DO.

Celebrate those who heal, cry over the ones that don't, but don't take responsibility for anything but the integrity of the energy you put out. Shine the light and stay in place. Continue to anchor yourself in the rock of wisdom, and do constant maintenance on the purity of the light that you display.

Joseph Campbell

Favorite Quote submitted by Samantha Rouse

The privilege of a lifetime is being
who you are.

Audrey Christopherson

Where I Feel Safe ©2006 Audrey Christopherson

Where I Feel Safe

We all need to find a place
We feel sure is full of grace.
A place where we like to hide
Storms and troubles to outride.
A place that's much bigger than me.
A place that eventually sets me free.

Let us find where comfort lies.
Lie on our backs and watch the skies.
Let your worries be like the clouds,
Blown out of sight in ghostlike shrouds.
Walk in a garden and talk to the trees
As if they were Angels on their knees.

Maybe you will find me on the sea-shore
Watching, listening, waves go back and fore.
I write my worries into the sand,
Water floats in and washes it bland.
Or late at night I look for a star.

Thank you, God, I know where you are.

Karen Clements

Rapture in the Wind ©2006 Karen Clements

Rapture in the Wind

The trees are swaying from a great energy that is allowing the movement to form a dance.

I admire how gracefully the tree moves, they have the flexibility to move ever so easily as they welcome the invitation to dance.

Do I dare enter and allow the wind to caress me or should I stay in my comfort zone and watch the affects from behind closed doors?

I desire to feel its embrace and brush back the hair from my face but I must make the first move and open the door if only but a crack.

It is speaking to me in song, I hear a melody ever so softly whispering in my ear.

It is the music of love carried in the vulnerability of the air.

How beautiful the words as they penetrate my heart and I feel the wetness of a tear welling in my eye.

Is the wind that strong to bring forth this tear or is it the gentle melody that is welling within me.

What brings forth this tear that is trickling down my face?

It is joy as I am being touched by my beloved.

I know my beloved and my beloved knows me as we have spent many nights in each others arms.

There is a longing in my desire that explodes within me for the comfort that our union brings.

“Together” is the mantra for my soul. And for a brief moment I recognize my beloved in the taste of this embrace.

I am enlightened if only for a moment with the possibility of what I may do on this journey with the energy that is provided by this powerful wind.

My soul recognizes the voice in the wind and my spirit dances with my beloved.

How my soul longs for these encounters when I can taste this love.

The wind seems to capture the moment and both time and distance cease and for a brief moment I am embraced in the rapture of love.

My soul has tasted the bitterness of despair when only the memory of my beloved will bring me comfort.

I have met my beloved and my beloved has met me.

In the light of day we will casually embrace but in the dark of night when sleep captures the body to give it rest then my soul becomes free to go to my beloved and dance in the embrace where love has no boundaries.

As we dance freely I am aware of the rejection that is encountered.

How am I to reach you?

The trees open and dance with the vulnerability of the air but many shut the door and take shelter.

As the knock comes on the door with a voice crying to find an opening for a breath of fresh air to enter and offer refreshment.

It seems there is no one home but the truth is the house is filled and they welcome not the air that is offered as the door remains closed.

Opening the door will allow the wind to blow in fresh air and push out the stale air that has taken residence.

Love is filled with Patience as it knocks throughout the night singing a love song ever so gracious.

This wind will tire and rest for awhile but it will never forget the song as it knows not how to stop loving.

Even when it no longer calls it will continue to love as that is the source of the energy that is this power called wind.

Fredrick L. Collins

Favorite Quote submitted by David Ellingsworth

There are two types of people –
Those who come into a room and say,
“Well, here I am!”
And those who come in and say,
“Ah, there you are!”

David Deida

www.mansinnerjourney.com

Closing down in the midst of pain is a denial of a man's true nature. A superior man is free in feeling and action, even amidst great pain and hurt. If necessary, a man should live with a hurting heart rather than a closed one.

Shawna Edge

The Lover's Circle ©2006 Shawna Edge

The Lover's Circle

The circle of love begins like the rise of the thunderous wave,
Starting its rise with great fortitude and belief –
The curve of the roll, the wonderment of its transforming power
as it completes its fall into the mysterious depths of the water.
The crash, the roar, and the dwindling of its magnitude
to caress the sand that waits for it patiently.
The restless ocean sits still for just a moment
before the beauty of the wave believes again in its re-birth
and starts his journey toward his ultimate destiny.

Oh love, with its parallel to the sea,
will always be your ultimate destiny.

Cathy Garten

Chances and Choices ©2006 Cathy Garten

Chances and Choices

He's a cowboy in a cubical.
He's an artist digging graves.
He's a sailor in the desert.
He's a leader all alone.

He has chances he won't take.
He has choices he won't make.

He says that obligation is the reason,
But it's really an excuse,
Not to take the chance,
Not to make the choice.

She's a gardener in a high-rise.
She's a dancer that's too fat.
She's a mother without children.
She writes stories in her head.

She has chances she won't take.
She has choices she won't make.

She says that obligation is the reason,
But it's really an excuse,
Not to take the chance,
Not to make the choice.

Ann Griffen

Floow ©2006 Ann Griffen

Floow

Timing, timing, timing.
Your path is straight and true.
Belief in you, sets free reality.
Your pace in motion, is motionless.
A cause, a circle, a rhyme.
Manifestation alive IS.

John Harricharan

One Little Glimpse of Eternity ©2006 John Harricharan
www.Insight2000.com

One Little Glimpse of Eternity

It was many years ago. The boy was not more than ten years old as he stood beside the man that early morning. They were both standing on the shore of the Atlantic looking east toward the rising sun. The chill morning air caused a slight shiver to run through the boy. The man, seeming to know, without even looking, took off his jacket and draped it over the small shoulders of his son. They walked up to the water's edge as the man spoke: "You see that wide expanse of water? It is made of billions of gallons, and each gallon is made of tens of thousands of drops."

The little boy seemed curious. "And what are the drops made of?" he asked.

With a smile, the man replied: "The drops are made of smaller and smaller drops, and each in turn is made of bits and pieces of things that make the very world we live in."

"What am I made of, Dad?" the boy asked after a short while. "Am I made of the same stuff as the ocean?"

The father smiled as he replied: "Everything is made of everything else, and everything is a part of other things. As you stand here this morning, you are a part of this land, this shore, this ocean. Look at that tree, the sky. They are parts of the very me and the eternal I. There is a force that keeps us together. Some call that force God, others, Allah, Jehovah, or Jove. There are a thousand names for this force, but it doesn't matter what it's called. It just is. As you grow older and wiser, you will find the stirring of this mighty force within you. You will know that it's always there, and that you're safe and happy within it."

The boy, with a puzzled expression, looked at his father and asked: "How can this force, this God, be within me and at the same time be in everything else I see?"

“Because,” the man replied, “God is everything and everyone. God is in you and in me, in those gulls you see over there, in the sand under our feet and the lilies of the field. God is everywhere and everything, and there cannot be two of everything. God is a part of you just like the drop of water is part of the ocean. Remember this well and you will grow up to have a sense of peace, joy and understanding.”

Decades have passed since I stood on that shore with my father. I have since traveled to many countries, lived in various cultures, and experienced deep sorrow and great joy. I have seen the best and the worst of my fellow human beings, yet, through it all, I could hear the voice of my father telling me: “God is everywhere and everything, and there cannot be two everything,”

As a young boy, I grew up in a small village of Hindus, Christians and Moslems. I learned at a very early age that all people are shipmates on the common voyage of life and that one cannot sink one’s shipmates without sinking oneself. As I studied the Vedic writings and compared them with the words of the Hebrew prophets and the teachings of the New Testament Apostles, I found that the common thread that ran through everything was love. The greatest commandment ever given was “Love your God and love one another” – all others are simply variations on that theme.

Marcia Jameson

Blending vs. Balancing ©2006 Marcia Jameson

Blending vs. Balancing

Balance is bogus! For a long time I strived to live a “balanced” life—juggling work, marriage, family and time for what’s important to me—in an attempt to not let any one of the balls drop. It didn’t work!

Although it’s still a very popular notion, the concept of work/life balance is fundamentally flawed. That which is supposed to relieve stress is itself inherently stressful!

I’ve decided living a “blended” life is far more doable and infinitely more satisfying than trying to lead a balanced life.

A blended life means I enjoy what I’m doing so much that work is play. It means that I do what makes my heart sing and toes tap—sometimes for money, sometimes not.

A blended life means I love the people I work with and enjoy being with them, just as I enjoy time with friends and family. I don’t need to get away from one group of people to be with the other . . . or vice versa.

In my blended life there is little distinction between “life” and “work.” So, there is nothing to balance!

It’s so much easier!

Angela Keller

(April 5, 1989 – July 28, 2006)

Only Your Days

We have to remember that yesterdays are gone,
Tomorrow is in front of us
Only to remind us to look back to blissful memories –
To relive them by each moment,
To look back on our mistakes only to learn from them.
With every day that flies by
We live each memory in mind and cherish them –
Cherish like a first kiss,,
Cherish like giving a smile to someone
And making their day.
With every day there is always a significant sign of beauty –
From every view point; on every surface –
One that is within an eye's or a heart's reach,
Such as the ocean tranquil and rhythmic –
The heart so responsible for so much and so precious
With each breath taken.

C.D. Larson

Submitted by James Farrow

Promise Yourself

Promise yourself that nothing can disturb your peace of mind;
To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet;
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them;
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism
come true;
To think only the best, and to expect only the best;
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about
your own;
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater
achievements of the future;

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living
creature you meet a smile;
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have
no time to criticize others;
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and
too happy to permit the presence of trouble;
To think well of yourself and to proclaim this fact to the world, not in
loud words, but in great deeds;

To live in the faith that the whole world is on your side so long as you
are true to the best that is in you.

Diane McCann

The Wisdom of the Forest ©2006 Diane McCann
www.goddesswithin.com.au

The Wisdom of the Forest

Oh the wisdom of the forest
Trees reaching for the sky
Wind whistling through the tree tops
Never asking why...
Why are we here, what is the reason,
Are we simply living from season to season?
To be born and then to pass away,
Just working and sleeping, day by day.

What about the soul that yearns to teach
All things we desire are within our reach?

The love we all seek and rarely find
Is because of a negative state of mind.
What we think is what we receive
It's all a reflection of what we believe.
You can do it you say then up comes the fear
I'm not good enough is what most people hear.
And so you remain locked inside
Our potential and beauty we simply hide.

What will it take until we know
If we let the truth within us flow
And acknowledge ourselves for who we are
Within us we'll find that shiny star.
So love yourself and take a chance
Because life is not pure circumstance.
You created it the way you need it to be
To learn lessons and to set yourself free.

Earl Musselman

Submitted by Kelly Fox

The Blindman's Cane

The sun was shining in my eyes, and I could barely see
To do the necessary task that was allotted me.
Resentment of the vivid glow, I started to complain—
When all at once upon the air I heard the blindman's cane.

If you wish to attain your goals,
don't look back.
Keep looking into the future.
Keep your focus on your dreams.
This is the only way
to move forward in your life.

Frank Outlaw

Favorite Quote submitted by Leonard Green

Watch your thoughts;
they become your words.
Watch your words;
they become your actions.
Watch your actions;
they become your habits.
Watch your habits;
they become your character.
Watch your character;
it becomes your destiny.

George Bernard Shaw

Favorite Quote submitted by Nathan Matthews

Life isn't about finding yourself,
life is about creating yourself.

Joyce Shafer

Gratitude... or Appreciation? ©2006 Joyce Shafer
www.lulu.com/content/127175

Gratitude... or Appreciation?

A funny thing happened on the way to writing an article about Gratitude. I changed my consciousness. For quite a while, I've been attaching "I am grateful for" in front of all my affirmations. I had heard, and accepted, the words of others who spoke about the importance of gratitude. But this morning, something was niggling at my brain. Something felt out of balance about this. Gratitude, in this new state of mind, seemed to have a thought of lack attached to it. I'm a proponent of what quantum physicists and spiritual leaders expound: What you focus on, you get more of. Since this has been my own life experience, I wanted to look deeper.

Pulling the dictionary from the shelf, I looked up Gratitude: A feeling of thankful appreciation for favors or benefits received. I looked up Favor. Amidst the many variations of meaning was: A kind, obliging, friendly, or generous act. Benefit: A kindly, charitable act.

These definitions supported my underlying unrest about Gratitude. A favor, by its nature – most of us have heard or read the phrase "I called in a favor" – implies something done that obligates the receiver to the giver. Benefit carries the energy of charity. Both of these imply that someone is in a state of lack.

I moved on to Appreciation, or its root – Appreciate: To think well of; understand and enjoy; recognize the value of. No mention of lack – just enjoyment, understanding, and recognition of value, on some level, of something.

What is the significance or difference? Let's try an example using both terms. You sit down to a meal and say, "I am grateful." Behind that may lie gratitude that you are not one of the starving millions on the planet or one of the homeless you passed on the street.

Now suppose you say, "I appreciate this." You appreciate the food and what it provides to your body. You appreciate every person who made it possible for you to be able to have access to the food – whoever produced or acquired the food, the processors and packers, the store owner for

providing a location where you could get it, the work you do that provides the funds to buy it.

It may seem a subtle distinction, but it's there. When you read the last two paragraphs, what was your inner sense, your feeling, your gut level reaction? Which emotion or thought would you rather project outward: Fear of lack or appreciation?

What about giving? Find a way to attach appreciation to it, even if it's only to appreciate the fact that you have something you can share with another. Work with this until you can remove any thought of lack you attach to the act or recipient.

The next time you pay a bill, ask yourself what you appreciate about the service or product it provides. When you go to make a purchase, ask yourself if the price is in alignment with the level of appreciation you will feel for it once it is yours. As you consider anything, even relationships, give thought to your level of appreciation in its regard. And, don't be surprised at the insights that come to you when you put this into practice.

Joyce Shafer

Leaves ©2006 Joyce Shafer
www.lulu.com/content/127175

Leaves

Leaves ---

Dance their final spiral before they touch the ground
and return to the earth that was midwife at their
birth.

Leaves ---

Like notes, float and swirl on the air...
Perform a symphony for eyes and souls who pause to
watch and listen with different ears.

Leaves ---

Do a joyous dance as they transition to the last note
of their octave,
then to their rest.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Lisa Alder

The Precious Gift

Once upon a time, when God had finished making the world, He wanted to leave behind a piece of His own divinity, a spark of His essence, a promise to man of what he could become, with effort. He looked for a place to hide his precious gift because, He explained, what man could find too easily would never be valued by him.

"Then you must hide this gift on the highest mountain peak on earth," said one of His counselors.

God shook His head, "No, for man is an adventuresome creature and he will soon enough learn to climb the highest mountain peaks."

"Hide it then, O Great One, in the depths of the earth."

"I think not," said God. "Man will one day discover that he can dig into the deepest parts of the earth."

"In the middle of the ocean then, Master?"

God shook His head. "I've given man a brain, you see, and one day he'll learn to build ships and cross the mightiest oceans."

"Where then, Master?"

God smiled, "I'll hide it where every man and woman will be able to find it if they look sincerely and deeply enough. I'll hide it in their hearts."

Unknown Author

Favorite Quote submitted by Sheila Anthony

It's not who you are that holds you back,
it's who you think you're not.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Tom Atkins

Don't Carry it Home

A lecturer, when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy is this glass of water?"

The answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it—the heavier it becomes."

He continued, "And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on.

As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for awhile and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden.

So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down.

Don't carry it home.

You can pick it up tomorrow.

Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can. Relax; pick them up later after you've rested.

Life is short. Enjoy it."

Unknown Author

Submitted by Ruben Blackmon

Today is Spring

One day, there was a blind man sitting on the steps of a building – with a hat by his feet and a sign that read: “I am blind, please help.”

A creative publicist was walking by and stopped to observe. He saw that the blind man had only a few coins in his hat. He dropped in more coins and, without asking for permission, he took the sign and rewrote it. He returned the sign to the blind man and left.

That afternoon the publicist returned to the blind man and noticed that his hat was full of bills and coins. The blind man recognized his footsteps and asked if it was he who had rewritten his sign and wanted to know what he had written on it.

The publicist responded: “Nothing that was not true. I just wrote the message a little differently.” He smiled and went on his way.

The new sign read: “Today is Spring and I cannot see it.”

Sometimes we need to change our strategy. If we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always gotten.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Linda Crawford

When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer – and I knew then that there was a God I could always talk to; and trust.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick; and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give your time and money to help people who had nothing – and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it – and I learned to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities – even when you didn't feel good – and I learned that I would have responsibilities when I grew up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's alright to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say,
"Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking."

Unknown Author

Favorite Quote submitted by Sue Dannon

Life is a journey,
and love
is what makes
the journey worthwhile.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Diane Graves

Perhaps God is a Poet

Perhaps God is a poet
who writes with words
of flesh and bone and leaf and flower.

Every hour of every day,
words pour out of the poet's heart,
and every word is beautiful
and true and worth the telling.
And when each poem is perfect,
and there is no more which ought to be said,
the Poet gently takes the words back into His heart
where they are safe forever...
and then begins again.

Unknown Author

Submitted by S. Peterson

Dancing With God

When I meditated on the word GUIDANCE,
I was drawn to “dance” at the end of the word.
I reflected upon how doing God’s will is a lot like dancing...

When two people try to lead, nothing feels right.
The movement doesn’t flow with the music,
and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky.

When one person realizes this and lets the other lead,
both bodies begin to flow with the music.
One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back
or by pressing lightly in one direction or another.
It’s as if two become one body, moving beautifully.

The dance takes surrender, willingness,
attentiveness from one person
and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes drew back to the word “GUIDANCE”...

When I saw “G,” I thought of “God,” followed by “U” and “I”

... God, U and I DANCE.

... God... You and I dance!

Unknown Author

Submitted by Ed Plattman

The Richest Man in the Valley

A rich landowner named Carl often rode around his vast estate so he could congratulate himself on his great wealth. One day, while riding around his estate on his favorite horse, he saw Hans, an old tenant farmer. Hans was sitting under a tree when Carl rode by.

Hans said, "I was just thanking God for my food."

Carl protested, "If that was all I had to eat, I wouldn't feel like giving thanks."

Hans replied, "God has given me everything I need and I am thankful for it."

The old farmer added, "It is strange you should come by today because I had a dream last night. In my dream a voice told me, 'The richest man in the valley will die tonight.' ...I don't know what it means, but I thought I ought to tell you."

Carl snorted, "Dreams are nonsense," and galloped away, but he could not forget Hans's words: "The richest man in the valley will die tonight." He was obviously the richest man in the valley, so he invited his doctor to his house that evening. Carl told the doctor what Hans had said... and, after a thorough examination, the doctor told the wealthy landowner that he was as strong and as healthy as a horse – and that there was no way that he was going to die that night.

Nevertheless, for assurance, the doctor stayed with Carl and they played cards through the night. The doctor left the next morning and Carl apologized for becoming so upset over the old man's dream. Then, at about nine o'clock, a messenger arrived at Carl's door...

"What is it?" Carl demanded.

The messenger explained, "It's about old Hans, sir. He died last night in his sleep."

Unknown Author

Submitted by Ray Stewart

What I Know About Love:

1. I love you, not because of who you are, but because of who I am when I am with you.
2. No man or woman is worth your tears, and the one who is – won't make you cry.
3. Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to, doesn't mean that they don't love you with all they have.
4. A true friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.
5. The worst way to miss someone, is to be sitting right beside them – knowing you can't have them.
6. Never frown, even when you are sad, because you never know who is falling in love with your smile.
7. To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.
8. Don't waste your time on a man/woman, who isn't willing to waste their time on you.
9. Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one, so that when we finally meet the right person, we will be grateful.
10. Don't cry because it's over – smile because it happened.
11. Make *yourself* a better person... know who you are and what you want before you get to know someone else; expecting them to know who you are and what you want.
12. Don't try so hard – the best things come when you least expect them to.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Dorothy Wilkinson

Your Name

You got it from your father,
it was all he had to give.
So it's yours to keep and cherish
for as long as you shall live.
It was clean the day he got it
and a worthy name to bear...
when he got it from *his* father,
there was no dishonor there.
So protect and guard it safely,
for when all is said and done,
you'll be proud the name is spotless
when you give it to *your* son.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Dorothy Wilkinson

Some People

Some people come into our lives and quickly go,
like waves briefly touching the shore.
Some people stay for awhile
and give us a deeper understanding
of what is truly important in this life...
they touch our souls,
we gain strength from the footprints
they have left on our hearts,
and we will never, ever be the same.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Tina Woods

We Should Dance

Life is short,
Break the rules,
Forgive quickly,
Kiss slowly,
Love truly,
Laugh uncontrollably,
And never forget
Anything
That made you smile...

Life may not be
The party we hoped for,
But while we're here,
We should dance.

Unknown Author

Submitted by Laura Wordsworth

Struggle

A man found a cocoon of an emperor moth. He took it home so that he could watch the moth come out of the cocoon...

On that day a small opening appeared, and the man sat and watched the moth for several hours as the moth struggled to force its body through the little hole.

After a while, it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no further. It just seemed to be stuck. So, the man, in his kindness, decided to help the moth – and, he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.

The moth then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the moth because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. But...neither happened! In fact, the little moth spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It was never able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the moth to get through the tiny opening was the way of forcing fluid from the body of the moth into its wings – allowing the moth to be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Freedom and flight would only come after the struggle and, by depriving the moth of the struggle – he deprived the moth of its health and well-being.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If we were to go through our lives without any obstacles; we would be crippled. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. Give every opportunity a chance. Leave no room for regrets.

We hope you enjoyed this book... please feel free to share it with your family and friends; and to visit the Web sites of our authors – where you are sure to find even more inspiration! We wish each of you an abundance of peace, love, prosperity and happiness.

Enjoy the journey; all is well . . .

Apache Blessing

May the sun
Bring you new energy by day,
May the moon
Softly restore you by night,
May the rain
Wash away your worries,
May the breeze
Blow new strength into your being.

May you walk
Gently through the world,
And know its beauty
All the days of your life.

