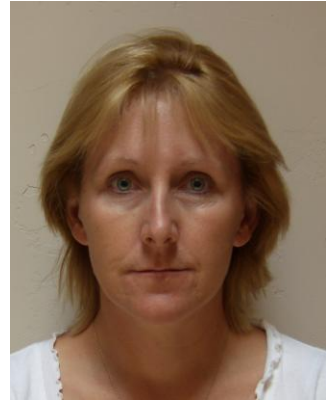


It's Not the Destination, It's the Ride

GUEST COLUMN

Wednesday, 25th November 2009



In this season of thanksgiving, I was reminded lately that we can all get snowed under by day to day life. Too many errands to do, too much work, keep the house tidy, look after the kids. Life can be a whirlwind sometimes. But when you hear of bad news, or you get bad news yourself, it kind of reminds you what we should really be thankful for.

I'm thankful to the rabbit that has made my yard his home and opens my children's eyes with delight every time they see him. I'm thankful to the spider who teases me by popping in and out of my bathroom plughole, because he reminds me that life can be snuffed out in an instant. I'm grateful to my dog who barks at everyone who comes within 100 yards of the house since, whilst it's extremely annoying to everyone, I know he's trying to keep me safe.

It's not just animals either. Humans, believe it or not, can also be nice people too. I know, doesn't seem like it some days, does it? But that guy who cuts the corner coming across a junction, we should be thankful to him. He reminds us how dangerous it is on the road and to slow down and take a deep breath.

To those people who make sure their car is locked by beeping the horn, I know it can be annoying, but be thankful. They're telling any thieves around that, yes, we are a safety conscious community and, yes, my car alarm IS on thank you very much.

Be thankful, too, to those people who write curt emails, because they remind us that words should be chosen carefully, even when you're typing with one finger, holding the phone in the other, and making lunch with anything else you have. Elbows do come on handy sometimes!

Thank you also to chance. When the thunderstorms come and the TV goes off, I'm reminded that I've been spending way too much time watching Home and Garden Television and that I don't need to rush out and buy dyed concrete counter tops, 6 shower heads per bath and a coffee machine that also vacuums. The house won't fall down without them.

It also reminds me that I am way too reliant on email. Checking it once or twice a day is OK, but not being able to pass the computer in the kitchen without refreshing the mail window, now that's addiction. Fact is, there is a world out there that's waiting for me to go visit. Not being connected can be a good thing.

And I'm thankful to the beautiful sunsets over the Sangre de Christos. When I drag myself out of bed early, and catch the sunrise out the window, just at the moment when it takes your breath away, I thank myself for getting up and not selfishly snuggling longer.

Get the message? It's the journey we should be thankful for, not the destination. Everything teaches us something. Yes, we're all thankful for our family, our friends, having a nice car, a roof over our head and our health, but we take the subtle bends in the road for granted. We all have to get off at the station sometime, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy the ride.

I've heard a lot of bad news lately, about friends and others in our community – tragic losses, relapses, set backs. My heart goes out to you all. It can be very hard to be thankful at times. But remember this. You, and I, are still on the train, whatever coach we're in. Some of us may be in first class just breezing along, while others may be in the cattle wagon searching for scraps, but we're all heading somewhere. We're there with our family, our friends and strangers, all taking the bumps, the jolts, the corners. The conductor hasn't come along yet and kicked us off, even if we are playing with the emergency cord.

So enjoy the ride and be thankful for it, because from challenge, from annoyance, from life, should always comes thanks.

Kay Kerbyson is Secretary of the Los Alamos Council on Cancer, and Founder/President of Ovarian Cancer Together Inc., the only non-profit specifically supporting women in New Mexico with ovarian cancer. Resources, support and education materials, for those affected by cancer, can be found at www.losalamoscounciloncancer.org and www.ovariancancertogether.org