



Much has been written about gratitude. Some of it, admittedly, by us here at *Wholly Holistics*. However, I feel it is one of those subjects that can't have enough perspective. Therein lies its power...

I initially started pondering this subject for this particular installment of our column while I was driving to pick up my daughter from school on the Monday after the Florida Gators beat my Carolina Gamecocks. The Gators seemed to have a secret weapon that day: the refs. (Now, as I write this, I realize that while that may have been true, Carolina has since revealed the dumpster fire that they telegraphed they were the day they played the other Carolina. I digress.) As I drove to Lady's Island, irritation at the unprofessional officiating made me neglect to be grateful for where I was and what I was doing. As I reflected, I became grateful for excellent vision to drive with. I'm grateful for hands and feet to drive with as well as slightly better coordination than the average octogenarian to avoid oncoming traffic. I'm being funny here, but seriously, not everybody has developed these assets, but they can.

Then a natural segue from sports to gratitude came to mind as I considered our friends in the Lady's Island community of Tel-Fair. The reason for this organically coming to mind is because my Tel-Fair buddy is, week in, week out, my person for everything sports related. (I don't get that in the Woo Woo world.) For this, I am grateful. But it goes further than that. We just marked our FOURTH evacuation in a row with the Parrish family. Four years of high anxiety about what will happen to all of us. Even though they no longer live on Fripp, all our lives, both personal and professional, are connected to this island in the sun. It goes further. By being a friend of the Parrishes, we now are de facto members of the Tel-Fair community and spend every Halloween there, as well as other random special times, usually centered around a huge game or something of that nature. Special shout out to the Plair family of Tel-Fair. Talk about gratitude at witnessing the effortless ease with which they fed the community with everything

from wings to lobster on the eve before a near miss from Hurricane Dorian, no less. I'm grateful, not only for your kindness, but experiencing, in person, the most extensive outdoor kitchen I've seen in real life or magazines. I pray I can pay it all forward one day with half the effortless ease the Parrishes and the numerous Tel-Fair households at-large have shown us over the years, even before Hurricane Matthew. I am grateful to understand that some blessings bestowed on you by others likely won't be able to be repaid in kind. However, I feel by keeping gratitude ready and in one's back pocket, I'll be aware enough to pay it forward when the opportunity arises.

Fast forward a couple weeks later to when I picked up this rough draft again to see if there was anything I could add. Not long after opening my fluorescent green *Wholly Holistics* notebook, I received a call from my doctor's office about the results of the ultrasound on my leg. While I didn't think the knot in my calf was serious, one never knows until one knows. I plan to carry this gratitude forward to my surgeon's consult.

I've also felt unexpected results when applying gratitude. It's a way to transform grief. Gratitude for what you had with a certain person while you had it is a refreshing look at an open wound and a way of closing or lessening said wound. Grief is a necessary part of life and God help us if we don't embrace it at some points in our travels and travails on Earth. Of course, the danger in grief comes in our wallowing. Gratitude offers a way out of the wallowing.

I'm grateful to my heart that continues to open. For without it, I wouldn't have had the emotional reconnection to childhood I had late last week. A "random" article led me to trolling YouTube to find Kermit the Frog's *Rainbow Connection*. (Please do yourself a favor and take the time to do such things.) Through a couple of sniffles, I realized this is the children's version of *Imagine* by John Lennon. Bold statement, I know, but I feel it's true. I sent it to a few friends who felt similar responses, then I sent it to Mama. She found my old Fisher Price record player and my Sesame Street 45 collection as well as her Carly Simon 45 she thought long lost.

So, my advice with working with the concept of gratitude goes like this: Start small. Perhaps this illuminates what you take for granted. This will reveal a secondary opportunity for release or growth when you work through the guilt of having taken something or someone for granted. Be grateful for these two realizations. Not everybody gets that far in their growth. I promise you the effect of all this meditation on gratitude is cumulative. It gets easier even when you seem to loop back around into being an ingrate, realize that if you truly were ungrateful, like the narcissist that doesn't realize or care about his or her narcissism, you probably wouldn't know it. As to how I came up with the title of this article: It rhymes. And why not just set aside

eight moments a day to be grateful, for a little experiment of eight days of gratitude in a row. It's as good a place as any to start.