

Heart of the Holidays



Holiday Inspirations
Yuletide Treasures & Traditions

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THANKSGIVING 365 DAYS A YEAR

*H*ave you noticed that we appreciate things more when we lose them? I know I did before being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at the age of twenty-three in 1986. I went from a competitive athlete to being paralyzed from the neck down. Since that time, I have experienced numerous attacks of paralysis and blindness with varying degrees of recovery in between.

Now, I give thanks each night for the senses that I *do* have, rather than the abilities I have lost. It's amazing how beautiful a sunset is when you've lost your eyesight for a few weeks or how enjoyable a walk along the beach can be when you've been confined to a wheelchair, paralyzed for nearly a month. Since regaining my ability to walk, I truly appreciate playing a round of golf with my husband and traveling internationally. Years ago when I was in a wheelchair during Canadian Thanksgiving, I decided to go to a medical healing retreat in Baja California, Mexico. My recovery was so terrific that I was able to enjoy a "personal best" golf round one month later during Thanksgiving weekend. I savored that turkey dinner in more ways than one! During times when I have lost my sense of touch and feeling to the degree that I could no longer appreciate the softness of my pet's fur, I would take action with an "attitude of gratitude" and book an appointment at a spa—when my legs were numb, it was an ideal time to have them waxed!

Of all the holidays I celebrate each year, I enjoy Thanksgiving the most because it's an opportunity to share with my loved ones the lessons I have learned about never taking things for granted and especially, to treat *every* day like it's Thanksgiving Day. I encourage them to practice Jack Canfield's quote: "Each night when you go to sleep, try counting your blessings, instead of just counting sheep."

~ JAN MILLS

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