

Every Day is a Gift

by Jo-Von Tucker

“Write in on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.”

~~~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

For those of us with COPD, life may often feel overwhelming. Coping with constant challenges and compromises, we are certain to experience discouragement, frustration and isolation. We know how it feels to suffer loss of self-esteem and sometimes, of independence, as it becomes necessary for us to rely on others for help. Happiness, for a lung disease patient, can be elusive and short-lived.

These are the realities of living with a disease that is chronic and usually progressive, and for which there is currently no cure. Plus, over time, it is surely to cause other complications and ill effects on our bodies. As individuals we must seek ways to help us in the battle with the illness, and with our tentative hold on that marketing term called “quality of life.”

Some of us are simply better at coping with our severely affected lives than others... those are the folks who refuse to give in to COPD and its ravages. Rather than sit back and let the illness have its way with us, the fighter and survivor in us looks around to learn everything possible about the illness, and adopts his or her lifestyle to best accommodate continuing interests and vital socializing. We educate ourselves in nutrition and even in illness prevention, maintaining a regular exercise program (regardless of how basic) to help us stay as fit as possible under our circumstances.

We follow our doctor's prescribed treatment program, and take our medications as directed. We avoid exposure to viruses and other germs where we can, without being reclusive. And we use common sense in taking care of our bodies to the best of our abilities.

But there is an edge to be gained from another important element of pro-active illness management... that of maintaining a positive attitude. We can literally quadruple the good effects of all of the aforementioned methodologies by **allowing our minds to help us in the fight to conquer matter!**

How do we do that, one might ask? My own approach is a simple one... simple enough for anyone to use successfully. **I face each day as a precious gift.** Each new sunrise dawns like

a blank canvas, ready to receive and to be accorded a special, private selection of colors and form. You can paint the day grey, or you may choose the light, bright hues from Nature's palette to complement your life.

The gift of a new day is the best one we can expect to receive. Think about it... it's like getting God's okay to have another go at it. That's why it is important to unwrap the hours of each day with the anticipation of wonders and joy to be found. Focus on the things that you can still do, not on the things that are gone from your life. Take pleasure in the small things; gain peace and serenity from the goodness that is around us. A child's smile, a mockingbird's song, a neighbor's good deed, time spent with a photo album or journal... treasures all, to be found neatly available throughout our day...scattered presents with shiny bows, placed just here and there waiting to be discovered.

A positive outlook as we approach each day will bring more strength to us than any other dimension of living. It may take some work to master it. It will require more effort on those "bad" days we all have. We can surely fortify our spirits with our involvement in our very special support group.

I encourage each one of us to greet a new day with positive thoughts. Let tomorrow be the first of these remarkable, promising, healing gifts. Look for it when your eyes first open... then open your heart and let it unfold for you. You may be surprised at how good it makes even badly damaged lungs feel just to breathe in the power of a positive rush of adrenalin.

Yes, each new day is a gift...and we should all remember, as our Mothers taught us, to say "Thank you" to the Giver.

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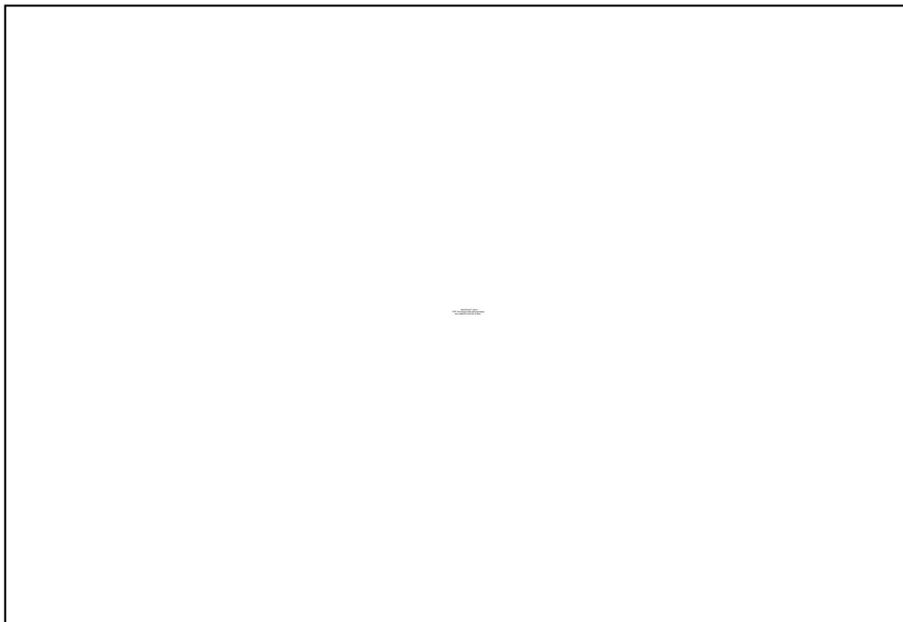


Photo courtesy of Ken Walkley, COPD patient