

Taking a Break

The circumstances of my life altered dramatically recently and I got to discover what was really important from a brand-new perspective. What happened is that, in a moment of inattention, I took a spill, badly broke my leg, had surgery and spent two weeks in the hospital. In one fell swoop, I shifted from being someone proud of her self-determination, independent life-style and accomplishments to being someone needing an I.V., bedpan and morphine pump. The mantle identifying me as a "professional" vanished and I was transported naked into a new world populated by angelic beings devoted to the well-being of a stranger.

Giving Thanks

Does it sound nuts to say this experience has been and continues to be a blessing for me? Everyday I remember nurses' radiant smiles and selfless actions -washing me, trimming my nails, lathering me with lotion. I vividly recall an assistant's cheerfully emptying my bed pan throughout her twelve-hour shift, a doctor's playfulness and the therapists who tailored and carried out a training program that would prepare me for my in-home recovery. By being fully in the moment, on-purpose, fulfilling their Hippocratic oaths, organizational missions and personal intentions, they made themselves unforgettable. I recall their names, faces, voices, gently healing hands and countless contributions. They inspire me to remember soldiers lying in hospital beds around the world and Mother Theresa's devotion to easing the suffering of the poor. I even find myself appreciating the on-going patience of athletes healing after surgeries. My medical team changed my life and make my heart rejoice. They remind me of how we all want our lives, actions and words to make a difference and proved to me that we all do.

Sharing the Lessons

The lessons I'm garnering from this experience may have value for you too, whatever your circumstances and commitments -

- Do one thing at a time. I was galumphing down the stairs, thinking about all the things I was going to get done and not paying attention when I misstepped. A friend told me she'll think twice before crossing the street while talking on her cell. Be fully present in your body and in the moment.
- Deal with what's so. As I lay at the bottom of the stairs, I desperately wanted, like Superman, to turn back time. I really tried, but since I couldn't, I asked myself, "What needs to happen?" and crawled to my cell to call for help. To be effective, ask who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Turn lemons into lemonade. We always get to choose the quality of our experience. I chose to let the medical team inspire my soul as well as care for my body. Regardless of how devastating the circumstances may be, commit yourself to making the most of them.
- Give your all back to life. Because I felt so grateful and inspired, it was easy to learn almost everyone's names, interact fully and, when I was able to get around in a wheelchair, meet and

brighten the other patients' spirits. A higher energy and fuller self-expression now empower all my relationships and raise results. Ride the horse in the direction it's going.

Because of the concerted efforts of a large medical team (plus family, friends and neighbors), I'm home now, have returned to coaching and teaching, and will eventually be walking on both legs again. I have much to be grateful for this Thanksgiving.

Thank you for letting me share this experience with you. I would love to hear about the life-changing experiences you've had too.

Godspeed and Happy Thanksgiving to all of you!