

Graceful Living December, 2008

Note from Grace

While standing on the sidewalk watching my house destroyed by fire, I must admit that all I could see was the tragedy. Blessing? You've got to be kidding. But, blessing it was, in that it allowed me to reconnect with my parents in a way that could have only been divinely inspired. My mother was just returning home from the hospital, never to fully regain her strength, and my father was at loose ends trying to cope with the situation. It became one of my life's finest opportunities to move into their home and assist in their care during the last years of their lives. This was my blessing for which I will always be grateful.

We at Graceful Living dedicate this issue to all of the masked tragedies in your life, with the hope that you have found the blessing contained in each and every one. May this be your most grateful holiday season ever with the knowledge that your gratitude now can only lead to more blessings in your future

GRATITUDE

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity.... It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melodie Beattie

Once, when living in rural Texas, I befriended and worked with one of the town's most notable elders who loved telling me stories about his wild and wooly childhood in the woods of east Texas. As time went by, he was more and more amazed at the seemingly ungrateful state that the holidays seemed to bring. He recalled that, as a boy, he and his siblings were enraptured with the thought of the coming orange or banana that they would receive in their

stockings, along with homemade treasures and certain necessities such as socks or small tools. It seemed beyond his understanding that the world had “progressed” to the point that the simple pleasures of life were no longer regarded as pleasures, but were allocated to the commonplace without much regard at all.

With him, I learned to forage for wild plants, native pecans and abandoned fruit trees. We farmed his 80 acres of field peas, pared about a thousand pears for preserves and he taught me to respect the animals that he hunted for not only his dinner table, but for their skins, as well. We baled hay for the livestock, planted kitchen gardens and played cards until late at night. He remains one of the great teachers that have appeared in my life.

As wild as a man can be, he exemplified the great power of gratitude for all of life and its blessings. Though not a religious man, he never failed to express his gratitude for the abundance that surrounded him, and all of his actions reflected this gratitude. I began to understand more about the place that this humble attribute plays in our lives.

Over the years, as my understandings have matured, I have experienced first hand the remarkable power of simply being grateful. There is no doubt that as we practice gratitude for what we do have; we are setting into motion the universal forces that bring more to us to be grateful for.

Even more importantly, by retaining the “attitude of gratitude” during those seemingly difficult times of our lives, we are able to see alleged tragedies as blessings and hardships as propellers of positive action. We are able to perceive break-ups in our personal lives and lay-offs in our employments as gateways to new adventures rather than end results.

Even in regards to our health, we can find the blessing of our illness in order to facilitate our healing. As simple as this is, it nevertheless is not always easy. It requires the retraining of ourselves to remain focused on what we do want rather than remaining immersed in the uncertainty of our immediate circumstances. It has been said, “Certain circumstances do not create happiness. Happiness creates certain circumstances.”

By experiencing gratitude for the now of our lives, we are able to experience the happiness of the moment rather than placing our happiness and prosperity some time in the future, based upon some imagined upcoming circumstance or event. We are challenged to retain our “prosperity”

consciousness during a time when it appears that our country, along with the rest of the world, is experiencing what would appear to be a lack thereof.

It would be helpful to remember that each of our respective consciousnesses creates the collective consciousness. We can see the results of individual and collective consciousness by observing the matters at hand. With this knowledge, it becomes more imperative that we place our thoughts and actions in the positive. By each individual participating in such practices, we can help to move ourselves and the collective into a world based upon abundance, health and happiness rather than one of lack, illness and despair. Simple, yes...Easy, maybe not...Imperative, without a doubt.

Testimonial

It is with great pleasure that I offer this testimonial in acknowledgment of Grace Justiss' consulting services. I was introduced to Grace by my wonderful and loving boyfriend Danny, who brought me to Grace as a gift for my many health challenges

I was now being faced with. Little did I know how much of a gift she would truly be. Specifically before meeting Grace, I knew my dietary habits were a major contributor to extreme problems with my digestive and immune systems, being overweight, fatigue, and knowledge of proper foods to eat, but I did not know how sick these foods were making me. But where would I turn for answers. How could I acquire the information necessary to change myself and then have the self discipline to follow through. I knew that I didn't want to rely on medications for which I believed would only mask my symptoms and be the easy way out for me. I believed in my heart there was another way. There was. I've been a client and friend now of hers for approximately two years and have been exceptionally pleased with the positive results I have received as a result of her wisdom and guidance. Since following her advice, these areas have improved significantly. I feel better than I have in many years and I am thrilled beyond words that it has been accomplished naturally. In addition, because of her years of experience and many contacts she has established, she has been able to direct me to professionals in related fields such as, acupuncture and water filtration. If Grace could not help me directly, she knew who and what could.

In summary, the quality of my life has improved noticeably because of the decision to include Grace Justiss. Not only has her guidance and experience in holistic approaches to proper health been useful to me, but her friendship and willingness to always be there has been a blessing. I am constantly amazed at how tirelessly she gives of herself for others to achieve optimum health. I feel anyone who chooses to employ her as their health coach or have in their lives for any reason will indeed experience a "Saving Grace."

Blessings to you, Grace Justiss.

Robin Daniels

Cajun Seafood Gumbo

Traditional seafood gumbo is always begun with a roux. Making a roux has a complicated reputation; but, I have found it simple to execute while providing taste and texture to whatever dish is being prepared. Southern cooks have been making a roux every time they have made gravy...they just didn't call it by its "fancy" name. This is a really delicious version of this wonderful combination of ingredients.

Ingredients: 1 whole onion, chopped
1 whole red or green bell pepper, chopped
2-3 stalks celery, chopped
4-6 cloves garlic, minced
1 andouille sausage, sliced and browned (optional)
½ cup organic butter or extra virgin olive oil
½ cup spelt flour
½ - ¾ cup sliced okra
6 cups chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned with juice)
1-2 cups chicken stock, more if necessary
1 pound shrimp, peeled and de-veined
10-12 ounces oysters
1 pound cocktail crab claws
Sea salt, pepper, thyme, bay leaves
Red pepper flakes, if desired

- 1) Saute the onions, bell pepper, celery and garlic in the butter or olive oil.
- 2) When the veggies are slightly tender, sprinkle the flour over them and slowly cook this mixture until the flour begins to change into a nutty brown color.
- 3) Slowly, stirring constantly, add the chicken stock. Using a whisk helps to prevent the flour from lumping. You will reach your desired thickness...and remember that the tomatoes will also add more liquid.
- 4) Now add the rest of ingredients except for the seafood and let this simmer for at least 45 minutes. Many people feel that this dish improves with longer cooking...making this a matter of personal choice.
- 5) At the last minute add the shrimp and oysters, saving the crab claws for adding to each bowl as they are served. Serve with rice.

May your holiday season be filled with joy and gratitude. If you would care for us to do some special cooking for you, it would be our great pleasure and all you have to do is ask.

Gift certificates are also available...