

The Practice of Gratitude



By Anna Von Reitz

Ever feel the hardness of your own heart?

I have been through so much, seen so much evil, that like most everyone else, I have learned to shield my heart with brick walls and battlements. I have my moats and my barbed wire. I have my "I could give a....." and no amount of human failing really surprises me.

Sins, errors, greed, cowardice, sloth, false witness, betrayal, pettiness, violence, every kind of crime and failure and manipulation --- these are a judge's stock-in-trade.

So it should come as no surprise that I am a pretty hard-bitten character, fully capable of making hard decisions, and able to walk away. I don't cry, I don't rage; I just get stone-cold as Josie Wales and my brain sifts through the sludge like a sieve.

Still, inside -- maybe deep inside -- a living heart remains in me. I still care. I still battle on. And I still feel gratitude.

One of my favorite things is write back to people who write to me and to send thank you notes to those who send donations. I really treasure the few moments I have to do this, because it connects me back to all of you and to our beloved country.

This afternoon, I had a whole three hours to just address correspondence, a whole blissful sunny Sunday afternoon to answer letters and officially say "thank you" to people all over this vast and beautiful land. It is a meditative process and as I write, I am trying to envision each one of you and the places you live: Texas, New York, Indiana, Rhode Island, California.... it is like a long list of old friends as I think of each State.

As a kid I memorized all the State Capitols, the land map of each State, the birds, flowers, trees and animals associated with each, the history and famous attractions. I was in love with America then. I am still in love with America now.

My hardened old heart cracks open like an eggshell as I bring the States to mind, one by one, and I write another letter. There is so much to love. So much to be grateful for.

I love America's people, too. Always have. Despite all the rats that share the planet with us, and their corrupting influence, there is still something so strong and solid about the people of America.

I love the fact that we come in all different kinds and colors and sizes, speak in so many different dialects and languages, arise from so many different faiths and nations and ethnic traditions --- because I know how much I benefit from this Melting Pot called America.

Where else can you eat a French Croissant for breakfast, a New York Deli-Style Pastrami on Jewish Rye with German mustard for lunch, and Chicken Enchiladas for dinner? It's the same way with everything.

No other nation on Earth has this kind of diversity within its own cultural heritage. We are Everyone. We come from Everyplace. And yet, when push comes to shove, we are all Americans.

What makes this miracle possible? The land.

When you truly realize and feel that this is your country, your land, your heritage, too --- then you know the truth about all peoples and all lands and the truth, too, about yourself. You're an American.

Maybe you are a German-American or an Italian-American or an African-American, but you are an American.

So in this marvelous garden of grace, where we live and breathe and have our being, and have the chance to enjoy our unity amidst our diversity, stop and take a moment as I have today --- just to give thanks for all the fifty States and all the People -- the actual Americans.

I am ashamed that I have ever been considered a "US Citizen" because it is plain to see how criminal, irresponsible, dishonest, thuggish, self-serving, and deceitful these foreign corporations have become, how they have acted in Gross Breach of Trust against the American States and the American People, how they have sought to profit themselves by war and conquest and spread the seeds of shame and discontent and prejudice and violence and self-seeking for nothing but money, money, money.

Yes, I am ashamed of what "United States Citizens" and "Citizens of the United States" have done in our names and I am ashamed for them for all that they have done in the name of greed and self-seeking to harm their own country, their own friends, neighbors and family members -- but never once have I been anything but proud and grateful to be an American.

Take that, Michele Obama.

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