



## NEWSLETTER ♦ 87th Edition ♦ Nov 2020

**Our Mission** - To reach out and empower people affected by limb loss to achieve their full potential through education, support, and advocacy, and to raise awareness of limb loss by becoming actively involved in our community.



### EDITOR'S NOTE

*– by Elaine Skaggs*

Hello, friends, and Happy Autumn! What a beautiful time of year, literally. I so enjoy all the fall colors of the leaves, the mums, and the pumpkins. And the cooler temperatures are certainly a relief! No more stopping to take off my prosthesis to dry off a sweaty limb! I mentioned in the last newsletter that I felt the lack of memorable events this past summer because of the pandemic; however, that doesn't mean that I don't have much to be grateful for. And now that the month of Thanksgiving is upon us, I hope that we all will take the time to ponder and think about all the blessings we've been given. In place of our SPOTLIGHT column this month, we're reprinting an article from the November 2018 newsletter about being thankful, written by yours truly. Of course, it's now been 5 years since the accident, but I'm still so very thankful to be alive and convinced that the best is still yet to come.

We had a great time on our Zoom meeting last month. If you aren't joining us, you're missing out. It's a wonderful opportunity to stay connected until we can start having in-

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*– by Elaine Skaggs*

Many of you have heard me say quite frequently that I am very thankful to be alive after my motorcycle accident (now 5 years ago). But in order to really understand the depth of just how grateful I am, it's necessary to know the whole story.

On a beautiful spring day I was out for a group ride with friends of a friend who wasn't able to make the ride that day. Right after stopping to have lunch in Loretto, KY, I left the group to ride back home and get



ready for a meeting with a client early that evening. I was probably 10-12 miles from home, enjoying the ride and the scenery, when I began to round a curve in the road. I realized immediately that I

was not turning to the right enough and was too close to the center line, taking the curve way too wide. A car was approaching from the other direction, and I didn't have time to correct. I knew as soon as I saw it that we were going to collide. Within seconds I felt myself slamming against the windshield of that car, immediately feeling the sensation of flying through the air. I then felt my head banging against the ground several times, sounds muffled inside my helmet. When I finally landed, 125 feet from the point of impact with the car, I laid still for a few seconds to get my bearings and felt a horrible burning pain in my left leg like I had never felt before in my life. My left shoulder was also

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## EDITOR'S NOTE (cont'd)

person meetings again. Our next meeting will be Sat., November 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. To join us go to Zoom.com, download the app, and click on join meeting. When prompted, our meeting ID is 577 001 8098, and the password is 4321. We'd love to see you there!

I wanted to also apologize for the October edition being late getting out. Evidently, now there is a shortage of ink due to the online learning programs across the country, and I had as difficult a time finding ink as a lot of people did finding toilet paper at the beginning of the pandemic. But, hopefully, that won't happen again as I have discovered an alternative to printing it here at home, and, therefore, will not be stockpiling ink, laughing out loud. And as always, if any of you have any ideas for articles please contact me at (502)548-6419.

Happy Thanksgiving!!

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## GRATITUDE - THANKFULNESS

Gratitude is our expression of appreciation for what we have. It is recognizing value that is not monetary worth. Spontaneously generated from within, it is an affirmation of goodness and warmth. This social emotion strengthens relationships, and its roots run deep in evolutionary history—emanating from the survival value of helping others and being helped in return. Studies show that specific areas of the brain are involved in experiencing and expressing gratitude. Brain scans of people assigned a task that stimulates expression of gratitude show lasting changes in the prefrontal cortex that heighten sensitivity to future experiences of gratitude.

### What Is Gratitude?

Gratitude is a spontaneous feeling but, increasingly, research demonstrates its value as a practice—that is, making conscious efforts to count one's blessings. Studies show that people can deliberately cultivate gratitude—and there are important social and personal benefits to doing so. It is possible to feel grateful for loved ones, colleagues, animals, nature, and life in general. The emotion generates a

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## THANKFUL (cont'd)

hurting, but I lifted myself to an almost sitting position to look at my leg. It was terribly mangled and bloody, but the thing I noticed more than anything was that my knee was bent in an odd position and my foot was facing the wrong direction. I lay back down and just began to scream from the pain, knowing in the back of my mind that I was going to lose that leg. The next few moments seemed like hours, and between screaming from the pain and silently praying that God would just take me because I couldn't imagine life without my leg, a man and woman came to me from across the street. He knelt beside my head, trying to talk to me and asking questions, while I begged him to just go away and let me go to sleep, thinking I could die that way. I was really getting agitated at him as he kept telling me to stay alert, stay with him, even asking me if I had ever seen any of those medical shows on TV where they try to keep victims of trauma awake, despite my efforts to get them to leave me alone. The woman then asked me if I would mind if she got something to cover me with, because apparently among the traffic that had been stopped because of the accident, there were onlookers who were trying to take pictures of me with their phone cameras. I agreed, and she disappeared for a few moments, returning & stating that the quickest thing she could grab was a white tablecloth.

During this time a Nelson County Sheriff's Deputy had arrived on scene, and I could hear them talking about an ambulance on the way and that someone had called for AirLife and what the ETA of each was. During this time, a younger man and woman, Nick and Miranda, had approached, and he proceeded to rip a strip of cloth from the tablecloth. Nick explained to me that he was going to put a tourniquet on my leg, that it was going to be painful but necessary to stop the bleeding. I later found out that my femoral artery had been severed in two places, and I was literally bleeding out. Miranda then took her place near my head, took my hand in hers, and told me to squeeze, offering as much comfort as was possible. The ambulance arrived while Nick was still working on the tourniquet, and immediately the EMT's began assessing my condition. At some point, someone attempting to remove my boot squeezed my big toe, which I felt, and I gasped. I told them I felt it and heard someone say, "Maybe she won't lose this leg after all."

While all this had been happening, I still wasn't convinced that I was going to live and was silently praying and looking for the white light in a beautiful sky. Out of nowhere I noticed a perfectly round cloud that

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## **GRATITUDE – THANKFULNESS (cont'd)**

climate of positivity that both reaches inward and extends outward.

### **Is gratitude an emotion?**

Gratitude is an emotion, one that makes a person feel happier. Gratefulness is also a mood as well as a personality trait. Some people are just more inclined to feel grateful as a daily habit.

### **Is gratitude a feeling?**

Gratitude is both a temporary feeling and a dispositional trait. In both cases, gratitude involves a process of recognizing, first, that one has obtained a positive outcome and, second, that there is an external source for that good outcome.

### **Why Gratitude Matters**

Psychologists find that, over time, feeling grateful boosts happiness and fosters both physical and psychological health, even among those already struggling with mental health problems. Studies show that practicing gratitude curbs the use of words expressing negative emotions and shifts inner attention away from such negative emotions as resentment and envy, minimizing the possibility of ruminating, which is a hallmark of depression.

### **Does gratitude reduce stress?**

People who are grateful feel less pain, less stress, suffer insomnia less, have stronger immune systems, experience healthier relationships, and do better academically and professionally. Overall it can boost both your mental and your physical health.

### **Are grateful people less depressed?**

Grateful people are indeed less likely to have mental health problems like depression. One study found that a gratitude intervention was successful in reducing negative affect and increasing mental resilience in a group of older adults.

### **Can gratitude help you engage in better self-care?**

One study suggests that spending only a few minutes engaging in a gratitude activity, such as writing a letter of gratitude to a loved one, can motivate you to make healthy food choices.

### **How to Cultivate Gratitude**

Gratitude starts with noticing the goodness in life. A materialistic culture that encourages constant wanting and sees possessions as the source of happiness is not the most fertile ground for gratitude. But it is not an insurmountable barrier to developing it. Envy, and especially cynicism and

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## **THANKFUL (cont'd)**

appeared to open up from the center, with part of an arm and hand waving, as if to wave me back. A feeling of peace immediately enveloped me, and I knew without a shadow of doubt that it had been my momma waving me back and letting me know it wasn't my time to join her in Heaven, and that I was going to make it. Time went fast from that point on, the helicopter arrived and in a very short time they had me loaded onboard and were headed to University of Louisville Hospital ER. During the flight, I remember being so cold, now knowing it was shock settling in, and continuously asking for blankets. The male and female nurses that were on the flight with me seemed to not take notice of that, but were busy doing their jobs. At one point, I also remember losing all bodily functions and apologized for not being able to control my body. Again, those statements seemed to be ignored. I know I did not have an out of body experience, no hovering over my body and watching what was going on, but I believe I was very close to death and wasn't really talking, but speaking with my mind only. It's difficult to explain, but I often wonder if I did die for a few moments, only to be brought back. I also remember arriving at the hospital, being rolled from the helipad into the hospital and being in a room with many people frantically moving around me. There was an older doctor who seemed to be asking a lot of questions and barking orders. I remember thinking that they needed to hurry up and get me to surgery, only to remember that this was a teaching hospital and that many of the people in the room were probably residents. The next thing I remember was waking up in a room in ICU with members of my family surrounding me, among them Jerome (my husband), my son, my father, and my sister and her boyfriend.

It was the evening of the following day and they had just removed the NG tube, and I was finally breathing on my own again. My first statement was made to Jerome, that they had removed my leg, hadn't they? The second question was, "Will I ever be able to ride a motorcycle again?" The doctor who had performed the surgery came in shortly after that and explained that they had to amputate my left leg above the knee because of the damage done, to which I replied, "I understand; just don't expect me to lie here and feel sorry for myself; I have too much life yet to live!" I also found out later that when Jerome and our son arrived at the ER, they were told that had it not been for Nick applying the tourniquet at the exact moment he did, I would have bled to death in a matter of minutes. So you see, my thankfulness runs very deep. I'm thankful

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## GRATITUDE – THANKFULNESS (cont'd)

narcissism, are similarly thieves of gratitude. In fact, the cultivation of gratitude may be at least a partial remedy for narcissism.

### How do you practice gratitude?

Just being around your family and friends can help you feel more grateful. Also, being more appreciative of life and feeling less cynical pushes you into a more thankful frame of mind. At other times when you are facing a tough decision, seeing it as a gift is useful. Some people wouldn't mind having such a decision to make.

### What makes a person feel grateful?

This depends on the person, and we all differ in the degree to which we are inclined to experience and express gratitude. It can be something as simple as a healthy spring shower, just because the rain washes everything clean. Engaging in a more specific act, such as volunteering to help others, makes people feel good about themselves.

### Is gratitude contagious?

Gratitude is a social emotion and the expression of gratitude toward others compounds its benefits. The emotion literally pays itself forward. And it almost does not matter whether the gratitude is communicated or reciprocated by others.

### Tips to Foster Gratitude

- + Keep a journal of or in some way note big and little joys of daily life.
- + Write down "three good things"—identify three things that have gone well for you and identify the cause.
- + Write thank-you notes to others.
- + Think about people who have inspired you and what about them was most significant.
- + Engage in "mental subtraction." Imagine what your life would be like if some positive event had not occurred.

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## MOVING FORWARD Salutes Our Veterans



## THANKFUL (cont'd)

to Nick and Miranda, the other man and woman, the deputy, EMT's, the pilot, and all of the miracles that happened that day. But most of all I'm thankful for my



life, that God chose to let me live. And I'm thankful for every opportunity to tell my story. Being thankful is not just a phrase I say, but is a way of life for me. I may have

lost my leg, but I gained a new purpose that day.

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## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

— by Katie Flanigan



### Cranberry/Orange Relish

Perfect add-on for Thanksgiving!!

#### Ingredients

- 1 Orange
- 1 12 oz package of cranberries; thawed if frozen
- 1 Gala, Fuji, or Red Delicious apple; cored, peeled & chopped
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice



#### Directions

Peel orange, cut orange segments free from the membrane, discard any seeds. In food processor, pulse orange segments, cranberries, apple, sugar, & the allspice until coarsely chopped. Transfer mixture into bowl, cover, and chill up to 1 week. Makes 10-12 servings

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## PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER ISSUES

MOVING FORWARD has been publishing newsletters since Sep 2013. For your convenience, all previous issues are available on our website at: [ampmovingforward.com](http://ampmovingforward.com)

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# Ways to Donate to *Moving Forward* Limb Loss Support

## AmazonSmile

Go to "[Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile)"

Sign in or Create your account

Hover over "Accounts and Lists"

Under the "Your Account" items,

Click on "Your AmazonSmile"

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon. The difference is that when you shop smile.amazon.com, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice!

Once you have registered, you can check back to see how much your orders have contributed to **Moving Forward**. You will know you are contributing to the group because under the search bar it will say "Supporting *Moving Forward* Limb Loss Support Group, Inc."

## Kroger Community Rewards Program

Go to:

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow/>

Click on "View Details" (this will take you to a new screen to select our group)

Enter our organization number: DC476 or,

Sign in or Create your account under box "I'm a Customer"

Search for "Moving Fwd Limb Loss Support"

### If you do not have internet access:

Register at the Service Desk of your local Kroger. Once you have registered, the bottom of your receipt will say that your "Community" rewards are going to **Moving Forward** Limb Loss Support Group. You can check the amount of your community rewards on their website for each quarter.

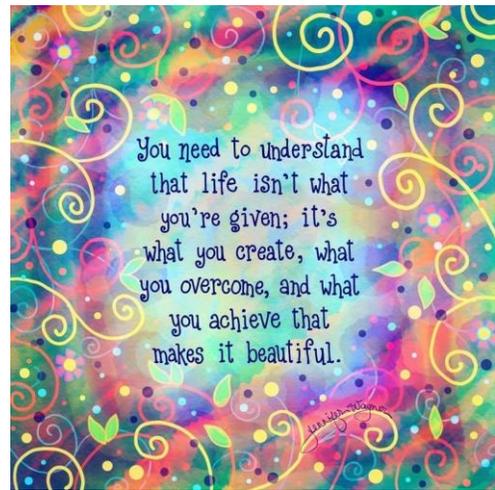
## Employer Deductions

Many employers offer employees the opportunity to have automatic payroll deductions which are donated to a charity of their choice. Some companies will **MATCH** your donation. If your employer uses Frontstream, Truist, or Network for Good to manage their deductions, **Moving Forward** is listed.

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH



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