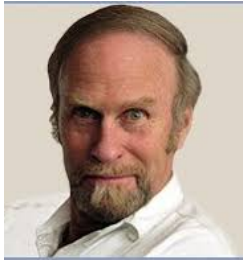


Live Life in Radical Amazement



By Frosty Wooldridge

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“Optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, it’s unlikely you will step up and take responsibility for making it so. If you assume that there’s no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, there is a chance you may contribute to making a better world. The choice is yours.” Noam Chomsky

Every human being on this planet wakes up each day with choices. At least in free countries, that person enjoys opportunities in the realm of work, play, friends, and attitude. Perhaps, “attitude” may be the most powerful entity of those choices.

As of this Thanksgiving week leading to Christmas and on to the New Years, let’s explore the miracles of being alive. Most of us wake up with sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Each one of those five senses allows you to enjoy incredible things such as “sight”, like a sunrise, sunset, campfire under a starlit sky, seeing your loved ones and navigating through this world with your vision.

“Hearing” allows you to listen to your spouse, friends, or kids. Maybe a bird chirping! You may listen to music to start

your day. You might find yourself dancing at Grizzly Rose on a Saturday night. Hearing allows your body to explore movement and physical, if not spiritual expression.

“Touch” may be that magic of holding your lover’s hand or guiding your kids down a water slide. You protect them by holding them in your arms. Touch offers such incredible feelings of being alive. A kiss of your lips to another’s lips brings such emotion, such joy, such sensation. To be blessed with the ability to touch—such magic!

Ever “taste” a fresh pizza out of the oven? What about a savory apple, pear, orange, cherry or gob of grapes? Ah, that amazing thing called “taste” delights your senses every time you sit down for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Tell me you don’t like to bite into a hamburger dressed with lettuce, tomato and cheese! How about fresh mushroom soup? What about that Italian pasta primavera? Whether you eat sit down to Chinese, Mexican, Thai, or another dozen ethnic dishes—your taste buds do handsprings with all the flavors of the food cornucopia that touches your life.

Finally, what about the “smell” of coffee in the morning? Can you beat those scrambled eggs, bacon, toast, and jam raging with your nostrils? “Smell” delights you with its aromas from that freshly cut flowers, that delicious chocolate cake, or a fresh batch of chocolate chip cookies.

Tell me you aren’t living life with “Radical Amazement” with all your senses flourishing throughout your body.

Right now, we face that “Energy Wave” of the holidays racing toward us at breakneck speed. That big, fat turkey with all the dressings, vegetables, wine, apple pie and ice cream—oh what a delight to your senses.

Some folks get depressed during the holidays. Some get excited. There’s an old saying by my minister Dr. Michelle Medrano, “When you change the way you look at things; and

things you look at, change.” How about looking at the world with “high expectation?” How about expanding your mind to enjoy the moment you’re living?

Set your intentions to accentuate your outcome of your personal life or life in general. Henry Ford said, “If you think you can do it; or you think you can’t do it; you’re right.”

During this “Season of the Heart,” life brings you an opportunity to eat all you can eat. It brings you an opportunity to reconnect with loved ones. It brings you an opportunity for gratitude, inner light, love, and deeper spiritual connection.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle called it, “Entelechy, which means to gift yourself to a higher path.”

Last month, one of my dear friends of 20 years, an amazing mountain climber and cyclist, Rufus Miller, died in a climbing accident. When I heard the news, I dropped to my knees and cried my eyes out. Last summer, he bicycled with his wife and two girls, from Mexico to Canada. He was reading my latest book, *The Kickstand Chronicles*, and we discussed his favorite chapters. We enjoyed so much friendship. At his memorial, over 300 people cried, hugged and shared their stories of his remarkable life that touched them all. I was sick to my heart. And yet, I count my life richer for having known him, biked with him, climbed with him and sparred over the latest book he shared with me. Sure, his loss brings me to tears. And yet, his life gifted me to Entelechy, a higher path.

Another man Dr. Michelle Medrano mentioned, suffered blindness. And yet, he became a photographer. Ted called himself “The blind photographer with big vision.” He takes pictures of places like the Golden Gate Bridge, then, raises everything up in the pictures so that when a blind person feels the picture, that person “sees” the photograph, in this

case, the Golden Gate Bridge. Since I've bicycled over it six times, I know its secrets, its magic, and its "higher path." Ted, the blind photographer shares that magic of the bridge with all who "touch" his photographs.

The bet is, you know other people in your life who have conquered their many challenges. You may be one of them. You have shared your gifts.

One of the things I do, which Dr. Michelle spoke about, is, I write letters of appreciation and gratitude to people who have touched my life deeply. I wrote my high school English teacher Nancy Steller, before she died, a letter of profound thanks for inspiring in me, a love of literature and writing. I wrote a letter to my college sophomore Creative Writing teacher, Beatrice Monaghan, for inspiring me to read Jack London, Emerson, Thoreau, Service, Muir, Jane Goodall, Diane Fossey, Nellie Bly, and other greats of literary history. Each one of them reached out over the decades to add to my life. My bet is, you too, have photographers like Ansel Adams or painters like Van Gogh or composers like Mozart or philosophers like Socrates who have brought you to "Entelechy."

One of my greatest employers, Paul Corrigan, of United Van Lines, allowed me to drive, load and work for him. He's late in his life. His kids come to visit him in Florida, so he won't be by himself since his wife Kathleen passed. I sent Paul a half dozen of my books, a three-page letter of appreciation for his part in my world travels. His daughter wrote me a dear letter where she said her father cried deeply because he was so thankful that one of his drivers celebrated his leadership and his life, along with his wife Kathleen. That's another form of "Entelechy."

During this season, when Christmas arrives, my church offers six candle- light services. It's an incredible sight to sit in the back when 1,500 people raise their candles to wish

humankind peace, abundance and good will toward all. We wish the best for our loved ones who have passed. We wish our best to all faiths, all paths to God, and all spiritual energy toward the world.

So, as you move through this next month of Thanksgiving, Christmas parties, and New Years--give thanks that you enjoy your five senses. Be thankful to live in America, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and any other free countries. Be thankful for your health, your family, your worth to yourself and your loved ones.

“Remember when you go into the world to keep your eyes and ears wide open, and be kind.

Love one another. Take care of each other. Tell the truth. Always do your best.

Listen to the big people and the little people. Explore new paths and have fun.

Know that you are loved like crazy. Give thanks for all your blessings.

Above all else, love and you will do wonderful things in this world.” – Rebecca Puig

Thanks to Dr. Michelle Madrano for her inspiring this essay about “Living Life in Radical Amazement.” God bless you, God bless America, and God bless all of humanity.

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