



home email contact

+44 (0) 1224 209988  
+44 (0) 7876 276839

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A MESSAGE FOR YOU



## A Message for You

### Losses, Gains & Gratitude (July/Aug 2008)

It strikes me just how much has happened since I wrote your May/June message in early May. I meet one of my dear friends each week, when we share "the week that was". I am always amazed at how much has happened in our lives within that short timeframe. Sometimes those happenings create big shifts within us; in our awareness, beliefs and decisions. Often, though our stories are different, we find common threads and themes in our experiences. Once upon a time I would have experienced all of these happenings in auto-pilot; not really noticing, just doing followed by more doing. These days a combination of regular journaling of my thoughts, feelings and experiences during the week, coupled with our weekly "stock-take" dinner, means that I am fully savouring the experiences and gifts of that week (even the "gifts" I would rather have not had!).

This really helps me appreciate what an amazing journey life is, even my seemingly humdrum life. Taking a sample of just two weeks, here are the losses and gains in my life.

**Losses** – My Grandmother died at the grand old age of 97 yrs. A fun, steely willed young woman on the inside, she remembered the celebrations at the end of the First World War. It's hard to imagine just how much change she saw in her lifetime.

**Gains** – My nephew, Oliver, was born in Beijing, four days before my Grandmother passed on. Another example of the cycle of life.

Two friends who I hadn't spoken with in ages got in touch and we had lovely connecting conversations. I also experienced some courageous conversations, where feedback was given and received, understanding deepened and respect built, despite the initial discomfort. I gained another year (my birthday!) Though that may be a "loss" of youth, I can always say I've gained some extra wisdom, and, sadly, the wrinkles that go with it!

So what brings the losses and gains into balance each week? For me it's simple, and it's called "**gratitude**". Despite the sadness of losing my Grandmother, I am deeply grateful for all

she meant to me, and for her peaceful departure. They say that "an attitude of gratitude" attracts more and more wonderful things and people into your life. I agree – it's true!

Most nights before I fall asleep I write in my journal all of the things I am grateful for about that day's experiences. I have noticed I have been "luckier" since. It's also really useful to read back previous entries in your journal when you are having a bad day. It makes you realise that you can't possibly anticipate what will happen in your life, and it can really help you recognise just how far you have come.

Some questions for you to reflect on:

- How can you break the "auto-pilot" journey through life and gift yourself the time to reflect and appreciate?
- What 5 things are you grateful for right now? (be specific)

Imagine how much it will lift your spirits if you fall asleep each night with the things you are grateful for at the front of your mind and in your heart. It only takes 10 minutes a few times each week to write your "gratitudes" (though you might start to enjoy it and do more!)

Wishing you connected conversations, and appreciation for all things coming your way in July & August.

With warm regards  
Alison

#### Additional note

Within a few minutes of writing this message, our phone rang at home. We received shock news that Neil, our close friend, had died in a motorcycle accident.

**Lives change in a second ... enjoy yours.**

*This message is dedicated to Neil Baxter, a thoroughly great guy, dedicated husband and dad. We are truly grateful that you have been part of our lives.*

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gain growth; to advance; to progress; to reach; to win (over); gainful; profitable; advantageous; devoted to gain



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