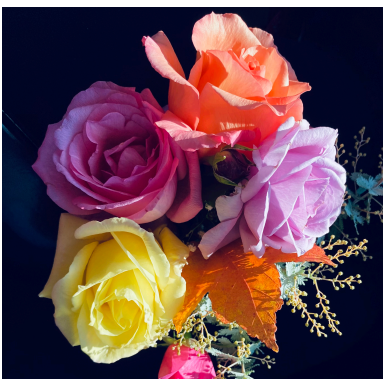




Notes & Quotes from Dawn

You can't be angry, or fearful and grateful at the same time.

Those words were spoken by Frank Ostaseski during a virtual workshop with Upaya Zen Center which I recently attended, entitled "Gratitude and Compassion". As he spoke about the power of gratitude to inform our lives and about the importance of being grateful for the challenges and difficult times we face as well as for the joyful ones, I was reminded of how my personal gratitude practice began over 20 years ago as I was going through treatment for ovarian cancer. During my first chemotherapy session, I decided to put my attention on the myriad things I had to be grateful for instead of my anxiety. The simple act of focusing on what one has, in any given moment, rather than on what one doesn't have, has tremendous power over the mind.



Rest and be thankful. (Wordsworth)

I can remember the surprise I felt when gratitude for the cancer that had invaded my body arose. I realized I was grateful for the lessons I was learning from the unwanted and exhausting experience, for the way it was pushing me to reprioritize my life, to take better care of my health and so on. That awareness helped solidify the title of my book, *Making Friends with Cancer*.

*It is through gratitude for the present moment that
spiritual dimension of life opens up.* (Eckhart Tolle)

My gratitude practice continued to deepen and expand over the years. It became a pivotal turning point while I was writing *Little Girl Found*...when I suddenly felt and could express gratitude for my birth mother as I focused on what she did do for me rather than what she was unable to do.

When I find myself distracted, begin to feel tense, irritable, frustrated or overwhelmed, I try to remember to inhale and exhale deeply a few times until this calming practice begins without effort. It has become a refocusing technique when I get distracted, as well as when I notice critical thoughts arising towards myself or another. I agree with Oprah Winfrey who has said that gratitude is



*the quickest, easiest, most powerful way to effect
change in your life—this I know for sure.*

At this point in my aging process, gratitude nearly always comes automatically as I am falling asleep as well as when I first awaken in the morning.

*Wear gratitude like a cloak and it will
feed every corner of your life.* (Rumi)



*With gratitude for your being, and for our connection
Love and Blessings ~ Dawn*

*Photographs: view out my study window Nov. 26
Arrangement of roses from garden last week
Rose in bloom - 2006*