

“Every breath we take, every step we make, can be filled with peace, joy and serenity.”
- Thich Nhat Hanh

I hope you all had a wonderful Easter. With what’s going on in the world right now, this quote is practically perfect in every way. Just about everyone seems to be anxious, and for good reason. But we must remember that what’s happening around us is truly out of our control. What IS in our control is how we react to it. We can choose peace, joy and serenity or we can choose stress, anxiety and worry...even depression. While on a recent hike, the serenity prayer popped into my mind. I’m sure you all know it, but here’s a reminder. *“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.”* We can’t change what’s happening right now so we must remember that peace, joy and serenity are choices we can make. We also can’t forget that God is in control of everything. If you’re struggling through this forced isolation and uncertainty, please reach out to me. I’ve chosen to remain calm.

Yours in health,

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What Brings You Joy?



The media hysteria, fear-mongering and non-stop coverage surrounding the Coronavirus inspired me to take your mind off all the negativity and focus on something positive. I’ve been doing quite a bit of hiking lately, which always centers me and brings me peace. When I’m in my “Happy Place,” I can completely disconnect and be at one with nature and with God. While hiking on my very favorite trail right before the Shenandoah National Park was closed, I realized how important it is to focus on the positive. You’re probably thinking: *“that’s kind of hard right now”*, but it’s so important, even if you only do it for just a bit. I think one of the most positive things I could do is make a list of things in my life that bring me joy and I’d like you to join me. After reading my list, please unplug for at least 30 minutes and come up with your own. Then keep it by your bed and review it before you go to sleep and as soon as you wake up. It will make a huge difference in how you start and end each day. Even with the constant negativity surrounding us right now, it’s important not to lose sight of the positive things that are all around us. Here’s my partial list of things that bring me joy:

- Receiving an unsolicited hug from my son.
- Talking to my best friend and making each other laugh.
- Being loved so much that I could actually FEEL it before those three words were spoken.
- Knowing I’m in excellent health and able to be as active as I’d like to be every single day.

- Being on a hike, especially one in which I can hear the sound of water.....a waterfall, a stream. When I hear it, I stop for a few moments, close my eyes, take a deep breath and just listen. The sound definitely centers and calms me.
- Walking along the beach, looking for dolphins and feeling the waves wash over my feet.
- Getting up early to watch the sun rise.
- Knowing I have close friends who I consider my family. After all, they're the family I got to CHOOSE and they know who they are.
- Spending time with people I care about.
- Smelling a freshly brewed pot of coffee.
- Sitting on my deck and enjoying a glass of great wine.
- Listening to my favorite song.
- Letting a piece of dark chocolate melt in my mouth.
- Eating a chocolate chip cookie hot out of the oven.
- Enjoying a Baileys and coffee after getting home from a long hike on a cold day.
- Sitting in my steam room when I'm cold or when I'm not feeling 100%.
- Going to bed and knowing I don't have to set my alarm because I can sleep and/or stay in bed as long as I want.
- Remembering special times with the people I love.
- Getting a 90-massage.
- Looking back at old pictures and thinking about the story behind each of them.
- Hearing a baby laugh.
- Reconnecting with an old friend and feeling as if no time at all had passed.
- Donating my blood on a regular basis and knowing I'm helping someone in need.
- Laughing at a joke that's so funny it makes my eyes water.
- Being told I'm a good friend.
- Writing about things that are important to me.
- Knowing that God is in control and that God always wins.

There you have it. I've given you my (partial) list of things that bring me joy. I'm going to keep it next to my bed and add to it when the spirit moves me to do so. Now it's your turn. I want you to really take the time to think about all the things that bring YOU joy and make YOUR list. Write down everything that comes to your mind. Add new things as you think of them. Don't limit yourself. Your list will be a great reminder of all the things for which you should be grateful every single day. When you're feeling down, pick up your list to remind yourself of all these wonderful things.

My wish for you is that you find your own Joy, Peace and Serenity. I know I have. Enjoy a wonderful month and stay well.