

December 2009 Holiday Letter

“The Question”

Dear patient family and friends,

The cool, fall weather has arrived. With the doors and windows open the sound of the rustling, dry leaves brings a sense of electricity in the air. I have snuggled into my soft, blue sofa with Ginger's head on my right knee and Ashton draped across my lap to prepare for the release of my 9th annual holiday letter.

It is usually the observation of some simple act of faith or kind gesture that triggers this outpouring of my heart. This year it was a few lines of the prayer titled *“Thank You”* that my brother-in-law, Mark, offered before our Thanksgiving feast that brought my pen to paper.

“In spite of all the challenges we face, we are richly blessed and we thank You. You never promise that our lives will be easy; but You do promise the strength, and the wisdom we need to prevail and for this we thank You. Today, we gather as a family to ask for your help and healing, and to thank You.”

Several weeks ago a friend on mine asked me the following “question”. “What I would you do differently if you were given millions of dollars and informed you only had five years to live?” My first response was simple and came easily; I would change nothing. I lack for nothing material. My children have been provided for and my dream of a life of service in a beautiful, patient focused practice has become a reality.

In this season where we are ever mindful of all that we have to give thanks for, this “question” continued to resurface. In quiet moments when I ask myself this question again, a more detailed response now seems more appropriate.

If I was given millions of dollars and informed that I had only five years to live what would I do differently? I would go to the store and purchase two jars and 1825 marbles. I love marbles; in fact, I have collected them for years. I have marbles large and small, handmade and machine made each with its own unique appearance and character.

Each marble purchased would signify one of the 1825 days and the jars would be symbols of the remaining and redeemed days. At the end of each day before transferring the marble from one jar to the other, I would examine it closely, think about my day and ask myself the following questions. Did I do my best today? Was I compassionate and kind? Did I share my knowledge to help others have a better life? Hopefully, I would be able to think back to the patients and staff I had served that day and answer “yes”.

I believe one of the greatest opportunities we have is to make a profound difference in the lives of others. My career has been a gift. This gift has helped me reduce the physical and emotional

pain in people's lives by helping them live a more comfortably. This gift has helped me help others present a beautiful smile and face to the world.

As I examine the virtual 'marbles' of my life, I am reminded of a missive credited to Audrey Hepburn which she titled "Tips on Beauty." I would like to paraphrase it for you now:

1. For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
2. For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people.
3. For a pleasant figure, share your food with the hungry.
4. For beautiful hair, let a child run their fingers through it once a day.
5. For poise, walk with the knowledge that you'll never walk alone.
6. As you grow older, you will discover that you have 2 hands – one for helping yourself and the other for helping others.
7. True beauty is not revealed in the clothes one wears, the figure that they carry or the way you comb your hair. The beauty of a person is seen in their eyes, because that is the doorway to their heart, the place where love resides. True beauty is reflected in the soul. It is the caring that is lovingly given, the passion that is shown and it only grows with passing years.

Our practice has thrived in these difficult times with patients coming in for treatment from all over the world. I have each of you to thank for this. As I begin and end each day in prayer, I ask for grace and guidance in all my decisions throughout the day.

We have finally settled into our beautiful new space and are putting the final touches on our home away from home. Even though it feels wonderful to be able to offer the best of everything to our patients, do you know what our single greatest asset is? The single most valuable asset of our practice is the loyalty of our patient families and referring doctors. For this, I thank you. I appreciate the trust you have placed in me. To those who have given us your support in the past and in the present, thank you.

May the year of 2010 be the most beautiful, and bring all the best to each and every one of you!

With Peace and joy,

Linda Crawford

