

Gratitude for cheese, family and serendipity

By: Veronica Cool 🕒 November 29, 2015



COOL TIPS

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As we all know, November brings Thanksgiving, the season for gratitude. I like to take this opportunity to just remember the unbelievable blessings we have and to take a moment to say thank you.

Let's begin with the important stuff, at my core: cheese. Manchego, gouda, goat cheese. I'm grateful for cheese and good food in general, like plantains, rice and beans, arepa, pizza, lladro and kipes. Coupled with a nice Malbec from Chile and Travelers Pumpkin Ale. Enough said.

Oh, and McDonald's apple pie. Piping hot. Don't judge me.

No. 2, I am grateful for my family, my beautiful children who drive me nuts every living moment. The same kids that push me to the edge of sanity yet make me realize that their inquisitiveness, laughter, humor and mischievous nature are my legacy. I just have to keep that smile on my face and try not to disown them.

No. 3, I'm grateful for my company, for the lessons and the flexibility I can enjoy. For the partnerships and relationships, we are creating. For the jobs and careers along with the opportunity to connect the dots for people who would typically not have access to them. And for the chance to deliver diverse talent to companies and organizations that normally wouldn't have them. I love that we can serve as a bridge connecting these various markets. I'm grateful for the sisterhood, the pool of women (and men) who are so generous with their expertise, wisdom and support. Mentors and sponsors and friends who always show support while opening doors of opportunities.

I am grateful for TravelZoo, the travel website that produces a weekly email recapping the best deal across the world, tailored for me, with Baltimore at the epicenter. Those 20 deals are a fantastic panacea — they make me pause, halting the crazy pace we live. TravelZoo makes me dream, opens my horizon. It reminds me that the world is so much bigger than the daily moments that consume us. And I swear, they better start paying me royalties, since I am constantly talking about them!

My body. No, don't think anything weird. I have lived through several knee surgeries (good surgeries and horrendous surgeries resulting in being on crutches for several months and having to relearn to walk), so I know and understand how priceless a functioning body is.

Yes, I could be healthier. Yes, I could be fitter and preferably much thinner. But I am so grateful for this body that allows me to run (OK, it was more like a fast walk. OK, I walked most of the way) a 5K. To chase my kids around the yard. The body that allows me to strut great clothing and great shoes, while allowing me to live this journey. This is a great reminder to re-focus on it so that I can continue to enjoy life.

And I'm grateful for serendipity. I truly did not understand the value of allowing serendipity into one's life. I know, you are going straight to Google right now to look it up. Go ahead. I'm grateful for the adventures, one enjoys by opening up to the world, fate, God Almighty, whatever you prefer to call it.

Opportunities surface. Friendships develop. Partnerships form. Serendipity. And last, I'm exceedingly grateful for my public library. Imagine, walking into a sanctuary of knowledge. With every form of media available for your use. AT NO COST. Movies, books, magazines and then add the programs, and children's' activity as well as access to the Internet. It's humbling to know that many folks don't have computers or Internet at home, especially students needing to do homework or returning citizens who are seeking jobs.

And if library staff don't have the material needed, they order it from somewhere else to be delivered to your home library! This is the only place where I happily pay every fine and late fee (not that I have many of those!) because I value the privilege of borrowing a book. There's no order to the above, and certainly there's plenty of humor. But I have chosen to live my life with appreciation and joy; even the difficult challenges bring forth lessons learned, never failure. Thanksgiving was last week, the one day when our commercialized society reminds us to be grateful. I trust you will read this column and pause to savor and appreciate the many people and experiences that bring you joy and, as such, merit your gratitude.

And gratitude is a yearlong feeling. So Happy Thanksgiving, amigos!

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