

Thanks comes in all art forms

By Robert Schimmel

There are times when I wish there were nothing to be thankful for, then I'd be justified in all my whining "what ifs?" and pity parties. I don't do as much of what I really want to do on a regular basis. I'll talk responsibility for this later.

But for now, daily tasks, mundane chores, and work that pays most of the bills (if one is lucky these days) make it so easy to paint the grass as greener over yonder. Ever been there or somewhere similar? Whew, not a good space until something triggers the "look at that guy; how does he do it; where is that smile coming from?" question that hopefully engenders a reality check and ultimately a lesson in gratitude and/or humility.



OK, right about now you're ready to leap from my therapist's couch to a real art column or magazine ... but wait. There is a connection.

Remember sometime back when I encouraged you about having and acknowledging your talent? Well, there's a tremendous amount of it out there that begs to be discovered, trained, enjoyed, shared, etc., and that's what we need to be thankful for as individuals and as a community. Once we've taken the step of recognizing how marvelous it is to have talent, use it, and enjoy it as well as that of others, isn't it a no-brainer how joyless and dull our world would be without its expressions and manifestations?

Of course, and here is where the connection lies: I have no business being a whiner when I get to write this column, host a radio show, paint or teach. Do I also have to go to work, pay for this, fight for that, struggle here, and lose there?

Absolutely, and the latter too often obscures the former. Yet, all are incredible blessings, and you have your version of these same lists. No one wants the minuses, but the truth is that character and strength don't come from having or winning, but from how we meet our challenges and lift up others in the process.

And this is what I witness constantly from individuals and organizations (for-profit and nonprofit) supporting and promoting the talents of others for the benefit of all.

To this point in the big picture, I just took part in a workgroup session of the Tahoe Prosperity Center at the Lake Tahoe Community College and came away humbled by the talents, accomplishments and concerns of all involved. Each is a professional as well as caring enough about Tahoe's future to volunteer time and energy to configure and implement relationships and plans to create end results and opportunities that will enable prosperity now and for posterity. I am thankful for these people.

Do I have my own Top 10 "Thank you" list? Actually, no, just a top two: my Lord Jesus Christ and my family. After that it becomes a litany of great friends, mentors, concepts, intangibles and experiences to whom and for which I owe so much. However, I do want to sincerely and heartily say "Thank you!" to all the fine, giving, caring, and steadfast volunteers, donors, promoters, organizations, teachers, companies, employees, bosses, etc. who put it on the line for developing and sharing all that Tahoe has to offer. I couldn't do what I do, for instance, were it not for casinos, news sites and radio stations and the people behind them, not to mention all the guests and events I've been blessed to experience.

What's your ledger look like? What are you thankful for and who is responsible for your talent and/or its use? Express it; tell them.

And finally, art is a strange animal in that it asks little and gives much. All we need to do is grant it freedom to exist and open doors for its expression, then it will bear abundant returns and yield a "field of dreams" never seen before. Tahoe needs that like no other, as current vernacular goes. We as a community, city, county and lakewide region need to recognize our talents, be thankful for them and open the doors to allow them to flourish. Then, and only then, will we be able to avoid the whining of economic woes and pity parties of "what ifs" and enjoy the giving of thanks in terms of the heart and the harvest.

May I wish each of you a wonderful, fulfilling, giving and sharing Thanksgiving Day and beyond.

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