

Published based on [The Gift of This Day](#)

The Gift of This Day



I awakened at 4 a.m. this morning to the sounds of the wind whipping. It's a bitterly cold 17 degrees with a wind chill of 2 degrees here in Northwest Alabama where dusts of snow lie on the ground from yesterday. It is my birthday.

Alone with my thoughts which refused to return to dreamland, I slipped out of bed. My coffee awaited me thanks to the wonder of a coffee maker with a timer, one of God's really good gifts. For a few moments, I purposefully took some deep breaths and thanked God for breath, for life, always painfully aware on my birthday that my twin, Mike, is not here to celebrate with me.

After reading some reflections on Advent, I smiled as my Facebook account told me that several of you early bird friends have already arisen and sent birthday greetings my way, and my email told me that Luminosity offers me a coupon for my birthday to buy a program to keep my brain sharp. Ah, the mixed blessings of being 51.

Before long, my husband greeted me with a lovely birthday card, very carefully chosen for this day and a chorus of *Happy Birthday* and *You Are So Beautiful to Me*. It was really close to Lionel Richie, sweetheart, I'm just sayin'.

I suppose birthdays are meant for reflecting. Tears fill my eyes as I think of significant losses in my life. Inner joy and peace also fill the moment as I think of the great riches I have.

I wondered if I could make a list of the best gifts I've ever received. I thought of seeing my oldest son, Andrew, lead a beautiful worship song at church yesterday. I reflected on the moment my daughter, Kara Beth, offered her grown-up gift of friendship to me during a year I barely survived and the words I'll never forget when she said, "You don't have to be strong for me," and the tears and embraces that followed.

I thought of the many times in recent days that my husband offered me gifts of the deep knowing of my soul and his blessing for me to continue on my journey to become all God has destined, even when it looks differently than either he or I ever imagined.

I thought of my son, Elliott, who never ceases to shower me with tender hugs and long embraces, which is pretty amazing for an 18 year old. And my youngest, Nathan, who lives life as fully as anyone I know. I also think of my ever-expanding family including my new granddaughter.

I feel deep thankfulness for my dear friends and my amazing spiritual community of believers.

Perhaps I am more aware than ever of the gift of the moment as I watch my aging mother have moments of fading memory.

My heart is full as my eyes.

Although I wouldn't have chosen many of the paths that have made me who I am today, I am thankful for how my heart, mind, and soul have expanded to more truthfully reflect God. And I think of the words of Richard Rohr who so beautifully taught us that "everything belongs".

Looks like it's gonna be a bright, bright sunshiny day in my heart.

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