**For Release Wednesday, November 22, 2023**

**Capitol View**

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**Let's Take a Different View of a Popular Holiday**

So, how about we rethink Thanksgiving?

Oh, I don't want to take away the tradition of turkey and football and listening to Uncle Harold's stories about the big war in which he never fought but he does remember what life was like back then. Those are family legend, just like Harold.

I’m not going to disrespect the traditional gathering, or what we learned in school about the Native Americans and the Pilgrims getting together to eat and drink and talk about western expansion and what kind of corn grows best.

We don't want to stop laying a child’s hand flat on brown construction paper and tracing it to create a long-necked turkey with four feathers. (Try to remember how to draw a cornucopia with the proper array of squash and root vegetables spilling out.)

Or, perhaps let's leave all that alone and just enjoy the day.

Go ahead and celebrate Thanksgiving if you like. But what about attitude? Can we change our mindset to “Giving Thanks?” Yep, same two words, different order. Thanks Giving should be all about Giving Thanks.

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Yes, the world is a mess with wars and rumors of war.  Homelessness continues, border struggles distract us. The seething dissension of political division and derision continues. You can't trust the talking heads. Where are they getting their information?

Some days you just want to go back to bed.

But stop and look around you at the things—but more importantly the people—who are around you.

You've been meaning to thank your neighbor for sweeping your walk that day it was too cold or too early or too dark.  Yes, I know. You were going to take him or her to coffee or get a gift card. Have you? Will you?

How about the dog walker who takes the time to pick up after their animal. Watch for them. Thank them. Give the dog a treat.

Maybe tackle a tough one: If you disagree with someone on an issue, offer to go to a forum with them to hear their story. Then listen and invite them to come hear your side. Then discuss.  If you can't find common ground, agree to respectfully disagree.  The learning process will be beneficial.

Who knows? You just might make a new friend. Don't forget to thank them.

The following points about being thankful are worth pondering. They attributed to the Halcyon Movement:

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**Did you know that gratitude changes the neural structures in the brain to make us feel happier and more content?**

**Did you know that gratitude has been proven to reduce toxic aggression, frustration, and regret even after receiving negative feedback?**

**Did you know that the benefits associated with gratitude include better sleep, more exercise, reduced symptoms of physical pain, lower levels of inflammation, and lower blood pressure?**

**Did you know that the renowned Roman philosopher Cicero called gratitude “not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others”?**

Give thanks. Be a change agent.

Celebrate.

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