

# I Am Grateful

This blog post is entirely personal. I want to thank the old friends and new who have cared enough and been moved enough to write to me in response to my previous posts.

Due to a glitch, 50 or so comments about my first post didn't reach me for two weeks. Then they came all at once. I was overwhelmed. I cried because I felt less alone in the aftermath of my wife's recent death, and I cried because I couldn't share the caring with her. I remembered what my wife and I had together for 48 years.

I am grateful to all of you who wrote. I am grateful to those of you who felt that what I said spoke to them. I am grateful to the old friend who said that I should abandon my recent effort to talk about the tough realities of growing old, that I should stop dwelling on negatives and focus only on the positives. I disagree, of course, but it is not easy to get honest criticism. I am grateful for it.

I am grateful to the people who heard the sadness in my words and wanted to help. So much reassurance and so many wonderful suggestions about how I could find more pleasure in being very old—primarily through relationships with people.

Apparently, the list of things I don't like about becoming very old—the physical, mental, and personal losses—made some of you think that I am miserable. I am not, except from time-to-time. There's all sorts of tough stuff in my life, but on balance I am a lucky man. And I am grateful. I am grateful to my caring daughter and my sweet grandchildren. I am grateful to have financial security, to have a community of friends where I live, to have old friends and new, and to have interests that I can pursue. Jazz has been my salvation (I'll write about that at some point).

At Keystone Korner, the jazz club where I have become the house photographer, there is an almost weekly jam session called "Bright Moments." Todd Barkan, the owner of the club, sings a

song he wrote also called “Bright Moments,” and he always ends by saying, “This music is dedicated to all the people in the world who do not know bright moments.” It is an important reminder to me and to everyone who does know bright moments that we are lucky people.

It’s a tough world and getting tougher. Human life is inherently tragic. Losses are inevitable and should not be denied. But for some of us, including me, there is much to celebrate.

I am grateful.