

I “Get” To!

By Jeanne Loehnis

Another day has dawned. Even before getting out of bed, the mind is racing as the to-do list looms large. There are enough potential activities to fill the next month and so many seem so urgent. A mental review of the list and the thoughts just keep swimming: “I have to go to the dentist ... I must get groceries ... Oh, and the kids need a treat for school today ... I’ll have to get a batch of cookies in the oven.” And even those activities that were joyfully chosen for the list now feel like “shoulds” and the mental chatter now sounds like: “**I have** to meet my son for a lunch date ... **I have** to practice the music I said I would share at a friend’s wedding ... **I have** to ...”

Imagine, for a moment, another scenario. Even before getting out of bed, you realize that the day holds the next round of chemotherapy which is working to clear the cancer from your body. Or perhaps you realize that this is the day the doctors will remove the tumor from your brain. Now imagine holding the attitude toward your activities that these folks did:

“The truth is, if you asked me to choose between winning the Tour de France and cancer, I would choose cancer. Odd as it sounds, I would rather have the title of cancer survivor than winner of the Tour, because of what it has done for me as a human being, a man, a husband, a son and a father.” Lance Armstrong

"If it took brain cancer to let me really understand that I am a spiritual being who is at choice, then I'm good with it." Nora from Texas following brain surgery

What? Cancer over athletic prowess? Being “good” with brain surgery? Under these conditions, there is no to-do list that includes music practice or baking cookies. Sometimes, the only item that gets to the “to-done” list is getting out of bed! Yet here are folks who saw the blessings in some of life’s most difficult challenges. And consider these words spoken by Jeni Stepanek, mother of four children who died of muscular dystrophy, at Mattie’s funeral:

"You are my best friend, and I always have been and always will be proud of you, my son. Thank you for the coffee, the foot massages, the snuggles, the conversations, the inspiration, the motivation, the laughter, the tears, the prayers, the dreams you shared, and for the gift of celebrating life."

Then there is Tony Melendez, the guitarist/singer who has no arms. (\*)

The to-do list? The have-to list? What a gift it is! Some of us **get** to bake cookies for a school treat or iron the clean laundry after numerous trips up and downstairs to the washer and dryer that we are healthy enough to make. If chemotherapy has not stolen your hair and your energy, you **get** to wash and style yours this morning. And that fifth tee ball game this week? If your children are healthy, you **get** to pack yet another picnic lunch and some Cool-aid and cheer them on again today.

Take a moment now to pause. Think about the people above, who, facing extreme human challenges chose to view them as blessings. Now, review your to-do list. With each item, how can you choose to complete the task with joy in your heart and gratitude in your awareness? How

can you move from seeing the pain and struggle, toil and frustration, or simply the weariness of another *have to*, toward an awareness of **get to**?

If you believe in a Master Creator, Higher Power, or the God of your understanding, do these lyrics sound like truth to you?

### ***Welcome to Paradise***

*Words and music by Jeanne Loehnis  
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*Oh my child I hear you calling. Why do you struggle so?  
I am here and I will guide you as you choose the way to go.  
Life was meant to bless you in ways yet unforeseen.  
Listen now. Hear My voice. And come with Me. Come with Me!*

*You are the master of all that you desire.  
And you hold the key to the gateway of your mind.  
Open up to loving thoughts; and let your spirit soar.  
Ride the wave to paradise where you can live forevermore.*

*Always you'll face choices that promise a better way.  
Some will lead to freedom and on others you will stray.  
Know you have the power; your mind is yours alone.  
Go within and nourish thoughts you want to grow and you will know that:*

*You are the master of all that you desire.  
And you hold the key to the gateway of your mind.  
Open up to loving thoughts; and let your spirit soar.  
Ride the wave to paradise where you can live forever!*

Choose paradise today! And consider giving that to-do list a new name: the “**I get to** list!” You have the choice. What you experience – joy or struggle – is within your control. The thoughts and the attitude that you bring toward the happenings of your day hold the key.

What do you “get to do” today?

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(\*) See an amazing video of Tony Melendez at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmnFj2Gc6vo>