

Making The Best Of It

Julie Hryniewicz-Hache -- Wednesday, January 3, 2007, 10:27AM



Hearing that Searchmont is now open, I must say that I am absolutely thrilled. Planning a skiing outing with my daughter this week, I am so excited that we will be among the energy of those ski and snowboarding enthusiasts who have been experiencing a bit of the "hardly any snow" blues. Snow making machines rule!

Considering that we are usually blanketed by the white stuff this time of year, I certainly don't miss the added pressure that heavy snowfall brings. Cleaning off the car, shoveling, bundling up like a mummy, and having to drive the highway in a white out, are not exactly my favorite things. I know that it will come fast and furious soon enough, but I am very much enjoying the temporary reprieve from the usual elements.

Having scheduled a family sleigh ride for Boxing Day, back in November, I never expected that we would be having a green Christmas. It was in that moment, as I was about to cancel the sleigh ride, that I recognized a familiar emotion that I used to experience regularly. I was feeling disappointed that, once again, our plans got messed up. (I am sure that business owners who rely on snow are feeling the same way.)

Maybe it was because I was overly exhausted and stressed from the frenzy of preparations, but I was taking this hard. We had planned our entire day around this sleigh ride and now I wasn't sure what we were going to do. It was going to be the highlight, the main feature, and the primary activity for my husband's Boxing Day family get-together and I was completely bummed out.

In the next moment, I decided to snap out of it. My drama, surrounding the lack of snow was ridiculous. There were bigger problems in the world and my old habit of being overly dramatic was no longer serving me. I also realized how easy it is to get sucked back into bad habits, that I worked so hard to overcome. I make the effort to stay positive, I try to always look for the silver lining, and finding that one thing to be grateful for in any situation, has been extremely effective.

I decided that we would find something fun to do no matter what, that I was just grateful to have the opportunity to get together with everyone. Sometimes things don't always work out as planned, but we can always make the best out of what we do have. Calling the farm down the road from our home to check if there were other options, I was excited that the outing was still a go - instead we would be having a wagon ride.

Seventeen family members crowded into two vehicles and a handful of us even sat in the back box of a pickup truck for the thirty-second ride to the driveway over. We felt like real hillbillies! It was such a beautiful and crisp day that we were in awe that it was December in Northern Ontario. Green grass, running creek water, and the most perfect day, to be out in the fresh air - we were so blessed!

The wagon ride was exhilarating and we even sung, "Jingle Bells" but changed some words. "Oh, what fun it is to ride in a two horse open wagon"... "Dashing through the grass, in a two-horse open wagon, over the hills we go, laughing all the way..." We were silly that day, enjoying every minute of it. We weren't going to let the absence of snow ruin our day. The fire, warm apple cider, sugar cookies, and chocolate fudge treats, halfway through, also helped.

In times of stress or anxiety, it is interesting to pay attention to the little conversation that is going on in your head. Hopefully I am not the only one who has this happen or you will really think I am crazy!!!! That internal dialogue has the power to take you into the depths of despair or the throws of exhilaration. You can convince yourself, either way, of anything. Why not recognize and direct the conversation. We are a magnet for what we think about - stressing about the bad things will only bring more of the same.

The best way to direct it is through gratitude. Gratitude for what we do have, is the most powerful emotion in the universe. It has certainly changed my life in so many ways. When we are feeling disappointed, upset, or out of sorts about something that is going on around us, it is extremely easy to be caught in the downward spiral of negativity. Gratitude, on the other hand, has the ability to pull us out.

Making the best of a situation, finding the bright side, being optimistic, and feeling absolutely appreciative of the good things is the difference between someone who is happy and someone who isn't. There is always something to be grateful for - it just depends on your perspective. The snow will come and the winter season will live on. We may even start

complaining once it does!

Without changing anything around you, you have the power to feel better right now. If your business is suffering, know that it will turn around. If you are grieving over someone's death, celebrate the memories of their life. If you are suffering a terminal illness, decide to spend every moment that you have left, doing the things you love with the people you love. If you are unemployed, consider it as an opportunity to have time to get very clear on what it is you want to do. If you are broke, be grateful for all of those gifts that brought joy to your loved ones.

Gratitude is medicine to the soul and appreciation is fuel for the heart. You can overcome any obstacle by finding the one thing or person in your life to be grateful for, to give you the energy to keep going. Look around you and realize all of the blessings in your life. You have a computer. You have electricity. You have a telephone. You have food. You have a bed... If you have someone to hold, hug, call, or visit, you are blessed. Many don't. We have so much, that we often don't even see it. We are so busy focusing on what we are lacking that we miss the daily opportunities to celebrate our blessings.

I am grateful for wagon rides in December. I am grateful for snow-covered ski hills, despite the grass that continues to peak through. I am grateful for people who can read my words. I am grateful for time with my family this holiday. I am grateful for warm fires, and I am so very grateful for chocolate! Life is good. We are contagious to others when we feel and express gratitude. Who and what are you grateful for? Life is too short to spend it in frustration, negativity, or struggle - you deserve abundance, joy, health, prosperity, love, adventure, and peace for this New Year. Gratitude will take you there...

***"The greater part of our happiness or misery depends on our dispositions and not on our circumstances."* Martha Washington**

If you would like to enjoy an old-fashioned horse-drawn sleigh or wagon ride through scenic countryside on St. Joseph Island, I am sure that the McRae's won't mind if you contact them at **705-246-2516** for further information. You can also visit Searchmont's website at www.searchmont.com for some family fun. **Have a great day!**