



THE BLESSING BOX

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Sometimes I am afraid that I will forget things. Sometimes I actually do. Sometimes I cannot remember what it is I've forgotten. It's easier that way, I think. When I was young, I could remember lots of stuff, not all of which was valuable, important or relevant. But my head was full of lots of information, some useful, some less so.

As the years passed, it seemed as though either my brain got full or I was simply beginning to forget things. Little things, at first, like who was the 17th president of the United States or how many feet in a mile. Later I began to become aware that I couldn't always remember someone's name or when I was supposed to go to the dentist (no one likes to remember that, however!). I didn't think too much about it as everyone I mentioned this to also seemed to be experiencing the same thing. Either I was surrounding myself with aging, forgetful people or forgetting is something that is simply part of the human experience.

Some things that I have forgotten are not really very important and I do not miss them. But other things are important and I do not want to watch them float off into the abyss, never to be recalled again. Things like the sound of my son's giggle, the softness of my daughter's touch, the radiance of our granddaughter's smile and the endless security of my husband's presence. I don't want to forget the excitement of sunrise or the sound of rain pattering on the roof. I don't want to lose the magic of a rainbow or the pleasure of a friend's call.

I am not sure it is old age that is stealing away my memory. I'm not *THAT* old (yet). I don't think it's a disease process or a chemical imbalance in my brain that causes me to misplace names, dates or the checkbook. I am beginning to think that it might be the hurriedness of today's world that is causing my brain to misplace things. I am beginning to think it is the sheer volume of "stuff" that is simply crowding an already overloaded brain that causes me to "lose" a few bits and pieces of information that is obviously not too important. I mean, I haven't forgotten to eat or how to bake chocolate chip cookies. I haven't forgotten our granddaughter's birthday or what flavor frosting is her favorite. I haven't "lost" my way to the grocery store and I can still find the cookie aisle. These are the important things to hold on to, so why am I worried?

I guess I'm worried because if I can begin to forget some things, then maybe, one day, I won't remember what it is I truly fear forgetting. It's been a long time since our journey through grief began and I honestly have to say that there are some things that are begging to fade, just a little. Things like the intensity of our pain are beginning to fade or the length of time each day seemed to take to pass. I've forgotten his smell, but I will never forget his face. I don't want to lose the heart connection between us as my memory gets overloaded with the day-to-day "stuff."

So, this year, I've decided to create a BLESSING BOX for myself. I found a wonderful old box in the attic the other day and I decided to bring it back to life by dusting it off and giving it a good lick of polish. It is old enough that I do not remember its original use, but it is about the size of a recipe box...just the right size for a BLESSING BOX.

I've placed a pad of linen-like paper and a beautiful pen next to it and it sits on my kitchen table, in the center. I can see it every day. Now

whenever I think of a blessing in my life, I write it down on one of those lovely linen sheets of paper, fold it and place it in the BLESSING BOX. I have found myself saying a silent THANK YOU as I placed the paper in the box, too.



It's such a simple act, yet one that has already transformed my life. Now instead of worrying that I will forget something wonderful in my life, I am filling a lovely old box with the blessings in my life. I've said THANK YOU for my husband's smile across the breakfast table. I've said THANK YOU for our daughter's new job, our son-in-law's success and our granddaughter's sweet kisses on the phone. My box is already beginning to overflow with remembered "gifts" that I have received: a hug from my sister, a wave from a neighbor, the sound of laughter coming from our backyard as the kids chased fireflies.

Sometimes when life has dealt me a tough blow, I open the BLESSING BOX, just to remind myself of all the good things I have. When a real estate action fell through, when sickness visited, when gas prices skyrocketed, when I couldn't remember the sound of his voice any more: those of the moments when my BLESSING BOX came to my rescue.

Inside this little box, are tiny messages and reminders of the joys and blessings of my life. Instead of keeping a litany of hurt and failure in my head, now I commit these "gifts of love" to paper and place them in my box, where I can read them, touch them, hold them any time I need to. This little box represents the best things in my life and I never again have to fear forgetting the love and the light in my life. They are all here, in my Blessing box, waiting for me to cherish them again and again and again.

I'm going to make everyone in my family a BLESSING BOX this holiday season and we are going to start a new tradition. We are going to start each gathering with a Blessing Circle, sharing with each other, a blessing we have received from them. I may forget lots of things in my life, but I never want to forget to say THANK YOU and to tell you what a blessing you are in my life.

Make a BLESSING BOX for yourself this season. And watch it change your life. Never again will you count what you have lost or forgotten. Now you will always be reminded of the treasures in your life...no matter how sparkly or rusted, these memories and blessings are yours, to treasure, to cherish, to keep, to hold, to share.

MAY LOVE BE WHAT YOU REMEMBER THE MOST.... IN YOUR BLESSING BOX.

