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Wake Up Grateful: The Transformative Practice of Taking Nothing for Granted

Kristi Nelson
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Kristi Nelson's *Wake Up Grateful* is a practical, philosophical guide for living a life of deep thankfulness.

When Nelson was diagnosed with stage four cancer in 1992, it changed her life. Her book tracks her experiences with cancer and in the years after, also expounding upon the teachings of Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast, which helped to transform her perspective. Those teachings are at the foundation of A Network of Grateful Living, which Steindl-Rast founded and Nelson directs.

Gratefulness and gratitude may seem synonymous, but the book highlights their differences, showcasing the power of moving from momentary gratefulness to gratitude that becomes a whole way of life. Nelson expands Steindl-Rast's mantra—"Stop. Look. Go."—to delve into the roles that presence, perspective, and possibility have in grateful living.

Achieving gratefulness requires an internal, philosophical change, which Nelson breaks down into practical elements so that her audience can begin the shift in the moment. These include practices like embracing challenging conversations with "three-word wonders," such as "I can see" and "Help me understand," while perspective prompts direct readers to behold themselves as newborns and ask "What everyday happenings do I cherish?"

Like gratefulness itself, the book comfortably holds extremes: it's expansive yet concise, individual yet relational, and personal yet universal. It represents an abiding belief in abundance and fierce commitment to wonder, but it's also grounded in reality, recognizing that life is uncertain and hard, and that it is lived in a flawed, fallible body. Wisdom and grace abound in the text, which is calm and cognizant of the fact that people are seeking gratefulness amid raging battles and hard circumstances.

Wake Up Grateful is an invitation to a new way of living, even in the most challenging times.

MELISSA WUSKE (November / December 2020)

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