



# The Masterpiece Living Mosaic

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## Spreading Positivity

By: Dr. Roger Landry

I have a question for you. How did you feel after your last interaction with another person? Did you feel better about yourself and more uplifted? Or, did you leave feeling the unhappy effects of negativity?

In the *New York Times* best-selling Book, *How Full is Your Bucket?* authors Tom Rath and Donald Clifton, PhD demonstrate how every interaction with another person is an opportunity to symbolically fill their bucket (creating positivity) or dip into it (creating negativity).



"Whether we have a long conversation with a friend or simply place an order at a restaurant, every interaction makes a difference," Tom Rath writes. "The results of our encounters are rarely neutral; they are almost always positive or negative. And although we take these interactions for granted, they accumulate and profoundly affect our lives."

We reap what we sow. If we spread negativity, not only are we dipping into other people's buckets, but we're also inviting adversity into our own lives. On the other hand, if we spread positivity, and care for others, if we share a love of life, our harvest can be brilliant.

**Take the Team Gratitude Challenge!** The Masterpiece Living team will be sharing gratitude photos throughout the month of October. Share your photos with us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MasterpieceLiving/>.

## Giving Back

By: Dr. Roger Landry

There is a scene in the movie *The Bucket List* where Morgan Freeman tells Jack Nicholson that in ancient Egypt, in order to enter heaven a person is asked two questions:



**1. Have you found joy in your life?**

**2. Has your life brought joy to others?**

In conversations with hundreds of older adults, I have found what brings meaning and purpose to lives consistently involves other living things, be it humans, animals, plants or the environment as a whole. It is this improving of the lives of others or the planet that resonates with people. Dr. Albert Schweitzer told us, "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

In a 2007 comprehensive review of the research on the health benefits of volunteering, even as little as two hours a week was found to lower mortality rates, improve functional ability and lower rates of depression later in life than those who did not volunteer.

Purpose is not stagnant. It is not something we do once and then are done with it. It is an ongoing process — our reason for getting out of bed in the morning. And, as Mark Gerzon tells us in his book *Coming Into Our Own*, "If it feels safe, it's probably not the right path, but if it scares you, it probably is."

This week, consider: **Have you found joy in your life? Has your life brought joy to others?**

## Bee of Good Cheer

By: Danielle Palli

When I phoned Gloria Casper to learn more about the monthly “Bee of Good Cheer” program she manages at the Beacon Hill community (where she is a resident), the interview took an unexpected turn. What I got, instead, was a lesson in what it takes to live a life of gratitude, and how a positive outlook can change everything.

Gloria’s family lived in poverty. Her parents died when she was eight years old, leaving her and her siblings to be raised in an orphanage in Chicago. Despite many setbacks, she went on to become a nurse, and then a preschool owner and director. She married her husband Joe and they raised three children (who, Gloria proudly shares, are all graduates of Notre Dame University with many post graduate degrees), while working part time helping immigrant families who were learning English as a second language.

Below is an excerpt from the chapter of a memoir that Gloria was writing the day I called...



### Why I Am the Way I Am

By: Gloria Casper

***"Every single thing that has happened in your life is preparing you for a moment that is yet to come." ~Author Unknown***

I felt this way my whole life. I took things as they came and tried to make the best and most positive solution out of any situation. I never worried about where my next meal was coming from or where I was going to sleep, or where I would get my clothes from.

When I knew I wanted to be a nurse, I never thought about *how* I was going to achieve this goal. I trusted in the Lord that it would happen. It did, with the help of many exceptional men and women behind the scenes from St. Anne's Hospital and Angel Guardian orphanage in Chicago, Illinois.

I was surrounded by extraordinary people in my life. Starting with my parents, especially my mother. She exuded love, caring and helping others, even though she herself was suffering from heart disease. She modeled how to be a good wife and mother. She was an avid reader. She would get books written in Italian from the Newberry Library.

My father taught us daily wisdom and caring, except when he was drunk. He was a good man! He was suffering from Tuberculous, depression and alcoholism. These were memories from when I was eight years old.

Today, Gloria celebrates the lives of other residents at Beacon Hill by encouraging them to share their stories: from the trumpet player who tells jokes, to the survivors of WWII, and the historians who teach the true account of the underground railroad and the history of Lombard, IL (where Beacon Hill is located). The tie that binds them together is the “bee” of good cheer – finding that nugget of positivity that came from these experiences.

From our conversation, I observed four key elements to Gloria Casper’s approach to life, that serve as valuable takeaways for all of us: 1) Focus on the positive. 2) Look for the good in others. 3) Be willing to adapt to your circumstance – whatever it may be. 4) Pay it forward.

“I think of all the good in my life,” Gloria says. “I don’t dwell on the negative.”

