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PEOPLE

MOM'S LESSON: WE ALL NEED MORE GRATEFULNESS



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LIFE LESSONS for BUSINESS OWNERS

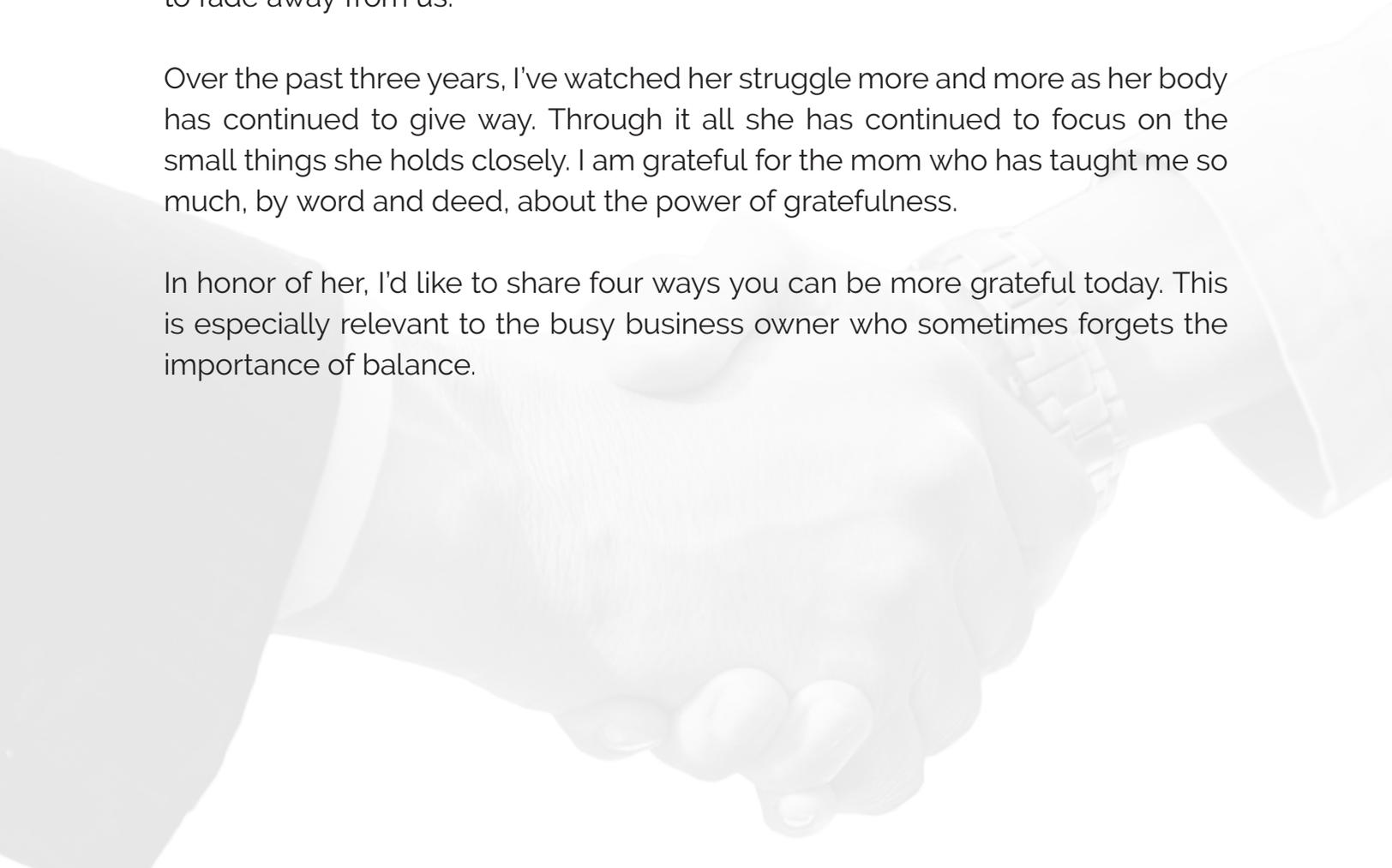
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My mom recently reinforced the message to me that we all need to recognize gratefulness in our lives. Gratefulness is that magical place where you are content with what you have and where you are. For entrepreneurs and business owners who are always striving to accomplish that next big goal, it's a tough place to find.

The importance of gratefulness has never been as apparent to me as it is today. As I write this column, I sit on the floor of my mom's hospital room as she begins to fade away from us.

Over the past three years, I've watched her struggle more and more as her body has continued to give way. Through it all she has continued to focus on the small things she holds closely. I am grateful for the mom who has taught me so much, by word and deed, about the power of gratefulness.

In honor of her, I'd like to share four ways you can be more grateful today. This is especially relevant to the busy business owner who sometimes forgets the importance of balance.





1. Start a gratitude journal. Everyday, schedule time to jot down at least one thing you're grateful for. I have one I center on thankfulness for my wife, Nicole. Every day I write an appreciation statement about her specifically. It keeps me focused on the positive and strengthens our relationship.

Your journal does not have to be significant—other specific. The practice is just about taking the time to write down what you appreciate in your day. The ritual and thoughtfulness will elevate you from the hustle and bustle of daily life, which can sometimes bog you down. Make this a part of your daily routine to regain focus and perspective.

2. Create a 100 list. Many times we find negativity in our relationships—especially in the workplace. This is an emotional suck that can distance us from gratitude.

When my clients ask for help in mediating workplace conflicts, I recommend the 100 list—if you have an ongoing conflict with someone take a pad and pen and write down 100 positive things about that person. You'll have to dig deep to find 100 things about a person you're not happy with, but at the end of the exercise you'll feel renewed. Whenever you can, find ways to trump negative thoughts with positive ones. The 100 list is a way to do that.

3. Smell the roses. We've all heard the adage, stop and smell the roses, and we get the point from a figurative perspective, but very few of us take it literally. I suggest you do. When you engage your senses to smell a flower or look at the bright blue sky, you rediscover the world around you, which engages your busy mind in the present.

We're always so focused on learning from our mistakes or planning for the future, we forget to be grateful for the day we're a part of now. Smell the roses to ground yourself in today.

4. Think of my mom, Gwen Warren Rothauser. These past few years she has been nearly immobile. Frozen by paralysis. Instead of focusing on the things holding her back she has relished in the small things like sending her granddaughter's cupcake recipes or hopping on Facebook to be the first to like every photo I post.

This day could be your last. A cliché I know, but it's true. Make it count. Treat every obstacle as a learning experience, appreciate how far you've come and make the important people in your life feel special by showing and telling them you are grateful.

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