



## CHASING THE LIGHT with Rod Moriyama

# Have Gratitude Each And Every Day

*“We practice simply to give thanks for what we have received.”*  
 — Jeff Wilson, Buddhist scholar

As a manager in the prime of my career, I was facilitating a planning session at IBM in Los Angeles when I collapsed. I was rushed to UCLA Medical Center. Following a biopsy, my gastroenterologist came to me with a grim look on his face.

My liver was so damaged that he didn’t know how to express it. He gave me the feeling that I didn’t have much longer to live. I was 35 years old and married, with two young children ages 6 and 4. Would I get to see them grow up?

This was no surprise, but I never thought that it would happen to me.

Seven years before, my brother and I went to donate blood during a drive at our workplace. We were both rejected — hepatitis B was found in our blood. We weren’t alone. Fifteen percent of the Asian population had it. My mother’s side of the family all had it.

At that time, hepatitis B was incurable. Almost everyone who had it in our family died at an early age. My mother died at 57, still in her prime of life in 1980. Her sisters and brother also died early of liver failure or cancer. My brother



Though faced with many challenges, the author says that one can learn to live a life of thankfulness.

er would later die at age 61.

After my collapse, I was in bed for two months as my wife took care of me. It was a time to reflect and wonder what to do with what time I had left. Miraculously, I survived.

I realized then that I had two options: live with disappointment and regret at the pain this disease caused my family — or be grateful that I was still alive.

Living optimistically and in gratitude had been part of my upbringing. This incident gave me a new commitment. Daily appreciation of the moments with my family brought balance to my life and gave me the energy necessary to pursue a successful business career. Acquiring healthy habits made a difference, too: living frugally and healthily, exercising, and consuming no alcohol or fatty foods were essential ingredients.

I am now enjoying my grandchildren. Who would have thought? The preciousness I feel for this life provides a perspective I probably wouldn’t have had, if not for the potential of dying early.

I am grateful to be alive every day.

*Born and raised in Wahiawā, Rod Moriyama worked for IBM on the mainland and abroad before returning to Hawai‘i. He is an active member of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai‘i as a board member, and president of Wahiawā Hongwanji.*

*Chasing The Light is produced by Lynne Johnson and Robin Stephens Rohr.*