

## FOOTPRINTS ON OUR HEARTS

Some people come into our lives and leave footprints on our hearts  
and we are never the same. (Flavia Weedn)

When November arrives, a surge of gratitude comes with it. I relish the thin veil of the Celtic tradition assuring us that the ancestors will approach close by on the eve of October 31st. The feast of All Saints on the following day also invites us to connect with people of the past whose presence has touched our lives. Whether recognized by the official Church or not, these remarkable "saints" influenced our lives and left their mark on our hearts.

As happens now with easy access to the Internet, the above quote of Flavia Weedn has some valuable pieces missing. Here is the more inspiring version: "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some people stay for awhile, and move our souls to dance. They awaken us to a new understanding with the passing whisper of their wisdom. Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon. They stay in our lives for awhile, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same."

Since my twenties, I've been aware that who I am becoming evolves largely due to people who step onto my path long enough to encourage my growth in a particular way. In the past, some have been relatives. Others were strangers. Some visitors have names I no longer remember. And then there are people who come easily to mind. What have they imprinted on my heart? Here are a few of the many gifts that provide purpose and direction for my life: generosity with time and presence, the activation of compassion, trust in my writing ability, access to inner resilience during difficult situations, relishing nature as a place to meet the Holy, and choosing to live more contemplatively.

What about you? For whom do you give thanks? Whose footprints have influenced your path of life? How have they done so? Whether young or old, if you allow yourself some quiet time to reflect on what inspires you to grow and share your best, I am confident you will recover memories of persons whose presence assisted your personal transformation.

Here is my Thanksgiving prayer this year:

Beloved Presence on my path of life,  
thank you for the footprints left on my heart:  
the soft and gentle ones that brought comfort,  
the deep and lasting ones of enduring friendship,  
the lightly passing ones conveying kindness,  
the heavy ones causing necessary change,  
and the impressionable footprints swept away by time.  
Even though lost, forgotten, or not recognized,  
these visitors have led me to live more fully  
the innate goodness residing deep within me.  
How grateful I am.

Abundant peace,

Joyce Rupp.

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