

## **Subject: Inspirational Stories & Quotations – Holidays**

### **Thank You For Everything By Alan Cohen**

The story is told about a woman Zen master named Sono who taught one very simple method of enlightenment. She advised everyone who came to her to adopt an affirmation to be said many times a day, under all conditions. The affirmation was, "Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever." Many people from all arenas of life came to Sono for healing. Some were in physical pain; others were emotionally distraught, others had financial troubles; some were seeking soul liberation. No matter what their distress or what question they asked her, her response was the same: Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever." Some people went away disappointed; others grew angry; others tried to argue with her. Yet some people took her suggestion to heart and began to practice it. Tradition tells us that everyone who practiced Sono's mantra found peace and healing.

Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

My friend Lisa, an attractive woman in her late 30's, came to one of my seminars after I had not seen her for a number of years. She informed the group that a year earlier she had been diagnosed with a brain disorder that required immediate surgery. The surgery was done, a steel plate was inserted in her head, and her doctor keeps her under close observation. Lisa reported that now she lives from day to day. Privately I told Lisa that I was sorry she had gone through this whole ordeal. "Oh, don't be sorry," she told me emphatically. "I'm not sorry at all. This was one of the best things that has ever happened to me. It really got me to appreciate my life and relationships. I married a wonderful guy and we are thinking about having children. I wouldn't trade the experience if I could."

Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

Can you imagine what your life would be like if you simply dropped your complaints? It's a radical proposal since most of us have been trained to question, analyze, and criticize everything we see. But then we end up questioning, analyzing, and criticizing ourselves. Then we miss out on joy, the only true measure of success.

The ecstatic mystic poet Hafiz proclaimed, "All a sane man can ever think about is giving love." One evening I received a phone call from my friend Cliff, a Jewish guy from Brooklyn who discovered 'A Course in Miracles' and became a world-class love exuder. Cliff just went around finding good and beauty in everyone he met. On the phone, Cliff told me, "I just called to tell you how much I love and appreciate you." "Well, thank you Cliff," I answered, delighted. "I really appreciate that...What prompted you to call me at this moment?" "My knee was hurting me, and I knew that the only way I could feel better

would be to give more love. So I began to think of the people in my life who I care about, and you came to mind."

Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

As we approach the holiday of Thanksgiving, many of us will be getting together with our families. Perhaps family issues may come to the fore and we might be tempted to fall into a pattern of rehashing old resentments and arguments. Wouldn't it be fabulous if, as we sat with our relatives, we held in mind, "Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever." Imagine what this Thanksgiving would be like if we decided that no matter how much Mom complained about Dad, how much Dad bugged us about getting a real job; or how unspiritual our ex is, we chose to be an unstoppable appreciation machine and found the good in our loved ones. Indeed this would be a triumphant Thanksgiving to remember!

Yes, I know, there is a voice inside you objecting, "But if I did not complain, people would walk all over me and selfish opportunists would genetically manipulate my food and terrorists would keep crashing airplanes into buildings and...and...Got it. Now, you went to Sono, her response would be, "Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever." I am simply suggesting that we practice the mantra for an entire Thanksgiving day. And then maybe one day a week. Then we might start to feel so good and our lives will become so effective that we want to turn every day into Thanksgiving.

In my book 'Handle With Prayer', I state that the highest form of prayer is gratitude. Instead of asking God for stuff, start thanking God for stuff, and you will find that God has already given you everything you could want or need, including the adventure of discovering more riches every day. Life is a big treasure hunt. Eventually we grow weary of seeking treasures outside ourselves, and we begin to look within. There we discover that the gold we sought, we already are. The beauty we overlooked because we were focusing on what was missing, still lives and awaits us like an anxious lover. As T.S. Eliot nobly noted, "The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. Have a great Thanksgiving.

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