

# Blessings in our backyard

**“BLESSINGS ABOUND  
IN OUR OWN BACKYARD. IT’S UP TO US TO  
UNCOVER, ACKNOWLEDGE  
AND BE GRATEFUL FOR THEM.”**

- BARBARA GRUENER

@THERAYCENTER  
#CHARACTERCOUNTS

*From our guest contributor, Barbara Gruener*

Can this be right? Simply acknowledging the good? Like counting our blessings?

Not sure exactly where to start this reflection, let’s look at the wisdom of German writer Johann von Goethe, a man whose work I’ve come to greatly admire.

## ***Nine requisites for contented living:***

*Health enough to make work a pleasure.*

*Wealth enough to support your needs.*

*Strength enough to battle difficulties and overcome them.*

*Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them.*

*Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished.*

*Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor.*

*Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others.*

*Faith enough to make real the things of God.*

*Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.*

*~Johann von Goethe*

Now that’s a formula for abundance, don’t ya think? How many of these virtues can you check off this hefty list? To which one(s) can you say, “*I’ve got this!*” Which one(s) are you

intentionally working on? Which one(s) will you likely never master? And where am I going with this?

As I picked the thistles out of the backyard with the boys yesterday, I couldn't help but think how abundantly blessed we are. To have a backyard to pick thistles out of. To have each other. To have love.

But sometimes the toils and tasks of life get in the way of appreciating the good we've got going on. It was humid and hot ... and some of those thistles were every bit as tall as those of us tackling them. And some critter made away with our baby cucumber plants. And the pollen that I scooped out of the pool in the morning was every bit as thickly a covering for that same water in the afternoon. How is this possible?

But we're healthy enough to be able to skim pollen and pick thistles. And wealthy enough to even have a pool. Weeds help us practice the strength, grace and patience we need; the charity and love come once we've replanted those cukes and can share the harvest (provided they produce) with our neighbors. And the faith and hope come from plenty of prayers. The essence of contented living. Every day. Without ceasing.

Prayers of thankfulness and appreciation. Because blessings abound, in our own backyard; it's up to us to uncover, acknowledge and be grateful for them.

Only then can we abundantly share our abundance with others. Learn more about character education.