

Women's Voices

By SHANNON TRAPHAGEN

Embracing the best part of ourselves

One of the greatest things about living in Buffalo is witnessing the changing seasons – watching as a white canvas fades, allowing empty trees to breathe life once again; as grass stretches its roots, filling up on the tender sun needed to grow; as ice crystals become water, and our winter turns to spring.

We watch as trees bloom with fresh flowers and vibrant green leaves. Summer winds bring in lake breezes and scents of lavender, gardenia and freshly mowed grass. As the sun starts to set a little earlier each day, we experience bold colors of burnt orange, red, yellow and brown. Falling like feathers to the ground, the trees prepare for a long sleep until the spring sun wakes them once again.



**Shannon
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We do our due diligence preparing for winter; raking leaves into piles for which joyous children pounce and dance through. Wrapping trees to protect their delicate limbs, and hanging lights and wreaths in celebration of what's ahead.

Winter brings with it the celebration of the holiday season – a season filled with magic and miracles.

Watching a child's face light up as he or she unwraps an unexpected gift, giving a meal to a family in need or donating to dozens of charities. To quote Sue Monk Kidd, "We become what we pay attention to."

So I ask this question as we approach the biggest holiday of the year: What do you pay attention to?

I pay attention to the sound of church bells as they toll. I pay attention to how the rays of sunlight enter my bay window and warms a sleeping dog in its path. I pay attention to a child's face as it lights up at the sight of Santa parading down the street or the tiny tracks of a bird as it makes footprints in newly fallen snow.

I watch as the trees brim with life, their emerald leaves shining bright against a blue background. I pay attention to the way my dogs beam with love as I walk in the door, filling the space with energy. When I go for a walk, smelling the crisp winter air, I feel renewed and loved and grateful for this place.

Watching our Buffalo community. The growth of Canalside, the grain lights, the food culture. Buffalo is on the move and it's beautiful to behold.

When I write, I write for those who need words of encouragement, hope and peace. I am filled with joy at the thought of being fully present in what I do. For me that is the magic of this world. All the little things that we are graced with being allowed to witness each and every day.

Attention of the heart is being fully present, in one moment, in every moment, in everyday life. Hardship, anger, violence – yes these things exist, but so do hope, love, grace, and peace. Pay attention to the good moments, take in the serenity of the space around you and allow it to fill you up. Become what you pay attention too and look to the magic of this season to renew in you what you may have lost. Follow the deepest part of your heart. Allow it to awaken you and reinvigorate you.

Take in the magic of this season, and when winter fades back into spring, bring it with you – allow magic and joy to fill your life all year long. Pay attention to the marvels and miracles of this world, embrace them, and become the best and truest part of your heart.

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