

Personal Honor Roll:

Lawson Inada's Workshop, Tule Lake Pilgrimage 2009

the good news is we can do this
it exists in us all and finding it is not hard
once we do, something akin to magic happens inside of us

lawson instructed us to write on our index cards and share what we wrote
we named "a person to whom we feel grateful"

- a piano teacher who sent her young student \$10 each month while she was in camp and \$25 each month after she was released for the rest of her life
- a banker who protected the farm of not just one japanese family sent to camp but those of many of redwood city's japanese flower growing families
- a postman who made the trip to deliver a bundle of mail to a family held at the assembly center
- a landlady who churned butter and baked cookies with the children of her japanese tenant
- a high school dean who gave college final exams to a student who had to leave campus short of finishing to insure being evacuated with her family
- a mexican neighbor with a car who kindly offered to transport a japanese family and its suitcases to the train station
- and many, many mothers

because on this pilgrimage we choose to focus on the experiences of the past
that are so painful, so unjust, and so indecent
because in so doing we come to new and hard understandings
of what human beings become as a result of
isolation
shame
anger
resentment
bitterness
and despair
these are the places of the mind and heart where healing is needed

GRATITUDE is the key
that opens the door
it gets us on board the bus to healing
because with this powerful gift we can cross the threshold
to forgiveness
to compassion
and to empathy
when we stand in that place
we cannot be there and still hold onto judgment
or revenge
or the need to be right
or the need to prove wrong
when we stand in that place,
we can let go of the need to point our finger at others
we can find self-compassion and an *inside* peace
that then can be directed *outside*
into our world
into our future