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## **Giving Thanks**

By Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB

November is here. Fall is my favorite season, and Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays. While I always try to be thankful, I think it is good to have a special day to focus on just how blessed we are.

We are all blessed in our own way. Just to live in the United States of America is an incredible blessing. To be free to practice alternative methods of health care is a huge blessing. To be a part of the massage profession, to be able to provide so many people with so much help, and to get paid for doing what we love and believe in is truly a blessing.

The fact that elections are over for a few months is also a blessing! But then again, that we have elections is a blessing, a huge one, one well-worth fighting to maintain. Groups of people are working very hard to take away our freedoms. The pharmaceutical industry is working through the European Union and international treaties to take away our freedom to purchase effective remedies, herbs and nutritional supplements. The United States public health sector is trying to take away our freedom to practice, and our freedom of choice regarding vaccinations and health care. The chiropractors are trying to take away our freedom to practice using methods developed by massage therapists long before chiropractic existed. I am thankful that none of these groups has achieved its goals.

I am thankful that we still have the freedom to fight for our rights in our legislatures and courts. I am thankful for *Massage Today* and the forum it provides our profession. I am very thankful for the opportunity this column provides me to share my views with you. But I am most thankful for all of you, the *Massage Today* readership, and the support, encouragement and positive feedback I have received from you. I am even thankful for the negative feedback I have received, because it is the dialogue and exchange of ideas that causes us to grow, both as individuals and as a profession.

I hope each of you can find many things to be thankful for this month. May the joy of your gratitude serve to motivate you to learn how to better serve others and to defend the rights and freedoms that allow you to do so.

I wish you all a happy Thanksgiving.

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Click [here](#) for more information about Ralph Stephens, BS, LMT, NCTMB.



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