



A *New York Times* bestseller, now available in paperback…

***29 Gifts***

***How a Month of Giving Can Change Your Life***

By Cami Walker

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Cami Walker was in her early thirties, living in San Francisco with her fiancé, immersed in an advertising job she found challenging and enjoyable. Aside from the occasional tingling and numbness in her limbs, and fatigue that several doctors swore was just stress, she loved her life. But a mere month after her wedding, these symptoms became unbearable. She lost the use of her hands, then her vision in one eye. What seemed like thousands of tests later, she was told that she had multiple sclerosis—an incurable neurological condition that can leave sufferers completely immobilized.

Two years after her diagnosis, Cami found herself depressed, sleepless for days on end, in constant pain, and falling into an addiction to prescription drugs years. The night before she went into the hospital for an eight-day detox, she called a mentor—Mbali Creazzo, a South African medicine woman whom Cami hoped would comfort her in her self-pity. Instead, Mbali offered this advice: *stop thinking about yourself, stop dwelling on your pain, and start giving away twenty-nine gifts in twenty-nine days*. Cami had never shied away from alternative medicine—acupuncture, massage therapy, hypnotherapy—but even she was skeptical about Mbali’s “prescription.” She needed to focus on her own recovery and, living on disability payments, she certainly didn’t have the resources to go around giving things away to others.

When a new series of medical treatments didn’t help her symptoms, Cami thought, “Why not?” In ***29 Gifts***, she chronicles her giving cycle and explains how it altered her perception of her situation. Whether listening to an upset friend, giving a bigger-than-average tip to a street performer, or helping others with multiple sclerosis develop business plans to fit their new lives, Cami found that even small gifts humbled and revitalized her. The giving cycle couldn’t cure her condition, but she was no longer too tired (or too bitter) to live her life.

On Day 29, Cami decided to give the gift of giving to the world by launching [www.29Gifts.org](http://www.29gifts.org/). Since then, more than 16,600 people have signed up for the 29-Day Giving Challenge online. Together, they have raised money to feed children in Africa, helped people pay for expensive but necessary surgeries, and funded humanitarian missions throughout the world. What was once a personal journey has now become a worldwide movement that has impacted tens of thousands.

**Cami Walker** was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2006. She created 29Gifts.org in April 2008, and has continued her own giving since. She lives in Denver, Colorado with her rescue dog, Charlie. She is currently working on the *29 Gifts* screenplay and her second book.

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***29 Gifts* also recounts the stories of other givers and offers tips for starting your own giving challenge.**

**Advice from *29 Gifts***

**on how a practice of daily, mindful giving**

**can improve the quality of your life…**

**Nonattachment**: Give your gifts with an open heart, without any expectations about what you might want to receive in return. In fact, try this: What if you were to give away something that you feel you could never part with? It could be a material thing, or perhaps a deeply held belief, behavior, or way of thinking that you feel isn’t serving you anymore. Try this at least once over your 29 Days and take notice of changes you see in your life in upcoming months.

**Gratitude**: If you stay in a space of giving and gratitude, you attract more of what you want in life. Note at least three things you feel grateful for each day. This may be anything from a family member, your health, shelter, or nature.

**Awareness**: Decide that you will go through each day being open to opportunities to give. Take action, and be mindful of what comes up for you emotionally. Does it feel hard or easy to give? Can you notice why you are having certain feelings? Is your desire to offer this gift connected to an experience that you remember from your past? Was there some resistance to taking action or resentment after the give?

**Service**: Try your best to approach offering each gift from an authentic desire to be of service to others. Take note of the times you go out of your way to help another person. What touched you about the person that compelled you to want to give? Are the traits that attracted you to the person somehow mirroring your own experience of life?

**Curiosity**: Approach this ritual with a willingness to be curious and surprised. Don’t go in assuming that you will learn something specific, solve a problem, or have an earth-moving experience. Instead, notice what surprises you about your give each day. Did you get an unexpected reaction from the recipient of your gift? Did extending yourself to another person bring up emotions you didn’t anticipate? Did you receive something surprising in return?

**Receiving**: When you give, it opens space for you to receive. Plus, saying “yes” to the gifts that are offered allows you to feel the joy of giving. Each day, notice if your heart feels open or constricted when you receive an offering from another person. Can you easily accept their gift with gratitude? Do you feel deserving of the gift? Do you give yourself permission to receive with an open heart?

**Praise for *29 Gifts***

**Winner of the 2009 Books for a Better Life MS Awareness Award**

“Walker presents a story that gets to the core of the emotional pain and loneliness that people feel when suffering from a serious disease like multiple sclerosis…Readers will instantly connect with this narrative of her journey to find an alternative to withering away in her apartment…Her story unfolds nicely, and the reader is left with a good picture of what it’s like to live with MS. Walker turns what could have been a book about self-pity into a great read about pain and a creative way to get on with life.”—*Library Journal*

“Walker’s a plucky writer, and it’s hard not to be inspired by her story…Can ‘29 Gifts’ work? Well, at the very least, it makes you more aware of the good in your life, and it shifts the focus from yourself to others.”—*Boston Globe*

“Glimpses into Walker’s day-to-day difficulties…crop up among the stories of her daily gifts, grounding the work in personal details…An admirable reworking of *The Secret* (in that it should actually help someone, at least gift recipients).”—*Publishers Weekly*

“Walker’s book gives new meaning to the phrase ‘giving is better than receiving’…The lessons of *29 Gifts* are applicable to everyone, healthy or not. It is an easy, enjoyable read—but more importantly, it opens a reader’s eyes to the ultimate gift: giving to others.”

—*Momentum* (magazine of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society)

“Maybe you’ve caught the buzz on *29 Gifts: How a Month of Giving Can Change Your Life*. Since Walker’s appearance on the ‘Today’ show two weeks ago, her inspirational story is making the rounds at light speed. Why are people so intrigued with this? Because her message is perfect for these uncertain times. For those of us immersed in pity parties because things aren’t going our way, Cami’s book offers a way to transform our lives and help the people around us. The best part: It doesn’t have to cost a dime.”—*Tampa Tribune*

“It reminded me a lot of Michael J Fox’s book, since it was more about the journey rather than the author…*29 Gifts* is a great read. The author’s tone throughout the book is extremely friendly and upbeat, even while recounting her darkest moments…This is the practical component of *The Secret*… One of the many things I found great about this book is that while it exudes positivism, the author, Cami Walker, is a realist…The relative simplicity of the 29 gifts movement is refreshing…A fantastic book.”—Blogcritics.org

“*29 Gifts* stands out among other ‘inspirational’ books because Walker doesn’t hold back. She describes her disease and symptoms in vivid detail. And it’s that bravery which makes the process ring true. Following Walker’s journey, one realizes that most of us give many little gifts each day. But without the right mindset, they seem like little tasks instead…Read all at once or at leisure, *29 Gifts* is worth your time. Not only does it put a face on MS, it puts a face on perceptions and the power of the mind to overcome adversity.”—*Deseret News*

“This holiday season, why not embrace the spirit of giving with your own 29 days of kindness?”—Oprah.com

“What a great idea.”—*Orange County Register*

“I really love the idea of the 29 gifts, and the book did a good job of getting me to stop and think about how one’s attitude toward the world colors one’s experience of it.”—*Roanoke Times*

“Not only is this book a bestseller in the U.S., it’s become a whole spiritual movement.”

—*Daily Mail* (UK)

“An insightful and moving story.”—*Good Times*

“In this season of giving, *29 Gifts* cuts to the very heart of the thing: giving to enrich and share rather than receive. If it doesn’t change your life, it will at least make you think.”—*January*

“An inspirational read recommended for any general lending library.”—*Midwest Book Review*

“This book…is now officially and wholeheartedly a part of my permanent library—and my heart.”—BiblioBuffet.com

“A remarkable and inspiring book…I highly recommend it as a gift for someone struggling with depression, a major illness or wanting to heal on any level…Let this review be one of my 29 gifts to you and let this book be a present to someone in need.”—Examiner.com

“A delight…Well written…At times hilariously funny, at times very sad, and at all times it had me spellbound…It is a book full of wisdom.”—*Cape Times* (South Africa)

“If you like reading a book for content, then you will really like this book…Cami’s book was certainly an inspiration to me. I plan to start my 29 days soon.”—Jim Soos (owner of Books & More in Moultrie, GA), *Albany Herald*

“A poignant and insightful account of the transformative power of acts of kindness.”

—*Saginaw News*

“[Walker’s] story is moving and inspirational; this book is likely to appeal to those striving to live a life of gratitude.”—Metapsychology Online Reviews

“The story of how even small gifts—a perfect conch shell here, three dollars there—helped give Walker a grateful heart and taught her not to be overwhelmed by illness.”—*Energy Times*

“Takes the reader smoothly into the day-to-day world of a young bride (Walker) who gets a devastating medical diagnosis just weeks after her wedding…Walker’s work transcends the ‘inspirational and spiritual’ genre, as this book is well-written to the point of approaching true eloquence…Don’t wait to buy this book.”—*Sacramento Book Reviews*

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