**Gratitude**

**When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life, for your strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies in yourself.** [**Tecumseh**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/t/tecumseh.html)

**If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.** [**Meister Eckhart**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/meister_eckhart.html)

**Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns; I am thankful that thorns have roses.** [**Alphonse Karr**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/alphonse_karr.html)

**No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.** [**James Allen**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/james_allen.html)

**Be true to yourself, help others, make each day your masterpiece, make friendship a fine art, ... build a shelter against a rainy day, and give thanks for your blessings and pray for guidance every day.** [**John Wooden**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_wooden.html)

**“You won’t be happy with more until you are happy with what you have.” Viki King**

**“Another shortcoming of desire is that it leads to so much that is undesirable.” Lama Rinpoche, The Door to Satisfaction**

**As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.** [**John F. Kennedy**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_f_kennedy.html)

**Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.** [**William Arthur Ward**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/w/william_arthur_ward.html)

**When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.** [**Gilbert K. Chesterton**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/g/gilbert_k_chesterton.html)

**Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.** [**Aesop**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/aesop.html)

**Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.** [**Marcus Tullius Cicero**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/marcus_tullius_cicero.html)

**Though I ebb in worth, I'll flow in thanks. John Taylor**

**Can Gratitude Help You Thrive,** *--by* [*Arianna Huffington*](http://www.dailygood.org/search.php?op=auth&name=Arianna%20Huffington)*, syndicated from* [*Greater Good*](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/can_gratitude_help_you_thrive)*, Jun 07, 2014*

**I’ve come to believe that living in a state of gratitude is the** **gateway to grace.**

**Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. - Melody Beattie -**

Grace and gratitude have the same Latin root, gratus. Whenever we find ourselves in a stop-the-world-I-want-to-get-off mindset, we can remember that there is another way and open ourselves to grace. And it often starts with taking a moment to be grateful for this day, for being alive, for anything.

The Oxford clinical psychologist Mark Williams suggests the **“ten finger gratitude exercise,”** in which once a day you list ten things you’re grateful for and count them out on your fingers. Sometimes it won’t be easy. But that’s the point—“intentionally bringing into awareness the tiny, previously unnoticed elements of the day.”

Gratitude exercises have been proven to have tangible benefits. According to a study by researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of Florida, having participants write down a list of positive events at the close of a day—and why the events made them happy—lowered their self-reported stress levels and gave them a greater sense of calm at night.

I find that I’m not only grateful for all the blessings in my life, I’m also grateful for all that hasn’t happened—for all those close shaves with “disaster” of some kind or another, all the bad things that almost happened but didn’t. The distance between them happening and not happening is grace.

And then there are the disasters that did happen, that leave us broken and in pain. I had known pain before. Relationships had broken, illnesses had come, death had taken people I loved. But I had never known a pain like this. What I learned through it is that we are not on this earth to accumulate victories, or trophies, or experiences, or even to avoid failures, but to be whittled and sandpapered down until what’s left is who we truly are. This is the only way we can find purpose in pain and loss, and the only way to keep returning to gratitude and grace.

Both monks and scientists have affirmed the importance of gratitude in our lives. “It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race,” wrote Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk from Kentucky, “though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one which makes many terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself gloried in becoming a member of the human race. A member of the human race! To think that such a commonplace realization should suddenly seem like news that one holds the winning ticket in a cosmic sweepstake.”

What the foremost researchers in the field of gratitude,[Robert Emmons](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/author/Robert_Emmons) of the University of California, Davis, and[Michael McCullough](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/author/michael_mccullough) of the University of Miami, have established is that “a life oriented around gratefulness is the panacea for insatiable yearnings and life’s ills… At the cornerstone of gratitude is the notion of undeserved merit. The grateful person recognizes that he or she did nothing to deserve the gift or benefit; it was freely bestowed.” ***Gratitude works its magic by serving as an antidote to negative emotions. It’s like white blood cells for the soul, protecting us from cynicism, entitlement, anger, and resignation.***

It’s summed up in a quote I love, attributed to Imam Al- Shafi’i, an eighth-century Muslim jurist: ***“My heart is at ease knowing that what was meant for me will never miss me, and that what misses me was never meant for me.”***

**How Gratitude Can Change Your Life,** *By* [**Marelisa Fabrega**](http://www.thechangeblog.com/author/marelisa-fabrega/)

***If the only prayer you say in your life is ‘thank you,’ that would suffice. – Meister Eckhart***

Gratitude means thankfulness, counting your blessings, noticing simple pleasures, and acknowledging *everything* that you receive. It means learning to live your life as if everything were a miracle, and being aware on a continuous basis of how much you’ve been given. Gratitude shifts your focus from what your life lacks to the abundance that is already present. In addition, behavioral and psychological research has shown the surprising life improvements that can stem from the practice of gratitude. Giving thanks makes people happier and more resilient, it strengthens relationships, it improves health, and it reduces stress.

**Research Shows Gratitude Heightens Quality of Life**

Two psychologists, Michael McCollough of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and Robert Emmons of the University of California at Davis, wrote an article about an experiment they conducted on gratitude and its impact on well-being. The study split several hundred people into three different groups and all of the participants were asked to keep daily diaries. The first group kept a diary of the events that occurred during the day without being told specifically to write about either good or bad things; the second group was told to record their unpleasant experiences; and the last group was instructed to make a daily list of things for which they were grateful. The results of the study indicated that daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, and energy. In addition, those in the **gratitude** group experienced less depression and stress, were more likely to help others, exercised more regularly, and made greater progress toward achieving personal goals.

**Notice and Appreciate Each Day’s Gifts**

People tend to take for granted the good that is already present in their lives. There’s a gratitude exercise that instructs that you should imagine losing some of the things that you take for granted, such as your home, your ability to see or hear, your ability to walk, or anything that currently gives you comfort. Then imagine getting each of these things back, one by one, and consider how grateful you would be for each and every one. In addition, you need to start finding joy in the small things instead of holding out for big achievements—Another way to use giving thanks to appreciate life more fully is to use gratitude to help you put things in their proper perspective. When things don’t go your way, remember that every difficulty carries within it the seeds of an equal or greater benefit. In the face of adversity ask yourself: “What’s good about this?”, “What can I learn from this?”, and “How can I benefit from this?”

**There are Many Ways to Practice Gratitude**

A common method to develop the practice of gratitude is to keep a gratitude[journal](http://www.thechangeblog.com/keeping-journal/), a concept that was made famous by Sarah Ban Breathnach’s book “[Simple Abundance Journal of Gratitude](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/044652106X?ie=UTF8&tag=iwillchanyour-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=044652106X)http://www.assoc-amazon.com/e/ir?t=iwillchanyour-20&l=as2&o=1&a=044652106X”. This exercise basically consists of writing down every day a list of three to ten things for which you are grateful; *Last year millions of people took the challenge proposed by Will Bowen, a Kansas City minister, to go 21 days without complaining, criticizing, or gossiping.*

**Conclusion**

Once you become oriented toward looking for things to be grateful for, you will find that you begin to appreciate simple pleasures and things that you previously took for granted. ***Gratitude should not be just a reaction to getting what you want, but an all-the-time gratitude, the kind where you notice the little things and where you constantly look for the good even in unpleasant situations. Today, start bringing gratitude to your experiences, instead of waiting for a positive experience in order to feel grateful; in this way, you’ll be on your way toward becoming a master of gratitude.***

**The Miracle That Will Change Your Life**   
  
Staying positive when surrounded by—even when *submerged in*—what others might call “negativity” is easier than you think. So here is The Trick. Here is The Tool. Here is The Incredible Technique.   
  
**Bring an immediate end to judgment.** “Judge not by appearances.”   
  
When you bring an end to judgment, you bring an end to an entire way of living. This is no small thing. This is a life-changing shift in attitude and behavior. This is a miracle. But how does one perform this miracle? That is the question to which everyone wants an answer. **The way to move out of judgment is to move *into* gratitude.**   
  
That is such an important corollary that it should be plastered all over your house and everywhere in your world. This means remaining grateful for every outcome. *Every* outcome.   
  
This is about saying “thank you” for **even those things that you are sure you did not consciously choose** and that **you are very clear you do not want.**   
  
***Somebody once said, “Happiness is not getting what you want, it is wanting what you get.” That “somebody” was profoundly right.***  
Gratitude is the miracle cure for every moment of dis-ease. It is the fastest way to dissolve anxiety, to heal disappointment, to replace negativity with positivity. The next time you are confronted with any undesired outcome, result, or experience, just stop, close your eyes for the smallest moment and say inside your head, “thank you.” “Thank you for this gift, and the treasure that it holds for me.”   
  
**The ‘GPS of the Brain'**   
  
When gratitude replaces judgment, peace spreads throughout your body, gentleness embraces your soul, wisdom fills your mind. Let gratitude replace judgment and your whole experience of life will take a turn for the better in five seconds. This is because attitude is everything. Attitude puts the course correction in life when you have stepped off The Path. Attitude is like the Map of the Mind. It is like the Global Positioning Satellite of the brain.   
  
***A negative attitude will send you down the road to unhappiness. There is no avoiding it. It will absolutely happen, and it doesn't matter what the problem. A positive attitude will put you back on The Path to inner peace and happiness. Again, there is no avoiding it. It will absolutely happen, and it doesn't matter what the problem.***

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| **Three Ways to Express Appreciation for Greater Impact,** by Jack Canfield  The period between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day is the time when most people tend to demonstrate their love and appreciation.  But wouldn’t it be nice to experience that level of joy, love and appreciation every day of the year? The process begins with us.  Someone once gave me a card that said, “The love I give to you is second-hand because I experienced it first.  ” In other words, for us to love someone else, we first have to feel the love within us.  To develop the ability to maintain a state of love and gratitude on a more regular basis, we need to make it a habit. We do dozens of things every day on automatic pilot, such as eating our meals, taking showers, or doing the dishes. We don’t have to spend time visualizing these activities or putting them on our to-do lists. We simply do them out of habit. Expressing appreciation on a daily basis will help you turn gratitude into a daily habit with multiple benefits.  **Three Kinds of Appreciation**  For your appreciation to hit the mark, keep in mind that there are three different kinds of appreciation – auditory, visual and kinesthetic. These are the three ways that our brains take in information, and everyone has a dominant type they prefer. Tailor the type of appreciation you give to suit the person you want to honor.   1. **Words -** Expressing thanks verbally is the best way to let them know how much we appreciate them. Auditory people are very sensitive to the tones of our voices, so speaking in a caring and compassionate voice is highly effective. 2. **Visual -** Letters, cards, flowers, plaques, certificates, pictures and any other gifts are perfect for these individuals. 3. **Touch -** A hug, handshake, or pat on the back.   When in doubt, use all three types of communication. Tell them, show them and give them a pat on the back.  **Keep Score**  When I was working to consciously lock in this new habit, I carried a 3” x 5” card in my pocket all day. Every time I acknowledged and appreciated someone, I would place a check mark on the card. I set a goal of appreciating 10 people every day. I would not go to bed without achieving my daily quota.  I would appreciate my wife and children, write letters to my mother or stepfather, or e-mail my staff. I did this every day for 6 months, until I no longer needed the card as a reminder.  As we build the habit of appreciation, it helps to expand the circle of people whom we appreciate. ***Our society flourishes because of connections***. We literally couldn’t survive without other people. Nobody pumps their own petroleum, turns it into gas, and trucks it into their own town. Other people do it. The food we eat probably has 30 to 40 people involved in it before it gets to our tables. Although they may be strangers, the people who serve us by doing their part in making our society function deserve our thanks, too.  **Build Your Appreciation Muscle**  To build the habit of appreciation, I encourage you to keep a daily scorecard as I did. Express your appreciation to at least 10 people a day, both individuals you know intimately, as well as virtual strangers who touch your life. Experiment with the different forms of appreciation, and observe how much more deeply your appreciation is received when you find the right way to deliver it for each individual. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Thank You. No, Thank *You***

***Grateful People Are Happier, Healthier Long After the Leftovers Are Gobbled Up***

By MELINDA BECK, WSJ

*It turns out that giving thanks is good for your health.* A growing body of research suggests that maintaining an attitude of gratitude can improve psychological, emotional and physical well-being. **How Grateful Are You?** Adults who frequently feel grateful have more energy, more optimism, more social connections and more happiness than those who do not, according to studies conducted over the past decade. They're also less likely to be depressed, envious, greedy or alcoholics.

Now, researchers are finding that gratitude brings similar benefits in children and adolescents. **Kids who feel and act grateful tend to be less materialistic, get better grades, set higher goals, complain of fewer headaches and stomach aches and feel more satisfied with their friends, families and schools than those who don't, studies show**. "The key is not to leave it on the Thanksgiving table," says Robert Emmons, a professor of psychology at the University of California-Davis and a pioneer in gratitude research. Philosophers as far back as the ancient Greeks and Romans cited **gratitude as an indispensable human virtue**, but social scientists are just beginning to study how it develops and the effects it can have.

***In an upcoming paper in the Journal of Happiness Studies, Dr. Froh and colleagues surveyed 1,035 high-school students and found that the most grateful had more friends and higher GPAs, while the most materialistic had lower grades, higher levels of envy and less satisfaction with life. "One of the best cures for materialism is to make somebody grateful for what they have," says Dr. Froh.***

[***Gratitude: The Wonder Drug***](http://blogs.wsj.com/juggle/2010/11/22/gratitude-the-wonder-drug/)

Much of the research on gratitude has looked at associations, not cause-and-effect relationships; it's possible that people who are happy, healthy and successful simply have more to be grateful for. But in a landmark study in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in 2003, Dr. Emmons and University of Miami psychologist Michael McCullough showed that ***counting blessings can actually make people feel better.***

The researchers randomly divided more than 100 undergraduates into three groups. One group was asked to list five things they were grateful for during the past week for 10 consecutive weeks. The second group listed five things that annoyed them each week and the third group simply listed five events that had occurred. ***Those who listed blessings each week had fewer health complaints, exercised more regularly and felt better about their lives in general than the other two groups.***

As simple as it sounds, gratitude is actually a demanding, complex emotion that requires "self-reflection, and the ability to admit that one is dependent upon the help of others. Being grateful also forces people to overcome the innate tendency to dwell on problems, annoyances and injustices rather than upbeat events. Can people learn to look on the bright side, want what they have and be grateful for it? "Kids and adults both can choose how they feel and how they look at the world," says Andrew Greene, principal of Candlewood Middle School, who says that realization was one of the lasting legacies of Dr. Froh's research there.

Keep a journal and regularly record whatever you are grateful for that day. ***Look for things to be grateful for, and you'll start seeing them everywhere***. A Buddhist exercise, called Naikan self-reflection, asks people to ***acknowledging those who touched your life***—from the barista who made your coffee to the engineer who drove your train—and reflecting on how you reciprocated reinforces humbleness and interdependence

Adopting a more upbeat mind-set helps facilitate gratitude, too***. Instead of bonding with friends over gripes and annoyances, try sharing what you're grateful for.***

**Appreciating a Parent’s Love**

by Michael Josephson on November 20, 2012



I always knew my parents loved me. I took it for granted. They were supposed to. I was their son. I had no idea how lucky I was. Until I became a father myself, I had no way of understanding the depth and intensity of their feelings and the emotional investment they had in my happiness. I couldn’t imagine how much it must have hurt them when I was cut from a baseball team or was hurt by a friend or how proud they’d be today seeing me become the kind of parent they taught me to be.

I always assumed I loved them and they knew it, but the truth is, my love was shallow and unexplored. I never came close to feeling or expressing gratitude for all the ways they made my childhood safe, comfortable, and fun. I wish I had given him that gift.

Of course, they weren’t perfect. They had flaws like everyone else. It’s so easy to overweigh our parents’ shortcomings, under weigh their virtues, and undervalue their love. What’s not easy is experiencing and expressing gratitude while it still matters. Please do that.

**"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." ~ *Melody Beattie***

***A Thanksgiving Story***

*A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet.  He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help."  There were only a few coins in the hat. A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat.  He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words. Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy.  That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were. The boy realized the same man had returned, and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning?  What did you write?" The man said, "I only wrote the truth.  I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote: "Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it." Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective? Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.* ***The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling. And even more beautiful, is knowing that you are the reason behind it!*** *Happy Thanksgiving to all!*

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