

Gratitude Can Change Your Life

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Every day I take a few moments to appreciate who and what I have in my life. It is a time of reflection and acknowledging what is good around me.

Who and what are you grateful for?

Gratitude is described as “sincere appreciation for blessings or help we have received.” I believe that if we are not taking the time to realize those precious people and things we are grateful for, we just may be taking them for granted. Only you know what is true for you.

For me, I find so many significant benefits to feeling grateful, that I couldn't let a day go by without it. Being thankful helps me in many ways and here I've noted a few:

- The present is celebrated. I'm not referring to a present in terms of a gift; rather, I am referencing living life in the present and in the moment instead of in rewind or fast-forward. I can appreciate a child's giggle, a corny joke, a sentimental quote, a warm gesture, a sincere smile, or a gentle touch from a loved one.
- My degree of happiness dramatically increases. Life doesn't seem so tough because I am focusing on the right stuff...what is truly important to me. This increases the positive thoughts and leads me to feeling happier.
- I appreciate challenges more. It may be a tough situation that I'm faced with, but when I work through it, I have such a huge sense of accomplishment. I become stronger and wiser when working through the challenge and now I know one more thing I *can* do. Think about times in your life when you have learned the most? My guess is that learning moment happened when you were faced with some type of adversity or challenge.
- I make a difference. Saying a simple “thank you” or demonstrating real appreciation may be the single act that changes a person's perspective. Maybe someone has just heard some devastating news or experienced a huge disappointment, and all he/she really needs is a small sign of hope or inspiration. Small acts of gratitude are never meaningless. People notice and appreciate back. Maybe not to you, but often they will ponder the experience and reflect on it, if only for a moment. But that is all it takes sometimes to make a difference in the life of another individual.
- Gratitude breeds gratitude. Just like hanging around “negative Nancy's or pessimistic Paul's” seems to multiply the cancer quickly, gratitude spreads just as fast when others experience it from us. Let's spread optimism, happiness, forgiveness and gratitude. We all benefit from it in countless ways.

If you haven't ever thought deeply about who and what you are grateful for, I truly hope you are inspired to now do so. I've also found it really helpful to write in a gratitude journal, daily if your schedule allows, which includes one small aspect that you are grateful for. This “Gratitude Journal” can be an excellent resource when you find yourself in a funk or struggling with something difficult.

If you are not quite yet feeling inspired to “Go for Gratitude,” read the unknown author's words below and you likely will have the motivation you need to truly appreciate all your riches.

Be Thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire,
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?
Be thankful when you don't know something
For it gives you the opportunity to learn.
Be thankful for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.
Be thankful for your limitations
Because they give you opportunities for improvement.
Be thankful for each new challenge
Because it will build your strength and character.
Be thankful for your mistakes
They will teach you valuable lessons.
Be thankful when you're tired and weary
Because it means you've made a difference.
It is easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are
also thankful for the setbacks.
GRATITUDE can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles
and they can become your blessings.

~ Author Unknown ~