



## THE BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

My favourite happiness habit is gratitude. Practicing gratitude has changed my life. When I do it regularly I notice the following benefits.

### **Relationships**

Gratitude reminds me to express appreciation and thank others for all they do for me. As I appreciate my husband more, and tell him so, our relationship deepens. As I focused on my son's finer qualities I got less irritated (and hence nag less) with their domestic sloppiness.

### **Abundance**

As I focus on what is wonderful in my life I feel so lucky and abundant. I am finding I need less, because instead of thinking about what I don't have, I am grateful for what I do have. I also enjoy housework more, because I see myself as blessed to have a family, home and garden to care for.

### **Perspective**

My mind has a tendency to be like Velcro for the negative experiences and Teflon for the positive experiences. Gratitude helps restore perspective, so I keep remembering what is also going well in my life. As I remember what really matters, little things bother me less. It's hard to complain about the little things when you regularly feel appreciation for what really matters in life. E.g. that your loved ones are alive and healthy.

### **Challenges**

Even on difficult days, I can always find something to be grateful for. I focus on how lucky I am to have people to love, help and support me, and that our city is so well serviced and resourced.

I am even learning to be thankful for the challenges (well mostly) because I know they are giving me an opportunity to problem solve creatively and build my courage, strength and character.

### **Living in the present moment**

When I catch myself grumbling or preoccupied with a "problem" I try and remember to stop and open my eyes to see the beauty and goodness available to me right here and now. As a result I appreciate nature more, and get delight from smaller things that I might have missed before.

When we learn to look we can see beauty in everything. If we let it, every moment can become a cause for gratitude.

## TEN TOPS TIPS FOR CULTIVATING GRATITUDE

Nothing changes your attitude and mood faster than practicing gratitude. It won't happen immediately, but you can change a little at a time, by trying the following ideas.

- 1) Notice, focus and express appreciation for the positive qualities in other people.
- 2) Monitor your speech, complain less and express pleasure in whatever comes your way.
- 3) Have a daily gratitude journal or E-mail buddy and find 3-5 things you are grateful for each day. Writing about it means you get to experience it "twice over".
- 4) Selectively choose uplifting media that reminds you of how much goodness is in the world.
- 5) Wake up to your other senses (sight, smell, and sound) and notice how much pleasure and nourishment they can also give you. See how they allow you to engage with and appreciate other people and the world around you.
- 6) When we are not sick or in pain (e.g. don't have a toothache) we tend to take our wellness for granted. Regard your health as a gift, by remembering to practice "non-toothache" happiness.
- 7) Take regular breaks to pause and appreciate the beauty of the present moment, by asking you "*What's wonderful about this moment?*"
- 8) Celebrate any good things that happen. E.g. promotions, passing tests, finishing a project, anniversaries, birthdays. Marking occasions and relationships with simple or indulgent rituals help you remember what's wonderful about life.
- 9) Each time you eat; pause to remember the many factors that have made your meal possible. Nature, people who grow and distribute food, and having money and shops available to buy food.
- 10) Still struggling to feel grateful? Imagine how someone from a dictatorship or third world country would view your life. What would they appreciate that you are taking for granted?

## QUESTIONS TO CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

### BODY

- 1) What is healthy and strong about your body?
- 2) What works well in your body? (*E.g. digestion, senses, breathing*)
- 3) What is attractive about your body? (*E.g. hair, eyes, smile, hands*)
- 4) What treats did your body give you today?  
(*E.g. enjoying a delicious meal, a walk in the fresh air, the touch of a loved one*)

### THE LITTLE THINGS

- 1) Wake up and enjoy all your senses. What did you see, hear taste and touch today that you enjoyed?
- 2) What did you appreciate about the weather today? (*E.g. a beautiful sunrise, rain for the garden, a breeze to dry the washing*)
- 3) What possessions gave you comfort? (*E.g. bed, bath, heater, stereo, book*)
- 4) What possessions gave you convenience? (*E.g. computer, car, home appliances*)
- 5) What gives you a feeling of abundance? (*E.g. clothes, food, a home*)
- 6) What people have you enjoyed and appreciated today?

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Has your family, your job, your home and garden or your relationship become such hard work that you are overlooking the beauty you once saw in them?

- 1) What benefits and pleasures have you received from the things you pay for? (*E.g. heating bills mean you are warm, taxes mean you are employed*)
- 2) What are the gifts and joy in your responsibilities?  
(*E.g. a big pile of washing or dishes means you live with others, lawn mowing and housekeeping mean you have a home to live in*)

### DIFFICULT TIMES

- 1) What is going well within the difficult situation?
- 2) What is going well in your life beyond this challenge?
- 3) Which people are being supportive and kind?
- 4) What services and resources exist to help you?
- 5) What qualities and skills are you getting the opportunity to develop & learn?

[Get in touch](#) to get out of a negative rut and feel the happiness and abundance gratitude can bring to your life.