



The Grateful Life

Living with Joy
and Thankfulness



MyLife & Wishes[®]



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Introduction

What is the difference between someone who is full of joy, has a zest for life, and always seems to have a smile on their face, and someone who is grumpy, grouchy, and a total drain to be around?

Is it the amount of money they have?

Is it simply their personalities?

Is it the circumstances they're going through?

While all those things certainly can play a role in the amount of joy a person experiences, they're not the primary factor.

The primary factor is gratitude.

Gratitude has the power to change any situation. Actually, a better way of putting it is that gratitude has the power to change the way we *experience* any situation.

Being grateful may not change your circumstances, but it does change you, and that makes all the difference.

Sonja Lyubomirsky put it beautifully when she said:

Gratitude is an antidote to negative emotions, a neutralizer of envy, hostility, worry, and irritation. It is savoring; it is not taking things for granted; it is present-oriented.

This is the power of thankfulness. It has the power to change the very way we experience life. It can neutralize negative emotions and enable us to learn incredibly valuable lessons even in the midst of challenging circumstances.

Thankfulness has the potential to transform your health, both mental and physical. It can also transform your spirituality and help you attract good things into your life.

With thankfulness comes great power. And **the more you cultivate gratitude, the more power you'll experience in your life.**

In this ebook, we're going to walk step-by-step through gratefulness. What it is, why it's so powerful, and how you can begin to cultivate it in your life.

If you implement what you learn here, you'll be overflowing with gratefulness and joy each day.

Ready to get started?



Chapter 1: What Is Gratitude?

Before we get into the details of the *power* of gratitude and *how* to be grateful, let's take a step back and ensure we're on the same page regarding exactly what gratitude is.

It's important to have a clear understanding of what it is and how it works.

Gratitude Is A Way of Living

First and foremost, gratitude is a way of living. It is a state of being in which you open yourself up to *receive* good things.

It is a posture of openness, receptiveness, and willingness to receive abundance.

And when you do receive those very good things, you instinctively and consistently give thanks.

In other words, gratitude is not a one-time event where you simply say, “Thank you.” It’s an entire way of being in which you joyfully receive good things and give thanks for those good things.

The great author and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson put it this way:

Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.

So, gratitude is a habit. It’s a perpetual way of life, almost like breathing. You take in something good and breathe out gratitude.

- Receive
- Be grateful
- Receive
- Be grateful

It’s a beautiful cycle and a powerful way to live.

Additionally, gratitude encompasses all things. As Emerson said, “All things have contributed to your advancement.”

Everything in life happens for a reason, and in every circumstance, there are valuable things for us to learn. These valuable things help us *advance* in life, primarily in character.

Because all things contribute to our advancement, we must live a life of gratefulness for all things that come our way (good or bad). We’ll cover that later in the book.

A Recognition of Receiving

Gratitude comes from the recognition that you have *received* something good. In other words, you didn’t create this thing yourself.

Rather, it came from outside of you. Maybe a friend did something nice for you. Maybe the universe created a circumstance that you enjoyed. Maybe a complete stranger said a kind word.

Because you received something from outside of yourself, it means that you didn't make it. It's not like you built something through your blood, sweat, and tears. Rather, someone *gave* something valuable to you.

Gratitude is distinctly different than *earning* something. When we work hard to create something, we can say that we earned it. Gratitude, on the other hand, comes when we receive something that we have not earned.

Gratitude occurs in response to gifts.

In order to be grateful, you must regularly recognize when you have been given good things. You must cultivate the ability to look around and see when good has been done to you or given to you.

Here is a typical example where gratitude can change your view of your day;

When reflecting on the day, your mind may tend to focus on the "bad" things that happened. Or you may not recall anything good in particular. So was it a good day, a bad day or just a regular day? Practicing gratitude helps you to think through your day and focus on the good. Was it sunny? Was it warm? Was traffic light on the way to work? Did you get a parking spot right in front? Did you eat something particularly delicious? Did you have a nice conversation with someone? Gratitude is about focusing on the good and enjoyable things – big or small. Once you get into the habit of focusing on the good things, more of them will come to you.

Consider this definition of gratitude from Harvard Medical School:

...a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives ... As a result, gratitude also helps people

connect to something larger than themselves as individuals – whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

Notice how gratitude connects you to something larger than yourself. This is one of the great powers of gratitude. It takes us outside of ourselves and connects us to other people, nature, and even a higher power.

Gratitude Is an Affirmation of Goodness

Finally, gratitude is an affirmation of goodness. In other words, it's recognizing that not only have we received something freely, but that thing we received is also very good. As a result, we are grateful.

It's important to regularly be grateful for and affirm the goodness that flows into our lives.

When we focus and affirm goodness, it takes our focus off the things that we don't like about our lives.

Gratefulness is like a magnifying glass that highlights the good in our lives and minimizes the things that we're unhappy about.

Gratefulness enables us to see just how many good things we have in our lives. On the flip side, when we're not regularly grateful, we become discontent and unhappy with the way things are going.

Gratefulness and contentment go hand-in-hand, which is one of the reasons it's so powerful.

The Opposite of Gratefulness

Looking at some of the opposites of gratefulness can help us better understand exactly what it is.

The opposite of gratefulness is:

- Complaining
- Discontentment
- Envy
- Anger
- Frustration
- Thanklessness
- Unhappiness

The good news is that you can't simultaneously be grateful and be in any of the states just mentioned. You could say that gratefulness is exclusive. It expands and doesn't make room for anything else.

When you're grateful, you simply don't have space to complain or be angry or frustrated. You only have room for gratefulness.

Example; Have you ever driven by a house that you really wished you had? Or saw an outfit you really wished you could afford? Rather than focus on that, look at what you do have. What do you love about your current home? What's your favorite outfit and why? Love and be truly grateful for what you have.

Wouldn't you rather be filled with gratefulness than with envy, anger, or discontentment?

If so, then you must seek out a life of gratitude.



Chapter 2: The Power of Gratitude

Gratitude is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. When you tap into the power of gratitude, incredible things begin to happen. Things you never would've expected.

Gratitude is not simply good manners. Rather, **when you're consistently grateful, it has the power to completely revolutionize your life.**

Consider these good things that happen when you're grateful...

You Attract Good Things

The Law of Attraction says that you attract more of what you focus on.

When you're grateful, you are intentionally, purposefully, and powerfully focused on good things. You're focused on how thankful you are for the good things that have come into your life.

All your attention is given to the good things that are flowing into your life. You're receiving good and giving thanks.

Because you attract more of what you focus on, gratefulness results in attracting more good things into your life.

Put another way, being grateful puts you into a particular state of being in which you attract more of the very things that you're grateful for.

The simple reality is that like attracts like.

If you're grateful, you'll attract more things to be grateful for.

On the other hand, if you're constantly:

- Speaking negatively
- Complaining
- Envious of others
- Moaning about all the things you don't have

...you'll attract even more of that into your life.

Which would you rather attract?

Do you want to attract good things? Do you want to position yourself to constantly receive goodness?

Then start building the habit of gratefulness today.

You Experience Greater Happiness

Numerous studies have shown that being a grateful person makes you happier overall.

In fact, one study showed that being consistently grateful had the same impact on happiness as doubling your overall income!

Really, this shouldn't surprise us.

When we're grateful, we're focused on all the good things that are happening in our lives. We're focused on positive things and not wasting our energy griping about the negative.

Our energy is devoted to being thankful for the wonderful life that we have rather than the few things that we wish we had.

And the good news is that gratefulness produces a “loop” of happiness.

We're grateful → We feel happy → So we're more grateful → So we feel happier

Gratitude Deepens Your Relationships

A 2014 study found that when we thank people, it makes them want to be around us more.

In other words, if you're grateful to people, they want to spend more time with you. After all, when someone thanks us, it makes us feel good. It makes us feel like we've helped someone out.

Thankfulness is an exchange of positive energy between two people.

Would you rather be around someone who is constantly putting out the positive energy of gratefulness or someone who is constantly stewing in how unhappy they are?

The answer is obvious.

When we're grateful to people, it attracts them to us. They want to be around us and develop friendships with us. Gratefulness is magnetic.

If you want to start developing deeper friendships, start being truly grateful for and to them today.

You Become Healthier

Gratitude is not just a state of mind. It has real, direct, positive effects on your body as well.

In one study, participants were asked to either count their blessings or their burdens. The results were amazing.

Those who were asked to count their blessings:

- Had 16% fewer physical symptoms
- Spent 19% more time exercising
- Had 10% less physical pain
- Got 8% more sleep
- Had 25% increased sleep quality

Gratitude has also been shown to have a number of very specific mental health benefits, including reducing toxic emotions such as envy and regret, as well as minimizing depression.

Clearly, gratefulness is powerful when it comes to promoting good health. When we're grateful, we're actively putting out positive energy into the universe, and one of the ways that positive energy returns to us is in the form of better health.

On the flip side, when we're constantly putting out negative energy, we risk having more health challenges.

Remember, your thoughts are a form of energy. Like thoughts attract and bring like circumstances. You have control whether you attract positive or negative energies.

You Are More Optimistic

When you're grateful, you're focused on the blessings coming into your life. You're preoccupied with all the good you have rather than the things that you don't have.

The result is that you're consistently more optimistic.

You believe that good things will happen to you because you're already focused on all the good things that have happened to you.

Numerous research studies have shown this to be true. Increasing your levels of gratitude leads to increases in your overall levels of optimism.

What you focus on expands. As you focus on being grateful for all that you have in your life, your sense of well-being and optimism grows.

Suddenly, everything seems possible. When you're optimistic, your eyes are opened to the abundance of the universe and all the glorious possibilities that it offers. You begin to develop the sense that good things are always coming your way, and you really do start attracting those good things.

The famous musician Willie Nelson said, "When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."

You Become Less Materialistic

It's not necessarily wrong to want more. But if you're constantly focused on what you don't have, you'll end up feeling unhappy, ungrateful, and discontent.

When you're ungrateful, you lose much of your ability to enjoy life, and you feel more negative emotions.

On the flip side, when you're grateful, you feel a deep sense of well-being:

- You're content and appreciate what you have.
- You don't constantly compare yourself to others.
- You are more inclined to be generous.

To be clear, being grateful doesn't mean that you don't work hard or seek to make money. It simply means that you're extremely thankful for what you have.

And here's the paradox...

The more grateful you are, the more likely you are to work harder and produce more good things in your life.

Why?

Because you're already optimistic about what your efforts will produce.

James E. Faust says it this way:

As with all commandments, gratitude is a description of a successful mode of living. The thankful heart opens our eyes to a multitude of blessings that continually surround us.

You Become More Spiritual

Being grateful connects you to something bigger and greater than you. When you're grateful, you're saying, "Thank you," to something that is bigger than you. You're receiving blessings with open hands from the One who gave them to you.

When you're more spiritual, you raise your overall energy levels so that you receive even more good things from the universe, which in turn, gives you even more reasons to be grateful.

The Power of Gratitude

Are you starting to see the incredible power of gratitude? It has the power to *completely* change your life.

Gratitude can:

- Strengthen your health
- Enhance your personality
- Deepen your relationships
- Increase your overall levels of happiness
- And much more

Gratefulness has the potential to be a complete game-changer in your life.



Chapter 3: Cultivating Gratefulness

Now that you know the power of gratefulness, let's talk about *how* you can cultivate more of it in your life.

After all, it's one thing to talk about gratitude. It's something else altogether to start practicing it.

Here are a few proven practices to get you started.

Practice #1: Keep a Gratitude Journal

Keeping a gratitude journal is a simple practice with profound effects. By regularly *writing down* things that you are grateful for, you keep yourself in a highly grateful state.

Try to write down at least three things you're grateful for each day. You could do this first thing in the morning, at your lunch break, right before you go to bed, or at any other time that's convenient.

When you're writing in your journal, avoid overcomplicating it. Write down anything and everything that you're grateful for:

- Your morning cup of coffee
- Holding your daughter's hand
- Your coworker who makes you laugh
- Your car
- A beautiful sunrise
- Having a home
- Friendly, welcoming neighbors
- The smell of fresh-cut grass

The goal with your gratitude journal is to be in the habit of constantly noticing things you can be grateful for.

You want to constantly notice the good things in your life, even if those things seem relatively small and insignificant.

If the thought of writing in a gratitude journal every day seems like too much, write in it once every few days or once a week. Simply try to make it a habit. The more you get into a habit of being grateful, the easier it will be to constantly be grateful.

Practice #2: Recite Gratitude Affirmations

Gratitude affirmations work in two ways. First, you affirm that you're grateful for things that you have *already received*. So, for example, you might say something like:

I'm so grateful for all the blessings I've received this week. I'm grateful for my new job. I'm grateful for my friendships. I'm grateful for my children. I'm grateful for the delicious meal I ate last night. I am grateful for the good nights sleep I got. I'm grateful for this wonderful cup of tea I'm drinking.

These affirmations help you take notice of and be grateful for what you've already received.

In addition to affirmations for blessings already received, also consider doing affirmations for things you're going to receive.

By being grateful in advance, you allow yourself to receive things with open hands and you maintain a high state of gratitude.

Also, being grateful in advance attracts more good things into your life, which gives you more to be grateful for.

A "future" gratitude affirmation might look like:

I am grateful for the many blessings that are coming my way today, tomorrow, and every other day in the future. I receive them with open hands. I'm grateful for the physical and spiritual blessings. I'm grateful for the friendships I'll enjoy and the food I'll eat. I'm grateful for the money I'll receive and the way that I'll be able to use it to achieve much good. I'm grateful for all the good things that are in store for me.

Gratefulness both for blessings already received and blessings you will receive puts you in a constant state of gratefulness.

Practice #3: Say, Thank You."

We tend to think about gratitude only when we receive big blessings, but if we really want to cultivate gratefulness in our lives, we must get in the habit of *constantly* saying, "Thank you."

If...

- You find a quarter
- Someone holds the door for you
- You see a beautiful sunrise
- You enjoy a good meal

- Someone gives you a hug
- You're just having a good day

...say, "Thank you."

Anytime you receive anything good, no matter how small, make a concerted effort to say, "Thank you," to someone. It may be another person, the universe, a higher power or even yourself. Say it, or think it. Just acknowledge it.

This will help you be constantly grateful.

Instead of only being grateful when you receive big blessings, you'll find yourself grateful for everything, which will improve your overall mood, which will then make you even more grateful.

Practice #4: Always Find Reasons to be Grateful

In even the most challenging situations, you can almost always find something to be grateful for.

This doesn't mean that you ignore the situation and act like it isn't hard. It simply means that you look for the good in each situation.

Whenever you're facing a challenge, ask yourself these questions:

- What valuable lesson can I learn from this situation?
- What good thing can come out of this challenge?
- How can this difficulty actually make me a better person?
- In five years, how will I look back on this situation?

These questions can help you identify the good in each situation, including the most challenging ones.

Once you've identified something good, be thankful for it. Give thanks that it's making you a better, stronger, more compassionate, more thoughtful, more resilient person. Be grateful that it's stretching you to be your best possible self.

While being grateful doesn't necessarily make a bad situation good, **it helps you come through the situation a stronger person than ever before.** Gratefulness ensures that your best self always emerges from every situation.

Practice #5: Develop an Abundance Mindset

An abundance mindset believes that we live in an abundant universe and that there is more than enough for everyone. A scarcity mindset believes that there's not enough to go around.

Those who live with a scarcity mindset feel like they need to hoard resources, while those who live with an abundance mindset can gratefully give and receive, knowing there's enough for everyone.

The more you develop an abundance mindset, the more you'll be able to cultivate gratitude. You don't have to worry about having enough. You don't have to fear running out.

You can simply receive all that the universe wants to give you with gratefulness.

It's hard to be grateful when you're constantly living in fear that you'll run out. It's difficult to maintain a receptive, grateful mindset when you're worried that resources will soon be scarce.

If you want to grow in gratefulness, it's important to develop a mindset of abundance.

Practice #6: Live in the Moment

Living in the moment means being aware of each moment every day and expressing gratitude for everything that comes your way.

Remember that in each moment, everything is exactly as it should be. Be thankful during each moment.

For example:

- As you sit in traffic, express gratitude that you have time to sit and think.
- As you go throughout your workday, express gratefulness that you have a job.
- Before you eat dinner, give thanks for the meal you're about to enjoy.
- Before you go to sleep, give thanks for your bed and for the refreshing sleep you're about to experience.

Don't think about what you would rather be doing or where you would rather be. Rather, fill each moment with gratitude. Live in the moment and savor it.



Living the Grateful Life

There are few things more powerful than a life supercharged with gratefulness. As we've seen, when you're grateful, you...

- Have better health
- Live in a state of constant optimism
- Attract good things into your life
- Experience greater happiness
- Deepen your relationships
- Become more spiritual
- And so much more

You could almost say that gratefulness is like a superpower.

It's one thing to read and talk about gratefulness. But in order for you to truly tap into its enormous power, it's crucial to begin actually living a life of gratefulness.

Begin and end each day with a grateful heart and go through your day giving thanks for all the good things you have received and will receive.

Gratitude will change your life in ways that you simply never could have imagined. So, don't wait any longer. Your grateful, joyful, powerful, abundant life is waiting for you!