

'Tis the Season

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.”
- Cicero

to be Jolly? (it really can be...)

By Mary Nearpass

Abhh, the Holidays. Some people love them, some people dread them and most of us look with disdain upon those who have completed their shopping, wrapping, card writing and baking in July. These people had the patience to hit the “after Christmas” sales, as they do each year. Then there is last minute Joe, who thrives in getting it all done on December 24th. Additionally, he will not be caught dead near a mall until the day before Christmas.

Now, what would your day be like, not just in the Holiday Season, but every day, if you started and ended it by simply noticing all that you have in your life? If you counted all your assets, you would always show a profit.

When you live your life in unison with your spirit, appreciating all of life and all of your blessings, you begin to discover more joy and kindness all around you. Miracles happen everywhere, all the time, but you will only notice them when you practice a daily attitude of gratitude. You will find yourself experiencing more inner peace, and you will naturally return to a state of joy, love and peace, knowing you are whole and complete **JUST AS YOU ARE RIGHT NOW!**

Being a fond follower of David Letterman’s Top Ten Lists, I decided to piggyback on his idea and have created the following list:

“TOP TEN REASONS TO ADOPT A LAW OF GRATITUDE INTO YOUR LIFE”

1 Gratitude has NO negative side effects; only positive ones. Positive emotions make us feel good and offer a sense of comfort. When we take a few moments to express our appreciation inwardly or to another, we begin to feel happier, more relaxed and more optimistic.

2 Experiencing the daily feelings of gratitude open up your eyes to actual **MIRACLES**. When you are feeling positive and grateful, you accelerate what it is that you desire. Negative thoughts and feelings, however, create interruption in the natural flow of life. Consciously appreciating what you already have is the short cut to manifestation and the secret to your personal fulfillment.

3 Thoughts of gratitude **FLOOD** your body with immune boosting endorphins. Studies show that a positive, appreciative attitude enhances the body’s healing system and general health. Try this- when you hold feelings of thankfulness for at least 15 -20 minutes, beneficial physiological changes take place in your body. Cortisol and norepinephrine, the “stress” hormones (a.k.a. flight or fight response) begin to decrease, coronary arteries relax, an increase in blood supply reaches your heart, breathing becomes deeper and the oxygen levels in your tissues rise.

4 Feeling grateful allows you to naturally get back into the “Flow of Life” at the “Speed of Thought”. Thoughts create things. If you are feeling and thinking positive

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thoughts, you create positive situations. You draw positive people toward you. Like attracts like!

5 Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. All of a sudden, what you have is enough, and more! Gratitude turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, and confusion into clarity. It can turn a meal into a banquet and a house into a home. Gratitude even makes sense of your past, brings peace for the now and creates a positive vision for tomorrow.

6 Feelings of gratitude produce a natural high. Grateful people tend to be more optimistic, which boosts the immune system. Studies have shown that daily gratitude exercises result in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism and ENERGY! Grateful people also experience less depression and stress, are more likely to help others, exercise regularly and tend to make more progress toward personal goals. People who feel grateful are more likely to give, receive and feel loved!

7 Gratitude provides an immediate sense of well-being. Gratitude research is beginning to find that feelings of thankfulness have tremendous positive value in helping people cope with daily challenges; particularly stress.

8 Feeling grateful is the main cause of "sustained joy". Focusing on the gifts one has been given is a natural antidote to envy, resentment, regret and other negative emotions that undermine long-term happiness. Joy is the most basic form of gratitude.

9 The more you give, the more you receive! When you express love, gratitude and sincere appreciation, you naturally blossom and expand. Consciously appreciating what you already have is the path to manifestation and the hidden answer to personal fulfillment. The more you assist others, the more you will assist yourself.

10 When you are genuinely thankful, anger and fear disappear! One of the incredible truths about gratitude is that it is impossible to feel both the positive emotion of thankfulness and negative emotion such as anger or fear at the same time.

Therefore, the choice is yours. You can choose to focus on what IS working in your life and what IS right in the world, or you can stay stuck in the quicksand of depreciation. Just as an attitude of gratitude is contagious, so is that of refusing to see the good in life.

I challenge you to give this gift of gratitude to yourself first this Holiday Season. Before long, you will begin to notice that instead of complaining about all the people you have to buy gifts for, you will instead start to be grateful for having all those people in your life. Things will fall into place with little or no effort on your part when you practice gratitude. Be lavish in your gratefulness and you will be lavishly blessed in return.

Addendum: On a personal note, this month of November, 2007 marks the three year anniversary of my meeting the founder of this extraordinary publication. Since our first meeting (in the sauna, no less, being completely unaware of who Jami was), we effortlessly and naturally began to express love, gratitude and sincere appreciation toward one another. How she has touched my life, and I hope I have touched hers in return, has manifested in not only a naturally expanding friendship, but also a mutual respect for each others goals in both our professional and personal lives. Without a doubt, I have been blessed, tenfold, by the gift of knowing Jami Appenzeller-Yancey, and I consider it my honor and privilege to write for her magazine.



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