

Accessing the Power of Gratitude

by [Tracy Brown, RScP](#)

The practice of gratitude as a tool for happiness has been in the mainstream for years. Long-term studies support gratitude's effectiveness, suggesting that a positive, appreciative attitude contributes to greater success in work, greater health, peak performance in sports and business, a higher sense of well-being, and a faster rate of recovery from surgery.

But while we may acknowledge gratitude's many benefits, it still can be difficult to sustain. So many of us are trained to notice what is broken, undone or lacking in our lives. And for gratitude to meet its full healing potential in our lives, it needs to become more than just a Thanksgiving word. We have to learn a new way of looking at things, a new habit. And that can take some time.

*"Ignorant men don't know what good they hold
in their hands until they've flung it away."*
Sophocles

That's why *practicing* gratitude makes so much sense. When we practice giving thanks for all we have, instead of complaining about what we lack, we give ourselves the chance to see all of life as an opportunity and a blessing.

Remember that gratitude isn't a blindly optimistic approach in which the bad things in life are whitewashed or ignored. It's more a matter of where we put our focus and attention. Pain and injustice exist in this world, but when we focus on the gifts of life, we gain a feeling of well-being. Gratitude balances us and gives us hope.

*"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile,
but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."*
Thich Nhat Hanh

There are many things to be grateful for: colorful autumn leaves, legs that work, friends who listen and really hear, chocolate, fresh eggs, warm jackets, tomatoes, the ability to read, roses, our health, butterflies. What's on your list?

Some Ways to Practice Gratitude

- Keep a gratitude journal in which you list things for which you are thankful. You can make daily, weekly or monthly lists. Greater frequency may be better for creating a new habit, but just keeping that journal where you can see it will remind you to think in a grateful way.
- Make a gratitude collage by drawing or pasting pictures.

- Practice gratitude around the dinner table or make it part of your nighttime routine.
- Make a game of finding the hidden blessing in a challenging situation.
- When you feel like complaining, make a gratitude list instead. You may be amazed by how much better you feel.
- Notice how gratitude is impacting your life. Write about it, sing about it, and express thanks for gratitude.

As you practice, an inner shift begins to occur, and you may be delighted to discover how content and hopeful you are feeling. That sense of fulfillment is gratitude at work.

“God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today.

Have you used one to say thank you?”

William A. Ward

About Tracy Brown RScP



Founder of ReclaimJoy.com, Tracy is an accomplished coach and author who has integrated spiritual principles into her life for more than 25 years. She has provided training to more than 400,000 people and has been featured in Money Magazine, HR Magazine, Dallas CEO Magazine and dozens of other media outlets. Tracy has been the host or cohost for six internet radio shows, including the long-running "Say Yes to Spirit" on the BlogTalkRadio platform. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the governing body for Centers for Spiritual Living worldwide.