GIVING THANKS

Why It Makes You Happy, Fills You with Peace & Changes Your Life!



Krystal Kuehn, MA, LPC, LLP, NCC

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By Krystal Kuehn, MA, LPC, LLP, NCC

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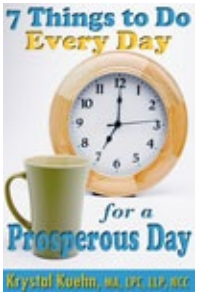


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INTRODUCTION:

The Benefits of Gratitude - You Can Have True Joy and Peace Every Day

Happiness is itself a kind of gratitude. ~ Joseph Wood Krutch

When I first came across this quote, I had to stop and think about it. Why would happiness be a kind of gratitude? According to Webster's Dictionary, to be grateful or thankful is to be conscious of a benefit being received and to be well pleased.

So does that mean when we are happy, we are receiving something that is to our benefit, something good? I think the key word here is "receive." When we receive something, we welcome it into our life. We take hold of it and experience it. Life is good. Simple blessings are all around us. Once we receive them with thanksgiving and appreciation, we experience true joy. That is why true happiness cannot exist without gratitude. **Gratitude opens our hearts to receive the good things in life with joy.**

When we do not receive a new day as a gift and blessing, but rather dread it and complain, we are not receiving the benefit and joy it can bring us. When we do not receive love and kindness offered to us, or the help and opportunity made available to us, we do not benefit from them, and we do not experience the joy and gratitude they can bring us.

So, is being happy, in a way, also being grateful? I would say that it certainly is. However, I do not believe we necessarily have to be conscious of all our blessings and benefits in order to be grateful and happy. Do you ever wake up singing for no particular reason? Do you feel the warmth of a smile? Do you watch in awe as a baby explores its world? Do you take in the beauty of a flower garden? Do the aroma and taste of your favorite foods bring you satisfaction? Does music move you? Do friendships energize you? Does love make you feel alive?

Life is good and there are so many reasons to have a thankful heart. Simple pleasures and blessings fill our days and the opportunity to enjoy them is always there. Sometimes we need to slow down and remember to receive the good things in life. We can choose to receive and appreciate someone’s warm smile as it warms our heart. We can choose to receive the opportunity to share in a child’s world of wonder and discovery. We can choose to take in the beauty and awesome design of nature and life all around us.

We can choose to receive and experience the good things in life to the fullest. This happens when we look for the good in everything and everyone. We recognize and are thankful for the benefits to us and others. We appreciate the simple things. We choose to focus on the good and humbly receive it. Gratitude influences our perceptions, and we cannot help but see that life is good. And we can choose to receive its goodness which fills us with true joy and peace.

Following is a compilation of articles from what started as a gratitude journal. Expressing and writing about my gratitude turned out to be a very rewarding experience and I found that it had no end. So this is just the beginning. It is my hope that it inspires gratitude in your heart and life as you make gratitude an ongoing part of your experience.

May you receive all the benefits of gratitude and be filled with life-changing joy and peace every new day!

Where there is gratitude, there is true happiness. Gratitude opens our hearts to receive the good things in life with joy. ~Krystal

Give Thanks that Life is Good



I am thankful… that life is good

One of the simplest and greatest insights I have ever learned is that a heart of gratitude is essential to true happiness. I have always believed that love is the foundation to a truly blessed life and I still do. However, we can be loved unconditionally and even learn to love ourselves and others without practicing gratitude.

There is a difference between knowing that someone loves us and being grateful that he or she accepts us just the way we are. Knowing we are loved, we might take it for granted or even reject that love. However, if we are thankful that we are loved and accepted unconditionally, we are more likely to receive that love with joy and appreciation. Gratitude causes us to cherish and value something. This, in turn, brings us joy. There is a difference between loving someone's sense of humor and being thankful for the times of laughter we enjoy with him or her. There is also a difference between loving our innate strengths and talents and being thankful that we can use them to help and bless others.



Gratitude helps us to put love into action. It helps us to experience love and to live it out. For example, I love my Godmother and really enjoy spending time with her. Just recently, we had a wonderful time together celebrating my birthday. She made it so special. I truly felt loved, but more than that, I was so grateful for everything she did to make it memorable. Love made me feel good and gratitude brought me joy. I notice that the more I reflect on the reasons I am thankful, the more appreciation and joy I experience.

A very effective way to increase our daily experience of gratitude and joy is to make it a habit to list at least three things we are thankful for at the end of each day. I remember when I first began putting this into practice years ago. I was surprised by how many little things were real blessings to my day. I typically would not have thought much of them and probably would have taken them for

granted. And I am talking about simple things like being thankful for having good weather so I could ride my bike, watching a funny movie with my family, discussing the day's events with my husband, running into an old friend, getting a big hug from my son, hearing a new song I like, and so on.

Practicing gratitude is powerful and life-changing! Scientific research has validated its effect on boosting our mood. As little as one week of practicing gratitude, by simply reflecting on the simple things we appreciate and are thankful for throughout the day, has been found to make a significant improvement to one's mood for up to 6 months!

The more I disciplined myself to take notice of the good things in life, the more I began to recognize just how much there is to be thankful for. Napoleon Hill said, "Your big opportunity may be right where you are now." Our greatest opportunity right now is to appreciate life, know that it is good, and enjoy it. We seize that opportunity every time we reflect on our blessings and give thanks!

What you focus on expands, and when you focus on the goodness in your life, you create more of it. Opportunities, relationships, even money flowed my way when I learned to be grateful no matter what happened in my life. ~Oprah Winfrey

Joy is a heart full and a mind purified by gratitude. ~Marietta McCarty

Gratefulness is the key to a happy life that we hold in our hands, because if we are not grateful, then no matter how much we have we will not be happy -- because we will always want to have something else or something more. ~ David Steindl-Rast

Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude. ~- Denis Waitley

Give Thanks for a New Day



I am thankful... for a New Day

Take a moment and think about how you began your new day. When you woke up this morning, what was the first thing that you began to think about? How did you feel about today?

From the start of our day, we unconsciously decide what kind of day we are going to have by how we think and feel about it. The attitude toward which we approach our coming hours, ours plans, goals and responsibilities determines what kind of day we are going to have.

If we are thankful to be alive, we will appreciate today. If we look forward to the day with anticipation, we will be excited about today. If we expect our day to be filled with problems, we will approach today with dread.

Today we woke up to new mercies, new challenges and problems, new hopes, new joys, and new reasons to be thankful. What we choose to focus on is up to us. There is an old proverb that says, *As a man thinks in his heart, so is he*. If you think you are blessed, you are. If you think you are defeated, you are. If you see obstacles as mountains that cannot be moved, you will not try to remove them. If you see obstacles as stumbling stones that can be overcome, you will overcome them. Think like a winner and you will be a winner!

Choosing gratitude, happiness, optimism, and hope is a daily decision. The choices we make determine what kind of day we are going to have as well as our destiny. It is a life principle--what we believe and act upon brings results in our lives. Those who develop their faith and belief in themselves and God have the power to live each day fully, successfully, and with true joy. How do we develop a strong and positive faith? Like all good things in life, it takes practice. Practice focusing on the solution instead of the problem and you will conquer it. Practice starting each day with thanks and good things will come your way. Practice looking for the best in everyone and you will find it. Practice seeing yourself as a

winner and you will walk in confidence and accomplish great things. The power of faith is available to all of us. But, some of us put our faith in fear, defeat, or failure. Faith works either way--for good or for bad. Let your faith work wonders in your life. Start each new day believing for a good day and you will have it!

When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive – to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love. ~Marcus Aurelius

Today let's concentrate on being happy. Live life like a child! If you capture the spirit of a child, life becomes much easier. Never let life pressures bring you down! This is the day the Lord has made - we will rejoice and be glad in it! ~Rev Run

Give Thanks for a Healthy Mind & Emotions



I am Thankful…. for A Healthy Mind & Emotions

If we stop to think about it, there are so many things to be grateful for. As I was reflecting on all the good things, people, and blessings I enjoy, I starting compiling a long list. It seemed it would never end. In all actually, it never will end because our blessings are new every morning. Following are some of the ways I am Thankful for A Healthy Mind and Emotions.

1. I am thankful to be free from negativity.

A while back I decided that I was going to stay away from as many negative influences as I possibly could. I ended some unhealthy relationships in the process. I realized that being around critical, negative people was not only unpleasant, but it rubbed off on me. Being around more optimistic, hopeful people surrounded me with a positive influence that was energizing and motivating. I can minimize negative influences in my life by making better choices in what I watch and read as well. Good and wholesome, edifying and positive influences help to keep my mind and emotions healthy.

2. I am thankful for peace in my mind and heart.

Fear, worry, anxiety and depression…They all rob me of inner peace. Whenever I get overwhelmed with stress and its negative effects, I immediately take a time out. I know how discouragement can keep us down if we let it. It leads to self-pity and ultimately to defeat and despair. Years of experience have taught me that bad times don't last forever. Things that seem so pressing right now are not as important as I make them to be in the big scheme of things. I remind myself: this too shall pass. I slow myself down. I recall the source of my help and the many times I have overcome in the past. I draw on my inner strengths and trust in God to help me. As busyness and distractions subside, I begin to see things from a more realistic and hopeful perspective. I become free of things that once bound me and shook my confidence, threatened my security, and dimmed my hope. I have new courage to take necessary steps for change. I gain wisdom and

learn to accept what is not in my control. Peace returns to my mind and heart.

3. I am thankful that I can learn from my mistakes.

When I make mistakes or say and do things I later regret, I found that I end up with two choices. I can either entertain feelings of guilt, regret, anger, blame, or I can take responsibility, apologize if necessary, and learn from my mistakes and regrets. Beating myself up over something doesn't really teach me a lesson. It just makes me more upset and frustrated with myself. Realizing this has taught me the importance of forgiving myself and accepting that I am not perfect, no one is. I can extend the same grace to myself as I do to others when they miss it. I don't want to punish them by constantly reminding them of their mistakes. Nor do I want to reject them for their human weaknesses and imperfections. In the same way, I will not punish myself by holding on to guilt, anger, and regret. I believe we can become better if we will learn from our mistakes and regrets, know when to let them go, and come out better as a result.

4. I am thankful that I can appreciate and like who I am.

It's not easy to love others when we do not love ourselves. Once I realized the importance of this simple truth, I decided to stop complaining about the things I didn't like about who I am. Instead, I started to change the things I could and accept the things I could not change. As a result, I was more able to appreciate myself and my unique God-given gifts and talents. The more I did this, the more I noticed and received the appreciation and love I got from others. My desire to be my best really began to flourish and bring much joy to me. It was simply accepting and liking myself that enabled me to love and bless others with all that I am.

5. I am thankful that I have control over my thoughts.

I can choose what I want to think about. Negative thoughts cannot stay if I do not allow them to. It seems the more we focus on something that is bothersome to us, the more if affects our mood and overall outlook. For this reason, I do not spend too much time thinking about life's disappointments and losses. Instead, I think about how to overcome them and I recall past victories. I have control over my thoughts and I can focus on things that build my faith, make me strong and hopeful, and encourage me. Sometimes I need to remind myself that my thought life is in my control. No one can put thoughts in my mind that I have to receive. I

can decide what will stay and what will go. Although I may not be able to control how I feel, I can control what I choose to think and dwell upon and what I choose to do.

6. I am thankful that when I forgive, I am free.

There is no prison like that of unforgiveness. It keeps us bound to bitterness, resentment, and unhappiness. It hurts us more than it hurts anyone else. For this reason, forgiving is more a benefit to us than it is to the person(s) who hurt us. I have learned that if my willingness to forgive is contingent on apologies or justice, it may never happen. I have to do it for me. It is not easy. Actually, it can be the most difficult thing we ever do for ourselves. Forgiving is a process. It begins with a decision to release whoever or whatever it is we are holding on to. I do this believing that people reap what they sow. You can't sow thistles and expect to reap daffodils. When people sow deceit, gossip, greediness, selfishness, and so on, they reap its fruit. When I choose to sow forgiveness, I reap peace and freedom. I am thankful that my mind and emotions can heal when I forgive.

7. I am thankful that I can know and experience love.

I believe God is love and when we receive His amazing love, it works miracles in our lives. I once said: The power of love is amazing and never-ending. It can motivate, energize, inspire, and strengthen. Love can do in a person what nothing else can do. Love has the power to revive and change lives, restore relationships, and bring healing. All else may fail, but love never fails. When you think about it, most of the love we know and experience has to do with relationships. That is why I do a great deal of writing on the topic (see **The 10 Keys to Happy and Loving Relationships**). Love is the foundation of healthy and successful relationships. Love is what we live for. I am thankful for the experience of giving and receiving love.

8. I am thankful that I can live a lifestyle of true and lasting joy.

True and lasting happiness is not something we can pursue as much as it is a lifestyle we live. I have learned that our lives are made up of many habits. Some are good and some are bad. It all shapes who we are and contributes to our well-being and happiness. When we make a deliberate effort to be our best, we find we have to change some things. Since I came to this conclusion, I began to

replace some old and bad habits with new and healthy ones. I practiced seeing the glass half full rather than half empty. I practiced patience to keep myself from acting on impulse. I allowed myself to make mistakes rather than be driven by perfection. I learned to relax and be at peace rather than become worried and anxious. It takes determination, self-discipline, and lots of practice to break old habits and establish new ones. Changing and improving our lifestyle is actually shaping our character and becoming our best. I want to fulfill my potential and I realize that the only way to do so is to live a lifestyle of health, happiness, and love. I am thankful that this is possible and I have all the tools I need to be all that I am destined to be.

Far from being exhaustive, the above list is just a start to the many reasons I am thankful for a healthy mind and emotions. In making this list, I am reminded of the very active role I need to take in maintaining good mental health. This list also helped me to identify the many things I can do to keep mentally and emotionally healthy.

Just like the physical body, there are times when we may not be feeling very well. When our bodies are sick, they may need some extra rest, healing, medicine, surgery, or some other attention. When our minds and emotions are going through difficulties, some comfort, support, changes in perception, insight, clarification of distorted thinking, forgiveness, boost in our natural feel good chemicals, counseling, love and unconditional acceptance can really do us some good.

Give Thanks for a Fit & Healthy Body



I am Thankful… for A Fit & Healthy Body

The first entry in this gratitude series focused on mental and emotional health. Here I will share my gratitude for physical health which I believe is a very significant part of our overall well-being. We sometimes overlook the mind and body connection, focusing on one or the other when trying to resolve problems. I know I did until I began to learn and discover how close this connection really is. A weak or sick body can have an influence on a person's mood or motivation. A strong and fit body can positively affect self-confidence, mental vigor and focus. Physical healing can be affected by a person's faith and determination. A negative attitude or perspective can sap a person's strength and energy. Taking care of our bodies is a challenge as well as a privilege. Following I will share the many ways in which I am Thankful for…A Fit and Healthy Body.

1. **I am thankful for this body I live in.**

I once wrote an article in which I compared our bodies to an automobile. In it I said we would probably take much better care of our automobiles if we had just one in our lifetime. Another way I like to look at our bodies is as our home, where our soul and spirit reside. Looking at it this way makes it a very special place. We are a living, breathing temple. We have just one body in our lifetime. Caring for it is a big responsibility, and I want to do my best to keep it healthy and functioning optimally. I also want to appreciate my uniqueness. No one looks exactly like me. I may wish some things were different, but I am going to make the best of what I have. I am thankful that I can love and care for this body I live in.



2. **I am thankful that I can improve my body**.

There is so much we must do on a daily basis to take care of our bodies. We

must provide our bodies with good nutrition at least 3 times a day so they have enough energy to function efficiently. Proper hygiene and grooming are also necessary to keep them clean and looking good. If we want to increase our endurance, strength, and improve how our bodies function, we must exercise. Caring for our bodies is a big responsibility as well as an opportunity to feel good and look better. It's not always easy, however. It takes effort and persistence in exercising and changing our food intake before we begin to see some results. After gaining some weight over the winter, I was determined to get into better shape. I began a more vigorous exercise program and cut out desserts (except for dark chocolate). It wasn't too long before I could fit into my favorite jeans again. I am thankful that there are things I can do to look better and improve my body. I do not have to accept unhealthy habits or sickness. I can do something about them. I can do my part to make my body function better and I will get good results.

3. I am thankful for our God-given senses.

Sometimes I will reflect on the simple blessings we are given in being able to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. I remember when I went to the eye doctor and got a new prescription. I didn't think my vision changed very much until I put on my new contacts. All of a sudden, as I looked all around I became really excited. I kept saying, "I can see." Everything was so clear. I didn't know what I had been missing. I was so thankful to see the outline of the clouds in the sky, the detail in the buildings ahead, and the clarity of colors everywhere. I am very thankful for clear vision. When I enjoy the taste and aroma of delicious foods, I am thankful for the senses that enable me to have this pleasurable experience. A sinus infection that kept me congested for weeks made it very difficult for me to smell or taste much of anything. I sure was thankful when it cleared up, and I was thankful for the little blessings I often take for granted. I am often reminded of the many reasons to be thankful for our hearing. I love music and spend a great deal of time playing and listening to it. I am also thankful for touch. Our bodies can experience all kinds of enjoyable physical sensations. As I think about all the amazing and beautiful things we can enjoy because of our senses, I am so thankful.

4. I am thankful for hands and feet.

Our hands and feet represent where we go and what we do. When my mother began to have problems with her knees, her ability to go where she wanted and

needed to go was significantly hindered. She couldn't walk for very long before she would have pain and discomfort in her legs. Her experience always reminds me to be thankful. I love to go for long walks and I enjoy walking, climbing, and exercising that require healthy legs, knees and feet. I am also thankful for the many things I can do well with my hands like play my guitar and work on the computer. A musician friend of mine has problems with arthritis in his hands that limit how long he can play. He is thankful for the ability to still play and he does not let it stop him. Fortunately, he has found some natural remedies that are helpful and keep his hands working. With our hands and feet, we work and serve others. We dance, jump, and play. I take the time right now to give thanks that I am able to work and serve, enjoy life, and go where I need to go and do what I need to do.

5. I am thankful for smiles and laughter.



I truly believe the words of this quote: There is no cosmetic for beauty like happiness. ~Lady Marguerite Blessington. A bright and happy smile on a person's face is so beautiful. I think people look their very best when they have inner peace and joy. It shines through their eyes and smile. One of the best ways to bring a smile to our faces is through laughter. I am so thankful that laughter is an inborn trait we all have. I believe we ought to laugh more often. This nonverbal form of communication creates a positive energy and is highly contagious! Laughter is not only good for our mental health; it is also good for our bodies. I heard a doctor describe it as "internal jogging" and a great way to relax our muscles, lower our blood pressure, and release endorphins. I am thankful for the gift of laughter. I can laugh at myself more often and not take life too seriously. There are many things that can make me laugh and smile. I make it a point to smile at people. I like the way I feel when people smile at me. I am thankful that I can express warmth, love, and joy when I smile and laugh.

Give Thanks that We Can Live Above Problems



I am thankful that I am above problems.

I notice that dwelling on problems makes them seem bigger than they really are. Molehills look like insurmountable mountains. Delays suddenly appear as dead ends. Annoyances are interpreted as personal attacks. We can make ourselves miserable by focusing on what is wrong, uncomfortable or frustrating. Having learned how quickly this causes me to lose my joy and peace of mind, I make it a point to refocus as quickly as I can on possibilities and positive outcomes. I can cope with the molehills. I can see myself on the other side of the mountain. Delays may test my patience, but I can pass this test. They might motivate me to make alternate plans. I can recall times when delays have turned out to be blessings in disguise. Annoyances do not have to spoil my mood or bring out the worst in me. Some people get so upset if a driver cuts them off that they start cursing and their blood pressure rises. It takes some time afterwards to calm down and shake off the agitation. There will always be people and situations that will bother us or push our buttons. We cannot control it, but we can control how we react and whether or not we will focus on the problem or sensible solutions. I want to remain hopeful when I face problems. I will seek out answers and solutions, but if I do not have any, I will not give up. I will see myself as an overcomer and continue to believe and pray for direction and answers until I have what I need. I am thankful that as I focus on the possibilities and trust that things will work out, problems and cares of this world cannot keep me down.

Give Thanks for Good Advice



I am thankful... for good advice

There are times when we do not know what to do. There are choices we have to make and we are not sure what is best. At times like these, it helps to hear another perspective, another point of view. Sometimes we have the opportunity to turn to someone who truly cares and has our best interest at heart. He or she may have words of wisdom to guide and direct us and words of encouragement to strengthen us. It never ceases to amaze me how one word, one truth, one principle received and acted upon can change a life forever! I have seen the course of people's lives positively redirected by a simple truth that lighted their path and led them in a new direction.

I recall having to make an important decision that would determine the direction of my future. I faced two distinctly different paths, and I had to choose one. For weeks I struggled at the crossroads until I felt completely exhausted and confused. Then I recalled a question my friend asked me. She asked me which path would cause me to be more connected to others and allow me to serve them with my gifts. As I reflected on that question, I knew which path I had to take. It meant I had to give up something I wanted. It was very difficult at first. There were even times when I thought I made a mistake. I had to remind myself of the commitment I made and put in writing. It helped me, and today I am so grateful that I stuck with it and followed the wise counsel of my friend. Today I know I made the right decision and I am so thankful.

Whether it is a future marriage partner or a career path, we may come to a crossroads and not know which way to go. Should we marry this person? Is this who we want to spend the rest of our lives with? What career do we want to pursue? Can we see ourselves doing this 10 or 20 years from now? Is this how we want to invest our time and talents? These are important decisions and although we have to ultimately make them on our own, it is a good idea to consider the wise counsel and good advice of a caring, loving person whether it is a close friend, family member, or a professional. It can help lead us on the best

course for our lives for which we will be forever grateful!

Give Thanks for Positive People



I am thankful... for positive people

We have heard that laughter is contagious, but did you know that happiness is contagious as well? I just read about a 20 year research study that showed a person is 15 percent more likely to be happy if they have a close friend or family member that is happy. It also showed that happy people tend to stick together. This makes perfect sense. I notice that the more I commit to being the best I can be and living a lifestyle of true happiness, the more I am drawn to positive and happy people. It is so nice to be around optimistic people with a good attitude.

Were you ever around someone who points out what is wrong with everything and everyone, gives reasons to worry and fear, and complains about how unfair life is? Or, someone who tells you why you should give up on your goals and dreams because you don't have what it takes. Negative people can put fear and pessimism in you if you let them. It can be difficult being around them because they tend to create a negative atmosphere as they focus on everything they don't like or that is wrong. Just as happiness and a positive outlook are contagious, so is negativity. It is no wonder that happy, positive people stick together. They try to avoid negative influences because they know how destructive and hopeless they can be. Positive and happy people are like lights in the world. They brighten our days and bring encouragement and hope wherever they go. I am so thankful for people with positive outlooks. They remind me that life is good. They remind me to enjoy life, laugh more often, appreciate my blessings, believe for the best, trust God, stay full of faith and hope and give thanks always. Being a positive, happy person is a lifestyle. Whether conscious of it or not, pessimism becomes a bad habit with continual practice just as optimism becomes a good and healthy habit with continual practice and application.

I am thankful that I can be positive, hopeful, and happy, and make it a habit for life!

Give Thanks for Simple Acts of Kindness



I am thankful... for simple acts of kindness

Did you ever go shopping and get a survey request with your receipt? Most people don't take the time to give their input unless it's especially positive or negative. Well, I had one of those especially positive experiences yesterday. I was shopping for some kitchenware and was so impressed and thankful with the help I received from one of the employees. He went over and above to be helpful and even gave me some good tips. Did you know that you can take off those stickers glued on your purchases that won't peel off by simply using a blow dryer? I never knew this. I thought goo gone was my most viable option. Anyways, this employee gave me that tip and it worked. When I peeled the stickers off so effortlessly, I couldn't help but think of Ivan. I was thankful for people like him. Then I thought about how the simplest little things can leave an impression on us and improve our lives in some way. I also thought about Ivan's kindness and warmth that was not only evident in his service, but also in his loving and joyful personality.

Simple acts of kindness keep people in our hearts and memories. It's almost like they keep us connected to them in a loving and positive way. Did you ever come across someone whom you have long forgotten and they tell you they still remember the words you said to them long ago that really helped them, or the gift you gave that they really appreciated, or what you did for them that was so helpful? I don't think we even know how much we touch other people's lives and bless them. Simply being kind, helpful, loving, encouraging, and thankful has lasting impact! I am so thankful for beautiful people who come across my path. I am thankful that I can be the recipient of other people's kindness and love. I am thankful that every day I have the opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to others and bless their day. I am thankful that I can make a difference by the smallest acts of kindness. I am thankful that kindness and love bring us together and fill us with lasting gratitude and appreciation.

Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into

joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings. ~William Arthur Ward

Can you see the holiness in those things you take for granted–a paved road or a washing machine? If you concentrate on finding what is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul. ~ Rabbi Harold Kushner

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. ~Albert Schweitzer

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle. ~Albert Einstein

Give Thanks that Our Words Can Encourage & Motivate Others



I am thankful… that my words can encourage and motivate others

It is amazing how a simple compliment and words of appreciation have the power to encourage and brighten someone's day. When I was a kid, I recall a magnet on the refrigerator. It said, "Give someone's day a little lift, give a kind word as a gift." Even a simple "thank you" or "you look nice today" can be encouraging and remind us that we are appreciated.

The other day, I thanked one of my son's teachers for the positive impact she was having on his learning. He enjoys her class and was so inspired by a movie she showed the students that he purchased the DVD. When I told her this, she was very surprised. She said she often wondered if her students were getting anything from her class. Learning that she is having an impact made her so happy. She smiled as she repeatedly thanked me for letting her know. I was so glad I did.

Too often we have an opportunity to say something kind or encouraging, but we keep it to ourselves. If we only knew how much of a positive impact our compliments and words of appreciation can have, I am sure we would share them more often. Every time I get positive feedback or am told of how something I wrote or did helped someone, I am encouraged. It brightens my day. I don't think we can ever feel too appreciated. I am so thankful that every day I have a chance to show kindness and appreciation to others. My words can encourage and motivate others. I am thankful that I can use them to really make a difference!

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. ~Albert Schweitzer

The seeds of discouragement cannot take root in a thankful heart. ~Joel Osteen

Give Thanks for Restful Sleep



I am thankful....for restful sleep

Waking up refreshed and alert after a sound night of sleep is a great way to start a new day. We feel energized and ready to face new opportunities and challenges. It feels good to know we can be our best because we are more focused, calm and productive. I truly appreciate the gift of rejuvenating sleep. There was a time when I struggled with sleep problems. I wasn't getting enough of the quality sleep that affects every area of our lives (health, productivity, relationships, safety, and work). As a result, I could not be as productive as I wanted to be, and I was tired throughout the day.



For years I tried everything I could think of to get better sleep. I tried many psychological techniques as well as any other tips that sounded like they might help. They did help to a point, but there was still an underlying problem. It wasn’t until I learned that I had a magnesium and vitamin D deficiency, that the sleep problem was resolved.

Supplementation was what I needed and it has worked for me ever since. I am grateful for this insight. I am also grateful for the many tips I have learned on my quest to getting better sleep. The one I find to be most helpful is to relax the body and mind by slowing down physically and mentally. Deep breathing works well for the body. For the mind, I have to stop working mentally. If necessary, I write down what I want to remember for later and let go for the time being. The goal is to have a peaceful state of mind, free of worries, cares or unresolved anger. Another tip that I find extremely helpful is to think about at least 3 reasons to be thankful for this day. It focuses my mind on what is good and it reminds me that I am blessed in many ways that are so easy to overlook or simply take for granted. I value good physical and mental health. And I appreciate the amazing ways the body and mind work together. Restful sleep isn't just a necessity. It is good for our overall health and well-being. I am so

thankful for the refreshing that comes from a great night of sleep that prepares me to enjoy and appreciate a new day!

Give Thanks for Work Opportunities



I am thankful.... that there is always work to do

Work keeps our minds occupied. It forces us to set and meet goals that lead to a sense of accomplishment. It encourages us to put our skills and talents to use. Work helps us to develop confidence in what we can do and how we can contribute. It connects us to other people. It is an essential part of our lives and a human need.

So how about those who have lost their jobs and cannot find work? Or, how about those with a disability or illness that leaves them unable to join the workforce? Are they resigned to feel idle, useless, or bored? Absolutely not! So long as we are alive, there is work for us to do. Getting paid for a job is not the only thing that constitutes real work. Work is any assignment, duty, or undertaking. It is anything that keeps us busy using our energy in positive ways. It includes simple things like giving someone a ride to the store, mowing the lawn, researching an idea, praying for a need, helping a neighbor, tucking children into bed, cleaning the house, preparing dinner, calling a lonely friend. All of these activities require some effort and skill. They all contribute to making life better or easier for someone. And they all require a willingness to give and to do what we are able.

Every morning presents us with new work opportunities for the day. There may be things we will enjoy and look forward to and others that we will dislike and even dread. But there is always something for us to do. If we are already busy and occupied with plenty to do, it would be wise for us to prioritize our time and make the best use of it. However, if we have more time on our hands than we know what to do with, we ought to invest our time in some short and long term goals that are important to us.

Time spent can never be retrieved. Once it is gone, it is gone forever. All that is left are memories and the consequences of the choices we have made. Let us not waste time. Wasting time is like letting life pass us by. It is letting dreams die and relationships fade. It is missing our potential and settling for less than we

were meant to be. May we choose to appreciate our days and use our time with wisdom and purpose today and always.

Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should. ~Psalm 90:12

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something which must be done, whether you like it or not. Work breeds a hundred virtues that idleness never knows. ~Charles Kingsley

Give Thanks for Changing Seasons & Routines



I am thankful.... for changing seasons & routines

Longer days, kids out of school, and ample opportunities to enjoy the outdoors makes summer not only fun, but a departure from our regular routines. Many of us like to stay up late and sleep in if we can. It is not easy coming in for the day and getting ready for bed when the sun is still shining, and you hear kids playing outside and people mowing their lawns.

Our routines often change in the summer. For many, it is a time of less structure and more flexibility. This summer I made a new routine to bike ride in the early morning or later in the evening. I also changed the time I go to bed to very late at night. My family has no set meal times, and I don't cook as consistently as I usually would during other seasons.

I have enjoyed this new, flexible schedule all summer long. I know that it will soon have to change and become much more structured as the new season begins. It will take some time to adjust, but it is something that I am looking forward to as well.



Routines help us to organize and manage our time. School begins and ends at the same predictable time every day. This helps students plan their days and schedule time for homework, extracurricular activities, and socializing. Adults with busy jobs have to organize their time around their work and family responsibilities. A consistent routine can help them to prioritize and make better plans to use their time wisely and most efficiently.

Having routine in our lives is healthy. It keeps us on task. It helps us to anticipate and look forward to things to come. It gives us some sense of predictability and control. Routines are shaped by our priorities, responsibilities, work, school, the seasons... We can always change them as necessary. We can also add new

routines to our lives as we develop new goals and habits or encounter new or unexpected situations. I am thankful that we can have a good and healthy balance of structure and flexibility. I am thankful that changing seasons and routines can help us to organize our time and priorities. I am thankful that they can give us a sense of stability, predictability and security. And I am thankful that the changing seasons and routines help us to prepare for and anticipate good things to come!

To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind than to be hopelessly in love with spring. ~George Santayana

People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy. ~Anton Chekhov

They must often change, who would be constant in happiness or wisdom. ~Confucius

Give Thanks that One Person Can Make a Difference



I am thankful.... that one person can make a difference

The other day we had the opportunity to vote in the primary elections. I was talking to someone about it and he told me that he didn't want to waste his time. He said it was because he believed his vote wouldn't make a difference anyway. Can you imagine if we all felt this way? Every one of us has a voice to be heard and every one of us counts. The attitude that our efforts are unimportant and worthless can transcend into the many other areas of our lives. It will keep us from speaking up because we think no one will listen. It will keep us from giving, because we think it won't ever be enough anyway. It will keep us from believing, because we won't stretch our faith, try to accomplish great things, or hope for miracles.

This man's comments made me think about all the people who believed that they could make a difference even if they were the only one to take the steps of faith necessary to accomplish their goals and dreams. I thought about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mother Theresa, and the countless others we may never know by name. We enjoy their contributions today and are blessed by the fruit of their fortitude. There are nonprofit foundations that are changing lives every single day that began with just one person willing to believe, make sacrifices and take action.

I understand not everyone is called to be a pioneer, world changer, or entrepreneur. But that doesn't exempt any one of us from doing our part to make a difference right here, right now. I recall what a professional counselor once said: It takes just one caring person to make a difference in the life of a hurting child. I never forgot her words. They are so true. If we ever think for a minute that we have nothing to offer that can make a positive difference in this world, we ought to think again. Our words, time, kindness, love, service, sharing, wise counsel, understanding, hugs can all make a positive difference in someone's life. I am so thankful that we don't have to wait around for someone else to change the world. We can all do our small part today and make this

world a better place.

Give Thanks for God's Grace



I am thankful...for God's grace

We always have something to be thankful for! I love this quote: *If you can't be thankful for what you receive, be thankful for what you escape. ~unknown*

Just yesterday as I was driving through a construction zone, I almost got rear ended when I stopped at a light. The person behind must not have seen the light change. When the driver suddenly realized I was stopped for the red light, he slammed on his brakes and started turning his wheel into the construction zone to avoid hitting me. Thankfully, I saw this in my rear view mirror so I let up on the brake and tried to give him more room to stop without moving into oncoming traffic. That was close! I was so thankful that an accident was averted and I could go along my way without any problems, delays, or injury. I believe there are many times we escape problems or accidents without even knowing it. It is good for us to remember to not only be thankful for all our blessings and for the good things in life, but we can also be thankful for what we escape! We can be thankful for God's grace!

Give Thanks for the Opportunity to Serve



I am thankful.... for the Opportunity to Serve Others

To serve others demands selflessness and sacrifice. So how can it be something to be thankful for? Do we really want to put the needs of others before our own? In most cases, we honestly do not. We may even become agitated when our goals are blocked or when we have to change our plans to accommodate someone else's need. This has happened to all of us. We give our time, attention, resources, whatever is needed of us, and we are not too happy about it. What I learned recently is that this is not only a sacrifice, but it is an opportunity to serve. After reading a story about a man who spent much of his life serving, I pondered on his life and his words. He said that his purpose for living was to serve. Serving people was his privilege and calling. It filled his life with purpose and meaning. Being a very spiritually-minded man, he had his mind and heart set on things above, things eternal. His treasure was in heaven and he found no greater joy. The more I thought about this, the more convicted I became. I am thankful to have come across this man's testimony. It caused me to reflect and repent. What became so much more important to me than serving? Why was it difficult for me to accept my present station in life? Maybe it is because my focus became self-centered causing me to temporarily forget what really matters and the joy in giving and serving from the heart. I believe there is no greater purpose in living than to serve others and our God. It only becomes a dreaded chore or burden when we do it grudgingly. It is my prayer that I serve with a willing, obedient, and cheerful heart that is full of gratitude. It is then that I truly fulfill my purpose and calling. I am very thankful for the many opportunities I am given every day to serve my God and others.

Happiness... consists in giving and in serving others. ~Henry Drummond

It is the love that we give and the service we render that really is the great payoff. ~David B. Haight

Give Thanks for Autumn



I am thankful... for autumn

Autumn is a beautiful season. As much as I enjoyed riding my bike through trails all summer long, I found nothing quite as beautiful as going through the same trails during autumn. Seeing the leaves change colors, breathing the fresh cool air, and hearing the crunch and rustle of leaves beneath my feet with every step I took was truly invigorating. Autumn is like no other season in its magnificent beauty, its mosaic of tone, color, rhythm and harmony. It is a truly magical and musical experience! I am thankful for autumn. I am thankful that it offers so much for me to appreciate and enjoy. I am thankful that it is a time to reflect, keep warm and remember that life is full of riches, wonder, and spendor!

There is music in the meadows, in the air – Autumn is here;

Skies are gray, but hearts are mellow,
Leaves are crimson, brown, and yellow;
Pines are soughing, birches stir,
And the Gipsy trail is fresh beneath the fir.
There is rhythm in the woods, and in the fields,
Nature yields:
And the harvest voices crying,
Blend with Autumn zephyrs sighing;
Tone and color, frost and fire,
Wings the nocturne Nature plays upon her lyre.
~ William Stanley Braithwaite, Lyric of Autumn

When the trees their summer splendor
Change to raiment red and gold,
When the summer moon turns mellow,
And the nights are getting cold;
When the squirrels hide their acorns,

And the woodchucks disappear;
Then we know that it is autumn,
Loveliest season of the year.
~ *Carol L. Riser, Autumn*

I am rich today with autumn's gold,
All that my covetous hands can hold;
Frost-painted leaves and goldenrod,
A goldfinch on a milkweed pod,
Huge golden pumpkins in the field
With heaps of corn from a bounteous yield,
Golden apples heavy on the trees
Rivaling those of Hesperides,
Golden rays of balmy sunshine spread
Over all like butter on warm bread;
And the harvest moon will this night unfold
The streams running full of molten gold.
Oh, who could find a dearth of bliss
With autumn glory such as this!
~ *Gladys Harp*



Autumn is a second spring where every leaf is a flower. ~*Albert Camus*

Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all. ~*Stanley Horowitz*
Autumn asks that we prepare for the future —that we be wise in the ways of garnering and keeping. But it also asks that we learn to let go—to acknowledge the beauty of sparseness. ~*Bonaro W. Overstreet*

Fallen leaves lying on the grass in the November sun bring more happiness than the daffodils. ~*Cyril Connolly*

Give Thanks for the Artist within Each of Us



I am thankful...for the artist within each of us

Now that fall has arrived, I have been winding down a little and making time to watch some movies. A friend once recommended *Walk the Line*, based on the true life story of Johnny Cash, so that is what I decided to watch and I am so glad I did. I thought it was an excellent movie--very sad and touching, yet inspiring and moving. The pain and rejection that Johnny experienced early in his life almost destroyed him. In his music, the artist within was able to express himself, release some of his pain, anger, hope and faith. Ultimately, it was love that saved him and changed his life forever.

Don't we all have an artist within us? I love these beautiful words I recently came across: *He who works with his hands is a laborer. He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman. He who works with his hands, his head and his heart is an artist.* It reminded me of the part in the movie when the record producer told Johnny that he heard the remake of the gospel tune Johnny was playing for him tons of times. Instead, he wanted Johnny to play something original. He wanted to hear the artist within--something that expressed Johnny's very heart and soul. The artist within emerged. It was a hit. It was authentic, moving, beautiful!

Within each of us is an artist. Whatever we put our heart into is an expression of who we really are. I remember observing the contractor who was laying tile down in our kitchen. He did an amazing custom job, very precise, professional and creative. I thought about what an outstanding craftsman he was. Then one day he shared how much he loved his work and put his whole heart into it. I then thought about how he came in every day whistling and singing as he worked. He truly loved what he was doing. His work was his art. It was the true expression of the artist within him.

We don't have to be a Michelangelo or Mozart to be an artist. All we have to be is our true selves and let it show in what we do. We can put our hands, head and

heart to work and let the artist within us emerge. Remember, when it comes to true art, there is no right or wrong, good or bad, it's about being real, creative, imaginative and expressive. I give thanks for the artist within each of us and I encourage you to let that artist out. There is so much within you to express, share and give. People love the real you, so let the artist within you emerge freely!

Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of somebody else. ~Judy Garland

You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note. ~Doug Floyd

A man that has a taste of music, painting, or architecture is like one that has another sense. ~Joseph Addison

Give Thanks for Great Moms



I am thankful... for Great Moms

Abraham Lincoln said, "I regard no man as poor who has a godly mother." I reflected on how blessed and rich we are who have a mother who lives a godly life and is an example to her children of God's goodness and love. In her life they see and learn wisdom, integrity, good work ethics, and godly values and morals. She teaches them how to live fully and truly succeed in life. She instills in them words of wisdom and models integrity. She encourages them to believe in themselves, and she is their greatest supporter and encourager. By her example they experience and know unconditional love, gratitude, faith, peace and true joy. They know there is nothing they can do to make her stop loving them. She models a life of gratitude, and they are her greatest blessings. She believes in them and her faith is unwavering. Peace in her heart guides her. No mother is perfect, and every good mom makes mistakes. What matters most is her heart. I am thankful for moms who try their best, give their all, and bless their children with something priceless...their love.

Every good mother is thankful for her children and wants to be the best mom she can be. Soon after my son was born, I wrote this baby poem: **Thank You Lord for This Child**. We have made it into a video and it has been touching people around the world ever since. I thank God for using this poem to bless moms and so many others in the way He has. I pray it blesses you too.



All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel Mother. *~Abraham Lincoln*

Mama was my greatest teacher, a teacher of compassion, love and fearlessness.

If love is sweet as a flower, then my mother is that sweet flower of love. ~ *Stevie Wonder*

By my mother's example, I developed a burning desire to live for God, trust in His goodness and love, fulfill my calling, believe in dreams and never give up. ~*Krystal Kuehn*

A praying mother is more precious and valuable than all the riches in the world. ~*Violet James*

Give Thanks for Great Dads



I am thankful...for Great Dads

When I was thinking about what a great dad means to me, some thoughts that came to my mind were: a strong leader, caring, unconditionally loving, protector and provider. I suppose how we define a great father depends largely upon our own experience. I am thankful to have had a father who did the best he knew to do in raising us. He never had a chance to know his own father who had passed away when he was around 2 years old. So he didn't have any real role model to learn from and follow. He did his best and for that I am thankful.

Sigmund Freud said, "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection." I believe this to be true. There is something about a Godly father that makes us feel safe and secure. This is what we want and need in a world filled with violence and suffering. A great dad helps us to know that we are loved and protected.



Great dads also love our moms. I really appreciate this quote: "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother," ~ Henry Ward Beecher. In doing so, children feel more secure and safe. A great father knows the importance of having a harmonious, loving relationship with his wife and the mother of his children. Parents getting along and loving each other is one of the healthiest things children can witness and experience. It makes their world and home a stable and happy place. It also models good and healthy relationships to them and prepares them for their own intimate relationships and parenting.

I believe I learned what a really great father is from my husband. He is an amazing father. He encompasses everything I mentioned earlier in describing a great and Godly father: strong leader, caring, unconditionally loving, protector

and provider as well as a loving husband.

We may not all have a great dad, and many don't. However, we can appreciate the qualities of a Godly father in others. It doesn't have to be our own dad. I am so thankful for men who love their wives, who care for their children, who care deeply and love unconditionally, who are strong in their faith and walk in integrity, who love the Lord and are good leaders and role models, who walk in humility, gratitude, and wisdom. For this I am very thankful.

My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it. ~Clarence Budington Kelland

*I don't care how poor a man is; if he has family, he's rich. ~M*A*S*H, Colonel Potter*

It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was. ~ Anne Sexton

Gratitude – The Antidote for Toxic Emotions



You cannot be grateful and bitter.
You cannot be grateful and unhappy.
You cannot be grateful and without hope.
You cannot be grateful and unloving.
So just be grateful.
~author unknown

Are you experiencing some toxic emotions like anger, bitterness, irritability, hopelessness or depression? When negative emotions occupy much of our attention and drain our energy, they have become toxic. Something that is toxic is like poison; it causes harm and serious debilitation. Isn't that what anger and bitterness do? Like poison, they impair and destroy our ability to function at our best. They keep us chained to unforgiveness and self-destruction. How about hopelessness? Its toxicity saps our strength and makes us weak. Irritability is another toxin that steals our peace and harms our relationships.

When we experience toxic levels of negative emotions, we need to detox. That is, we need to counteract and remove their destructive effects. We may need to release some anger, process some hurt, change our perspective, recall our past victories, take some time away, or talk to someone who can help us. These are healthy coping methods that can all be very helpful in dealing with toxic emotions. However, what is especially helpful and probably the best antidote for toxic emotions is practicing gratitude. One of the best ways to do this is to get our minds off the problem and change our focus. Instead of thinking about how angry we are about what went wrong, we can give thanks for what went right or for what additional sorrows we escaped. Instead of focusing on the hopelessness of a situation and what we cannot change, we can give thanks for what we can change and the control we have over our thoughts and actions. We can be

thankful that we have options and can choose to respond in a healthy manner.

Gratitude and toxic emotions cannot coexist. The next time you experience toxic emotions, counteract them with gratitude before they poison your mind, body and relationships. Toxic emotions may not always be completely eradicated from our lives, but their destructive effects can be!

In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy. ~Brother David Steindl-Rast

Gratitude: More than Words



As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. - John F. Kennedy

How trustworthy are our words if there is no action behind them? We can tell our kids not to smoke, but if they see us smoking, can we realistically expect them to listen? We can say we care about our health, but do our eating habits support that claim? The old adage rings true: Actions speak louder than words.

It is not just the words we say that reveal the condition of our hearts. People watch what we do more than what we say. Our actions are the best indicators of who we really are. Actions can speak so loud that we may not even need words at all at times. If you see a man treating his wife with love and respect, speaking well of her, supporting and acknowledging her, you don't need him or anyone to tell you that he loves her. If you know someone who gives of their time and resources to help people in need, you do not need to be told that he or she cares or that he or she is a giving person. Observing the actions of others lead us to come to our own conclusions.

When our hearts are truly thankful, it will come out of our mouths and be evident in our words. With a thankful heart we will not find fault, but rather, we will find something to praise. We will not complain, but instead, we will rejoice. With a thankful heart, we will not focus on what is lacking, we will be filled with all that is good. We will not be resentful because we feel cheated; we will cherish and acknowledge the many ways in which we are blessed. The way we live, our attitude, and our perspective is communicating something to someone at all times.

We can be assured that our gratitude and appreciation is being heard when our life becomes a song of praise--realizing our many blessings are undeserved, our

life is a gift, the love we share with others is priceless, and the beauty and wonder we see and experience in creation is a privilege.

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. ~William James

What people say, what people do, and what they say they do are entirely different things. ~Margaret Mead

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are. ~Theodore Roosevelt

Give Thanks at All Times – Good & Bad

If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul. ~Rabbi Harold Kushner

It is really easy to be thankful when things are going well. But how do we stay thankful when they are not? It may be difficult, but practicing gratitude at all times is one of the best ways to make it through setbacks and disappointments. It keeps us hopeful and reminds us that we made it through hard times before. It helps us to see that life is still good. Circumstances may be negative, but they can change. People may hurt us, but we can heal. Losses may never be recovered, but we can gain something new. The more we practice gratitude for what is good, right, beautiful and hopeful, the more real it becomes to us. So whether we are going through some bad times or the best of times, it is always appropriate and empowering to be thankful.

Following is a poem that helps remind us why we can be thankful at all times.

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 in the difficult times.
During those times you grow.

Be thankful when you have 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 during the setbacks.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful in the midst of your troubles and they can become your blessings. ~ *Author unknown.*

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity... It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow. ~Melody Beattie

A thankful person is thankful under all circumstances. A complaining soul complains even if he lives in paradise. ~Baha'u'llah

He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has. ~Epictetus

Find the good and praise it. ~Alex Haley

Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot. ~Hausa of Nigeria

If you want to turn your life around, try thankfulness. It will change your life mightily. ~Gerald Good

Thankful Kids are Happy Kids

How wonderful it would be if we could help our children and grandchildren to learn thanksgiving at an early age. Thanksgiving opens the doors. It changes a child's personality. A child is resentful, negative-or thankful. Thankful children want to give, they radiate happiness, they draw people. ~ Sir John Templeton

The best way to help our children learn to be thankful is by our example. When we are thankful, it shows in our attitude, actions, and words. Instead of complaining, let them hear us praising. Instead of thinking only of our own needs, let them see us giving and helping others. They are watching and listening to us as we model gratitude-focusing on what is right rather than what is wrong and on what we have rather than what we don't have.

Children who are overindulged learn entitlement rather than gratitude. They come to expect privileges as if they are rights they can expect and demand, and they become resentful when they do not get their way. It is often very loving parents who think they are helping their children by meeting all of their wants and wishes. The greatest desire of anyone is ultimately to be genuinely and truly happy with inner peace and love. Instilling a heart of gratitude in children is the greatest gift and investment in his or her future success and happiness that we can give.

A grateful heart is a merry heart. It instills in us a desire to give. It leads to a lifelong experience of inner joy and peace. Gratitude is the path to success and purpose. It shapes our personalities and instills in us inner beauty and grace. It opens doors to fulfilling relationships and pursuits.

Thankfulness radiates happiness!!

We can help our children radiate happiness and live life to the fullest as they learn and practice thanksgiving!

3 Things to be Thankful for Today



Practicing gratitude is one of the best habits we can develop. It not only changes our lives, but it affects others around us. Our gratitude is like a positive energy that can inspire and energize others. I knew a woman who always confessed that she had a black cloud that followed her wherever she went. And guess what, it did! That black cloud was her negativity and lack of gratitude. Although she had much to be thankful for and some good opportunities in her life, she always found something to grumble and complain about. This woman was one of the most unhappy people I have ever known. The black cloud kept her in darkness, clouding her hopes, dimming her outlook, and constantly attracting more negativity and problems in her life. This only reinforced her self-destructive attitude.

Negativity surrounds a person who cannot find the good or be thankful for even the simplest blessings. Being thankful is a way of life. It is a way of thinking that affects how we feel and what we do. To make it a part of our life, we must practice it. A great way to do this is to think of at least 3 things every day that you can be thankful for. At the end of the day, before going to sleep, think about all the things that were good and give thanks for them. Record them in a journal if you would like. When I first started doing this years ago, it wasn't long before my list grew to many more than three things each day. Before I knew it, I was feeling really positive. I realized that there are simple little things we don't even give a second thought that are blessings to us. I came across a beautiful quote that illustrates this perfectly:

I'm thankful for a pair of shoes that feel really good on my feet; I like my shoes.
I'm thankful for the birds; I feel like they're singing just for me when I get up in the morning... Saying, 'Good morning, John. You made it, John.'
I'm thankful for the sea breeze that feels so good right now, and the scent of jasmine when the sun starts going down.

I'm thankful...
Johnny Cash

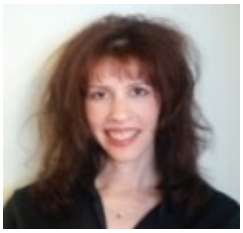
Practicing gratitude has amazing power to improve our lives!

Can you think of three things you are thankful for today?

Appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder and even ecstasy, however stale these experiences may have become to others. ~Abraham Maslow

In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy. ~Brother David Steindl-Rast

About the Author



Krystal Kuehn, MA, LPC, LLP, NCC is a psychotherapist, author, teacher, and musician.

Krystal specializes in helping people live their best life now, reach their full potential, overcome barriers, heal from their past, & develop a happiness lifestyle. Her inspirational and empowering approach has been helping people all over the world for over 20 years. Krystal's articles, poetry, and songs have been published locally and internationally. She is also the author of many books (For a Complete List: click here).

Krystal has a passion for encouraging others. She believes everyone has untapped potential for greatness and everyone can live a life of fulfillment and true happiness. Krystal is the co-founder of New Day Counseling in Michigan. Her web sites include:

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