

Gratitude & Service

Desired Outcomes (5)



Definitions:

Gratitude: The quality of being thankful

Service: The act of fulfilling a purpose for others



OFFERINGS, MEKONG RIVER, LAOS

Gratitude offerings left in a cave by pilgrims to Luang Prabang

Words of Wisdom:

- 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**
- Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others – **Cicero**
- Gratitude to gratitude always gives birth – **Sophocles**
- I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought; and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder... when it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude – **G K Chesterton**
- The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others – **Mahatma Gandhi**

Relationship Happiness Habits :

GratITUDE, like love, is one of the most powerful emotions and one that shows a clear differentiation between positive and negative people. Grateful people seem to have better mechanisms for coping with life, asking for help and planning how they are going to overcome difficulties. Gratitude seems to explain levels of well-being more than most other factors.

There is an increasing level of scientific study that supports the view that grateful people tend to have a higher level of personal health and well-being than people who are not grateful. Positive outcomes of being grateful are:

- Greater satisfaction with life and feeling more loved
- More optimistic, alert, enthusiastic and higher energy levels
- Less stress and anxiety and better sleep (duration and quality of sleep)
- More open to interconnectedness with others and openness to sharing
- More likely to help others and less judgmental of others
- Taking better care of yourself, less self-pity and better immune system
- Less interest in materialism and possessions.

Gratitude is not about ignoring or denying negative aspects of life but learning to live with them. Gratitude involves taking time to notice the good things in life. It requires presence and a positive attitude towards what is important. Grateful people are more open to seeing the 'awe' in nature and to appreciating the wonders of little things in everyday life.

Until recent years, scientists had largely ignored the relationship between happiness and gratitude. In the USA, Drs McCollough and Emmons have conducted research into faith, happiness and gratitude. In part, the basis of this research has been that religious faiths have always emphasised a need for gratitude. The studies have found great importance in gratitude and found that it operates independently of faith.

Gratitude is about creating virtuous cycles of appreciation and reciprocity of kindness. In a virtuous cycle, one act of gratitude encourages another and receives appreciation from somewhere else in return. Gratitude is a key part of a successful and fulfilling life. It is a magnet that attracts good fortune and can have a multiplier effect if consistently pursued. Gratitude brings sense and purpose to life; it anchors the past and creates optimism for the future. The French have a proverb to describe this: 'Gratitude is a memory of the heart'.



Value - What difference would it make to your desired outcomes?

- **Happiness & Joy:** Grateful people have been shown to be happier
- **Health & Well being:** Grateful people tend to have higher levels of mental health and contentment
- **Personal Growth & Self-Connection:** Gratitude focuses you on how you are growing and developing as a person
- **Contribution & Connection to Others:** Gratitude is about connecting with others
- **Gratitude & Service:** Gratitude is the second most powerful positive emotion
- **Learning about Love and being Love:** Learning about love is a great thing to be grateful for
- **Extraordinary Intimate Relationship:** What else could you be most grateful for?

Where are good sources of information and support?

- **Internet Search:** GRAT; Appreciation Scale; GQ6; gratitude exercises; hedonic treadmill and beyond the hedonic treadmill; Drs. Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough
- **Good Books:** The Power of Story – James Loehr; Even Happier – Tal Ben-Shahar; Kitchen Table Wisdom – Rachel Remen
- **Good web sites:** www.psychology.ucdavis.edu/labs/emmons/ ;
- **Related Skillful and Unskillful Habits:** abundance from scarcity; finding good not bad in others; open your heart and trust yourself; meditation, mindfulness & prayer; positive intentions

Smart Thoughts

‘Good men and bad men differ radically. Bad men never appreciate kindness shown them, but wise men appreciate and are grateful. Wise men try to express their appreciation and gratitude by some return of kindness’ – **Buddha**

5 things you can do to change this habit

- Where do you feel gratitude or resentment in your body? Why?
- Create a personal gratitude prayer for yourself
- Use affirmations – ‘I am grateful’ (10 times)
- Write thank you letters regularly
- Look for reasons to be grateful in every situation.

For more detail and information about this habit see:
<http://www.extuition.com/self-discovery/desired-outcomes>

