

Gratitude For a Better Life

Escaping the Hedonic Treadmill - by Sgt. Steve

Before discovering Stoicism, my understanding of gratitude was flawed. I thought it was transactional, a business deal where I say "Thank You" to keep the favors coming. This shallow view kept me from fully enjoying life.

Gratitude is not just a polite response. It's a whole lot more than that, and it's the key to living a happier life. Gratitude isn't about owing someone for the good in your life. It's about recognizing and valuing those good things, freely, openly, and consistently.

When you practice Stoicism, you learn your views, opinions, and judgments shape your emotions. For example, if you believe yourself to be lucky, you will feel lucky. It is a choice.

THE PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

Take your living room, for example. It might not look like much, just a regular spot to chill. But if you switch on gratitude, you'll see magic. The lights, the endless streaming on your big TV, the world's knowledge at your fingertips, the comfort of your couch. **You're living a life of luxury compared to many great historical figures.**

The Problem: The Hedonic Treadmill

Hedonic Adaptation is a natural mental process where what's extraordinary becomes ordinary over time. The once coveted fancy car gathers dust; the spouse you adored is now just another person in the room.

This "Hedonic Treadmill" (the relentless pursuit of more) leaves us in a cycle of dissatisfaction. Yesterday's treasures become today's mundane possessions, driving us to seek the next best thing just to stay happy.

The Healthier Route

Gratitude disrupts this endless cycle. It allows us to relish our current blessings without clawing for the next upgrade. By intentionally choosing gratitude, we can find joy in the present and

realize that what we have is already plenty.

A GUIDE FOR GRATITUDE FROM THE ANCIENT STOICS

Just want less.

"Wealth consists not in having great possessions, but in having few wants." - Epictetus

Value everything, even being alive.

"When you arise in the morning think of what a privilege it is to be alive, to think, to enjoy, to love." - Marcus Aurelius

Think about missing what you currently have.

"Take full account of what Excellencies you possess, and in gratitude remember how you would hanker after them, if you had them not." - Marcus Aurelius

Realize you have enough.

"Let not your mind run on what you lack as much as on what you have already." - Marcus Aurelius

Gratitude isn't just feeling thankful, it's a daily practice that can really change your life. In my own personal experience, I've learned that it's hard to feel unsatisfied when you're counting your blessings.

**Amor Fati,
Sgt. Steve**