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The Power of Gratitude

When a deep feeling of gratitude envelops us, happiness is realized. 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.

While we may acknowledge gratitude's many benefits, it still can be difficult to sustain. Many of us are trained to notice what is broken, undone or lacking in our lives. For us to experience gratitude's highest healing potential, it needs to become more to us than just a "Thanksgiving" word. Our stereotyped notions can block clear vision and crowd out imagination. New ways of looking at life can help us develop new habits, which can take some time.

That's why **practicing** gratitude makes great 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 choosing 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.

There are many things to be grateful for: colorful autumn leaves, friends and family, chocolate, fresh air, warm jackets, tomatoes, the ability to read, the ability to move our body, roses, our health, butterflies...what's on your list?

Let's not let gratitude be just a seasonal attitude. Here are some ways to practice gratitude all year long.

- Keep a journal and list things five things for which you are thankful on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. 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. You will re-discover great things you already possess.
- Make a gratitude collage by drawing or pasting pictures together.
- Practice gratitude around the dinner table or make it part of your nighttime routine.
- Make it a point to 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, find songs of thankfulness and gratitude, and express thanks for it.

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