The Power of Gratitude: Living the Elevated Life

November 26, 2015 By Alexander Avila

As today is Thanksgiving it is a good time to reflect on that powerful human trait called "Gratitude." Gratitude is the recognition that the good that comes to you comes from outside you--whether from God, family, friends, or even a stranger (someone helps you when your car is broken down on the side of the road).

Psychologists have documented the power of gratitude. Individuals who keep a "Gratitude Journal"--where they write down daily all the things are grateful for--have lower incidences of depression, higher levels of optimism, and report better mental and physical health.

Why does gratitude have so much power to help your feel better and happier in life? It is because we tend to take our good fortune in life for granted. We are alive, we have our body intact, we have friends and family, perhaps an occupation that stimulates and enriches us. We feel the sun, hear the birds, listen to the waves--we love, laugh, and learn. All of these things that are positive in our lives are often forgotten in the hustle and bustle of daily living. Gratitude is the ultimate reminder of who we really are and what we really have.

Expressing gratitude--whether verbally, mentally, or in written form--is what slows down our lives so we can enjoy them. It allows us to pause and recognize what a miracle life is. Do you realize that you are alive at this very moment; breathing, thinking, feeling? It is a special gift to be alive, and to be able to experience the joys, and even the pains of life--it is through the pains that we grow and appreciate the joys.

In fact, we can even be grateful for our mistakes and our problems and our setbacks because each negative element in our life can provide the seeds for growth and renewal.

Start today by making a list of all the things you are grateful for in your Gratitude Journal. Every day, write down three things you are grateful for--do this for one week. Are you grateful for your life; your health; your financial status; your loved ones; your friends; your job; your hobbies; your talents; your experiences; your memories; your future hopes and plans; for God's grace and mercy? There are many, many things you can write down, even when you are feeling down and depressed. In fact, it is when you are feeling sad or miserable that being grateful (and writing down grateful things) has the most power.

You are a psychological genius when you can be grateful amidst turmoil, pain, and defeat. When you do that, you loosen the chains of past regrets and future worries, and you begin to live in a state of constant gratefulness, awe, and wonder.

The more grateful you are, the more positive things you attract in your life. Rejoice today, enjoy your Thanksgiving, and remember that giving thanks is the same as receiving all of the blessings you can possibly imagine. Enjoy and rejoice.

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