

The Attitude of Gratitude

By Jeff Peller

Have you ever thought about the role fear plays in the decisions you make every day? Have you let fear rob you of your peace of mind, keep you from moving forward, or keep you from the opportunities that await you?

When headlines are bombarding us with negative news and sensational journalism, it is hard not to get caught up with pessimistic thoughts and emotions. Sometimes we can only focus on the problems we are currently facing, forgetting about the infinite number of things going right in the world and in our lives.

While we may not totally be free from the various conditions or situations that confront us, we can always choose how we respond to them. The best thing we can do is realize what we can and cannot control. Focus on what you can control and make positive steps in that regard.

The important things in our lives are rarely urgent. The more we can align our behaviors with what we deem important, the more satisfied and fulfilled we will be.

Our level of satisfaction in life is highly correlated to our level of gratitude. Stop for a minute and really think about the things in your life that you are thankful for. When we recognize that everything we have is a gift, it is much easier to be content and understand what is most important in our lives.

Gratitude is more than a feeling—it is an attitude. It's a way to think and behave. It is a lifestyle. What if we approached each day through the filter of gratitude? When you show gratitude every day, your thinking literally changes.

“Happiness doesn't depend on any external conditions, it is governed by our mental attitude.”

Dale Carnegie

Here are some ideas on how you can cultivate an attitude of gratitude and better incorporate gratitude into your daily life:

1. **Be generous:** Share your time and talents and be ready to make a difference in the lives of others. Give freely without the expectation of anything in return.
2. **Be present:** Make sure you are really listening to people, not just hearing them. Put the phone down, turn off the computer or the TV, and give the moment your undivided attention.
3. **Keep a gratitude journal:** Keep a list of 5-10 things you feel grateful for. In the beginning, journal once a week and work up to keeping a daily journal over time. Things to be grateful for could be as small as making a child laugh or as large as achieving one of your most meaningful goals. In addition to notebook journaling, there are also numerous computer and smartphone applications available that can help you keep track of the things you feel grateful for. Regardless of your method, seeking out things to appreciate every day will be a very powerful experience.
4. **Gratitude letters or notes:** Send letters or notes to people you appreciate or to someone who has changed your life for the better. Be specific about what the person did and how it affected you.
5. **Schedule time to be grateful:** Just like other priorities in your life, you may need to set a specific time each day to be grateful.
6. **Surround yourself with things that will inspire you:** Pictures, objects or favorite quotes can remind you of what you are grateful for.
7. **Public displays of gratitude:** Praise your spouse, kids, friends and co-workers in a public way. This can be one of the most effective ways to express your gratitude.
8. **Random acts of kindness:** Give lots of hugs, smiles, compliments, flowers and surprises to show your appreciation.
9. **Watch out for negative thinking:** Try to curb negative thinking in yourself and others. Stop “when/then” thinking. For example: **When** I have xxxx amount of money or lose xxxx pounds, **then** I will be happy.

“As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.”

Henry David Thoreau

10. **Be forgiving to others and to yourself.** This will reduce your stress and allows you to better invest emotional energy in other, more positive aspects of your life.

As we approach the end of another eventful year, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our clients for allowing us the opportunity to serve them. As advisors, we hope we have been able to make a difference in your life, and help you to live more confidently, fully and purposefully. We wish you and your family health, happiness and prosperity for 2013 and all the years ahead. We also wish to share with you a poem we think you might appreciate.

Be Thankful **By Author Unknown**

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 for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your 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's easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who
are also thankful for the setbacks.

Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive.
Find a way to be thankful for your troubles,
and they can become your blessings.