

## Why Living a Life of Gratitude Can Make You Happy

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“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘thank you,’ that would suffice.” - [Meister Eckhart](#)

Many days, I try to humble myself and hold a 2-minute gratitude session. I simply sit or kneel, with no distractions, close my eyes, and think about what I’m grateful for and who I’m grateful for.



Photo by [kalandrakas](#)

I don’t do it every day, but let me tell you, on the days I do it, it makes me very happy.

Why should that be? Why should the simple act of thinking about who and what I’m grateful for make such a big difference in my life?

Just a few reasons:

- **Because it reminds you of the positive things in your life.** It makes you happy about the people in your life, whether they’re loved ones or just a stranger you met who was kind to you in some ways.
- **Because it turns bad things into good things.** Having problems at work? Be grateful you have work. Be grateful you have challenges, and that life isn’t boring. Be grateful that you can learn from these challenges. Be thankful they make you a stronger person.
- **Because it reminds you of what’s important.** It’s hard to complain about the little things when you give thanks that your children are alive and healthy. It’s hard to get stressed out over paying bills when you are grateful there is a roof over your head.
- **Because it reminds you to thank others.** I’ll talk about this more below, but the simple act of saying “thank you” to someone can make a big difference in that person’s life. Calling them, emailing them, stopping by to say thank you ... just taking that minute out of your life to tell them why you are grateful toward them is important to them. People like being appreciated for who they are and what they do. It costs you little, but makes someone else happy. And making someone else happy will make you happy.

**What do I give thanks for, privately, in my little gratitude session?** It varies every day. I thank all the readers of this site, for the encouragement you have given me, for the donations you’ve made that have made me that much closer to realizing my dreams, for the criticism you’ve given that has made this site better ... for the time you’ve given me, just reading the articles when you have the chance.

I thank my loved ones, for all they do to me. I thank strangers who’ve shown me little acts of kindness. I thank God, for the life he’s given me. I thank people around the world for the things they’ve done to make the world better. I thank myself, for things that I’ve done (it’s important to recognize your own accomplishments).

**How to Live a Life of Gratitude**

The thing is, simple acts of gratitude don't cost you much (especially once you get over the initial discomfort some people feel with thanking others). But they can make a huge difference.

If you're interested in living a life of gratitude, here are my suggestions:

- **Morning gratitude session.** Take 2-3 minutes each morning to give thanks, to whoever or whatever you're grateful for. You don't have to do anything, other than close your eyes and silently give thanks. This one act can make a huge difference.
- **Say thank you.** When someone does something nice for you, however small, try to remember to say thank you. And really mean it.
- **Call to say thanks.** Sometimes you might think about something nice that someone did for you. Perhaps you remember during your gratitude session. When you do, pick up the phone and call the person, just to say thanks. Let them know what they did that you're grateful for, and why you appreciate it. Takes a minute or two. If it's too early to call, make a note to call later. Even better is telling them in person, if you happen to see them or if they're on your route. Almost as good is a thank-you email — keep it short and sweet.
- **Give thanks for "negative" things in your life.** There's always two ways to look at something. Many times we think of something as negative — it's stressful, harmful, sad, unfortunate, difficult. But that same thing can be looked at in a more positive way. Giving thanks for those things is a great way to remind yourself that there is good in just about everything. Problems can be seen as opportunities to grow, to be creative. See the prayer below for more on this.
- **Learn a gratitude prayer.** There are many prayers, religious or not, that can remind you to be grateful. Find one you like, and print it out or make it your desktop wallpaper. Here's a [religious one](#), and here's a collection [from a multitude of religions](#). You can find many others on the Internet, or write your own. If you're not religious, make one that doesn't include the concept of God. A good one is below.

Let me leave you with a prayer of gratitude that I've always found ... well, perfect:

### **Be Thankful**

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 is 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.

~ Author Unknown ~

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