

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT E- BOOK 7:

Gratitude



*Thank You!*

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## Do You Count Your Blessings?

Are you the type of person that likes to count their blessings? If so this means that you have learned what it means to be grateful for certain things in your life. These can be physical items like owning your own home or they can be on a more personal level, by being grateful for someone in your life.

The concept of being grateful for what you have can be difficult for some people to understand. Instead of focusing on what they have, many people find it easier to be constantly thinking about what they don't have.

Think about this for a moment. Do you really have to be wealthy to feel as though you are? Will having a million dollars in the bank automatically make you happy? The answer to both of these questions is no. Money doesn't buy you happiness and you don't need physical wealth to feel wealthy.

Wealth can be compared to having abundance and gratitude in your life. If you are surrounded by people who love and respect you, you will instantly feel treasured in return. Babies don't ask for your love, they love and trust you from the moment they are born. In return all that they want is to be loved and taken care of with no strings attached!

A person who has just undergone lifesaving surgery can feel extremely grateful to be alive. Even though they may be faced with months of rehab and physiotherapy.

When you think about what you have to be grateful for you should look further than just physical items. There is more to life than money and owning all the latest and greatest tech items on the market.

Being grateful for your life consists of understanding what you have gone through to get to where you are today. This includes your struggles and fears as well as your successes and failures. After all who doesn't learn from making a mistake? These are the moments that you want to relish and enjoy.

Your friends and family are a huge source of people that you can be grateful for. Get into the habit of counting your blessings for having them in your life. This also includes you telling them that you are thankful for them! It's not always easy to speak those kind of words out loud, but when you do they can have a greater impact and reach than you ever thought possible.

## Improve Your Life by Being Grateful

Do you wake up in the morning looking forward to the challenges that the day will bring you? Or do you find that you are more fearful of what lies ahead for you? If the latter is true then it is time to start working on improving your mindset and learning how to be grateful for what you have.

Showing that you are grateful to others doesn't mean you have to be all smiles and always be giving people compliments. It does mean though that you need to make an effort to acknowledge those around you.

There are lots of small ways that you can show how grateful you are to others. Just smiling and nodding your head are two simple, yet effective ways of doing just this. You could try to say "thank you" to people a little more often too.

If you think good thoughts your mood and outlook automatically change. You will feel happier and others will notice this too. Your movements will portray your true feelings.

Work on thinking positive thoughts. The best way to do this is to pick one thing that you are grateful for. This doesn't have to be something huge, it can be a very small thing that you appreciated. Did someone hold the elevator door for you on the way to work, for example? Or did someone thank you for some small gesture you made?

Take a good look at your life, this includes your home, your friends, your family, place of work and other areas. What things do you like about your life? Write them down. Then pick an area that you would like to improve and make a note of this as well.

It is human nature to always think about those things you don't like. So now that you have selected something you don't like, write out how you can improve this. Then set yourself a goal for actually committing to doing something about it. Then it is up to you to take action on it.

If you do this, then you can't sit around feeling sorry for yourself. Instead you can look at your list and know you have the tools and resources to make positive changes. Just start working on your plan each day or week. You don't want to become obsessive either, but now that you have a goal to work towards you can change your life.

Always remember to be grateful for those small things in your life, while you are working on improving other areas.

## Helping Others with Acts of Kindness

Being happy and satisfied with your life is a fantastic place to be in. If you feel as though this is you, have you thought about how you could brighten up someone else's day? A small act of kindness can easily put a smile on the face of a stranger in more ways than you might think.

We are talking small acts here, which might include things like helping a senior pack her groceries into her car. Opening the door for a disabled person or letting a mom with a crying baby through the checkout ahead of you.

Helping others can do a lot for increasing your own self-respect and self-confidence. It just makes you feel plain good to help out another person. Even if you aren't one hundred percent satisfied with your own life, helping others can help you get one step closer to achieving this.

Another way to show how grateful you are for the things you have in your life is by volunteering your time to help others. You can do this by helping out at a child's sporting event, helping out a charity, serving in your local soup kitchen or taking dogs for walk at your local animal shelter.

When you help others out without being asked you become happier and feel more fulfilled in life. Those people around you tend to view you in a different light. They will start seeing you as a giving person, someone who thinks about others more than they think about their own interests.

Have you ever been on the receiving end of a nice gesture, such as someone holding the door for you? Notice how it makes you feel as though you want to return the favour to someone else, almost immediately. It's true, one act of kindness is often the starting point for more actions.

The same applies if you were to ask someone for help and then refuse. You are less likely to ask them again, and if they were to ask for your help, you would want to refuse. Keep this in mind the next time you see a situation where you can help someone.

Showing your appreciation can be done in several ways and this includes extending your hands to strangers in times of need. So how about helping out locally this year when you can? It will show everyone around you just how grateful you are to be part of the community.

## Do You Truly Give Thanks at Thanksgiving?

With Thanksgiving just around the corner, how much thought and effort do you really put into this day? Do you spend time being grateful and thankful for your friends and family? Or are you just glad that you get an extra day off work?

As with any type of holiday, commercialism can creep in and ruin the real meaning of the day. This is why it is so important that you put the time into being thankful at this time of year. Parents need to set an example to their children and make plans for spending the day together whenever possible.

While many families will eagerly say that they do spend Thanksgiving, giving thanks, is this the only day of the year that they do so? What we mean, is why not fill the entire year with tons of gratitude?

You don't have to save your thanks for your family and friends for just one day of the year. Get into the habit of letting all those people know just how special they are to you throughout the year.

You can do this in very simple ways such as sending them a quick thank you note or email. You could also send out a Tweet, Facebook message or a text message on your phone.

Thanksgiving is also the time when retailers run their Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. This can also eat into the time you spend with your family. If you are going to shop see if you can include some other family members too. Don't exclude them to the point of not showing up the entire weekend for the sake of picking up a couple of specials! Is money more important than family?

Traditions are wonderful for this time of year too. Why not start a new family Thanksgiving tradition this year? This might consist of taking a family photo or just sitting around the fireplace sharing childhood memories and stories. These small moments are easily treasured by every family member for years to come.

If you do intend to hit those sales this weekend, take a few moments and be grateful for those employees who are working. Don't forget to smile and say "thank you" to them. Any small action, even from a stranger, can brighten up anyone's day. Especially for those who have to work when they would much rather be home enjoying the day with their family.



## Do You Love Your Life?

Can you honestly say that you are happy with your life? Most people often find that they feel as though there is something missing. Yet they can't quite put their finger on what this is.

If you are living your life waiting for that something special to happen, that thing that will improve your life. You may find yourself waiting a long, long time indeed.

If you aren't happy or satisfied with your life, it is up to you, to do something about it. No one else knows what your deepest dreams and wishes are. No one can tell you the steps to take to improve your life. So stop waiting and make today the day that you start taking action.

Of course, changing your life is going to take time, commitment and effort. Things won't change in a day either. It will be much easier, though, if you have a plan of action in place. This way you can track your progress and know that you have made strides, no matter how large or small they may be.

One of the easiest ways for you to start feeling better about your life in general, is by learning how to be grateful for what you have today. Do you have a wonderful spouse or best friend that is always there for you? Is your family supportive of your dreams and goals? Are you healthy and fit? These are all things that you can be grateful for. Start reminding yourself of this every day.

Your next step is to identify what it is that you don't like about your life. Do you hate your job? Wish you were in a relationship? Or maybe you want to travel or own a home. Really think hard about this step and write down the one thing that you feel would help you turn your life around.

Once you have that written down, figure out how you can achieve this. It might be training for a new job, learning to save on a regular basis or becoming more social so you can meet someone new.

If your goal still feels out of reach, break your goal down into smaller segments. If you need to become more social figure out how you can do this. Does it mean getting a new haircut, losing weight or buying some new clothes? Or do you need to work on your self-confidence first? Your answer will become your plan of action. Write out detailed steps and work through them one by one. Before you know it you will be loving your life just that little bit more!

## What Does Being Grateful Mean to You?

When was the last time you sat down and thought about what you have to be grateful for? Surprisingly it may have been awhile, but you are not alone. Gratefulness is often something that we take for granted, which is exactly why not many people pay attention to it.

Let's change that today by sitting down for a few minutes and thinking about what we have to be grateful for. Here's some ideas to get your juices flowing.

1. Health – are you in good shape, or are you dealing with a health issue?
2. Money – how are you finance wise, in good shape, or is this an area that requires improvement?
3. Family – do you still have all your loved ones around you?
4. Job – do you have a stable income?

These four items are often taken for granted. Your health is a great example of this. You may not think about your health until you start to have issues. How many people around you are dealing with pain issues, mobility problems, are overweight or are suffering with a major health complications. You should be grateful for the current state of your health, and you should be taking actions to maintain it.

Having your family around you can be a great source of comfort and enjoyment. Many families lose children at a young age, or a child loses a parent. If your family is intact this is another reason for being grateful.

When it comes to your job, you may not particularly like what you do, but your job provides you with an income which allows you to give your family food, shelter and warmth. In some countries these things are a daily struggle.

While you may not be rich, and who doesn't wish for more money, you should be grateful for what you do have. If you are managing to pay your bills and mortgage on time, that's great. As is feeding your children and putting clothes on their backs. Again, these are things that are almost impossible for some people to manage.

You don't have to be totally satisfied with your life. But you should take the time to think about those things you do have, compared to those less fortunate. Then be grateful for what you have. Stop dwelling on the "what if's" and the "don't have's" in life. Focus on your family and your health and the word grateful will take on a whole new aspect for you.

## Teaching Your Children the Meaning of Gratitude

Children learn by example, so what better way of teaching them the meaning of gratitude by your own actions. Teaching them what gratitude means will help them their whole lives.

One of your first lessons should be to demonstrate to them just how thankful you are for having them as your children. Make a point of telling each child why they are special to you, and do this fairly often.

Don't forget that your actions speak louder than your words. Things like giving them a quick hug or pat on the head can speak volumes, even as they turn into teenagers!

In order for you to teach your children the meaning of gratitude you need to know what you are grateful for yourself. Take a few minutes each day and contemplate this. Here are some questions you could ask yourself.

- What makes you grateful to be a parent?
- What is it about your child that makes you grateful?
- What family members are you grateful for and why?

Then don't forget to ask yourself how you can show your gratitude to others. This might include volunteering at your child's school or helping to run a Christmas play or bake sale. This will also help teach your children the value of giving to others and helping out in your local community.

As a parent you know the importance of leading by example, and this should spill over into all areas of your life. Young children are like sieves, they watch your every move and soak things up more than you may ever know. They instinctively know when you are upset or not feeling well. These same instincts can be applied to the practice of showing gratitude and being thankful.

Ensure that as a family you spend time together during all those important holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, as well as birthdays and anniversaries. Celebrating milestones is another wonderful way of teaching your children how to be grateful.

Don't overlook the small things in life either. If your child has tried to pack their lunch, appreciate what they have attempted. Don't just tell them they didn't get it right. Show your appreciation for the fact that they wanted to help you out. This will not deter them from trying again, instead they will keep on wanting to please you in any way possible.

Start today by working on ways to teach your children the meaning of gratitude. This will allow them to share this meaning with their own friends and acquaintances.

## Showing Your Gratitude

Do you have things in your life that frustrate you like crazy? Most people do, and who doesn't find it easy to voice your opinion when you get frustrated. But, how often do you show your gratitude to someone?

Showing your gratitude means being thankful and appreciative of something or someone. You may be annoyed that your husband rarely helps with the dishes at night, but you love the way he always puts the kids to bed. Which one do you focus on the most? Instead of badgering him about helping with the dishes, express how grateful you are that he takes over the bedtime routines.

If you aren't happy with your life, learning to be grateful for what you do have, can improve it. Maybe you need a new car then be thankful that you still have one that is running. If you wish you had more money in the bank, be grateful for what you have managed to save so far.

In other words you want to stop focusing on those things you don't have and concentrate on what you do have. If you have a loving partner or kids that are doing fantastic in school, show them how grateful and thankful you are. Is your family healthy and happy? Wonderful, so many families have a member that is sick and this can pull down every member.

Any relationship can be improved by displaying your gratitude for each other. It is important to focus on what you already have. When you do you will notice that it is easy to find additional things that you are grateful for. Plus what person doesn't like to be appreciated? When was the last time someone thanked you for something unexpected?

It's not that you suddenly have to get all gushy with someone. Just thank your spouse for supporting you, thank your children for being who they are and enjoy the time with your family.

Quite honestly when was the last time you displayed any type of appreciation or gratitude. Here's a few things you could try today:

- Write down two things that you are grateful for.
- Thank your child for watching TV with you.
- Tell one family member that you appreciate being in their life.
- Demonstrate your appreciation in some way. Buy someone a cup of coffee or send a quick thank you note, text message or email.

If you are having trouble displaying your gratitude then simply write down all the things you are grateful for. Think about what others do for you, what qualities someone you appreciate has and more. Once you have identified these you will find it easier to find more things to be appreciative of.

## Reduce Your Stress Levels by Being Grateful

Who isn't stressed out these days? Everyone is rushing around juggling jobs and family responsibilities like crazy. This leaves us very little time to appreciate the good things we have in life. When was the last time you thought about what you have to be grateful for? You probably haven't in a long time.

Today is the day that you want to start changing this. From this point in time on, always take a few minutes each day to be grateful for something or for someone.

By focusing on something positive you will find that you feel less stressed out. Instead of worrying about all those things you didn't get accomplished during the day, focus on those that you got done. If you answered all of your emails then appreciate this, if you finally got that software program to work, be grateful. Don't worry that you still have tons of things on your to-do list. Just work on getting those things done bit by bit.

A good way to tackle a long list is by prioritizing your list each day. If a certain task sits on your list for too long, it may be that it really isn't as important as you thought. Shuffle your list each day and do the most important item first.

You can apply the same types of tactics at home too. Don't rush home thinking about all the chores that are waiting for you. Go home with the thought of looking forward to sitting down with your family and eating dinner together. Be grateful for the time that you can enjoy together. Remember your kids will grow up fast, before you know it they will be packing for college. Spend time with them while you can. Leave that load of laundry for another day, and ask yourself if it really is that important!

Dealing with high levels of stress is not healthy for you, or for your family. Stress can easily rub off on all the members of your family. Learn to start each day by being thankful for one small thing. It could be as simple as being able to watch the sun rise, or grateful that your child slept through the night. Do the same before going to bed at night. Think about what you were grateful for that day.

When you do this consistently you will find that your mood changes. It will be easier to think positive thoughts more often than you think about negative things. This means that you are learning how to be grateful for what you already have.

## Life is What You Make it

You have no doubt heard the saying "life is what you make it", and it is very true. To truly enjoy your life you need to appreciate it for what it is. When was the last time you thought about what you have to be grateful for?

You might be tempted to answer that you don't have anything to be grateful for. This isn't going to be true at all, there will always be a few things that you can be thankful for having. Your health is one, you should be glad that you wake up each morning ready and able to face the day. For many people just the task of getting out of bed and getting dressed is a huge challenge.

If you have a job, you should be grateful for it, even if it is one that you don't really like. Are your parents still alive and well? Then be grateful for that, if they are how long has it been since you visited or chatted with them?

It is very easy to fall into the pattern of not being happy, almost to the point of getting depressed. Dwelling on what you don't have such as not getting that promotion, not making enough money or having no-one to share your life with can really do a number on you.

If there is something that you really want out of your life, it is up to you to go out there and get it. If you are not in a relationship why not? Be honest here, you can't expect to meet someone if you stay hidden at home all the time.

Negative thinking is not healthy at all and can lead to severe depression and worse. You need to learn how to start switching out your negative thoughts for more positive ones. This may not be an easy task, but it can be done if you put the time into it.

Each morning when you get up remind yourself of at least one thing that you are grateful for. It can also be helpful to use positive affirmations to help you stay in a positive mindset.

If you hate your job, instead of dwelling on this, figure out a plan of action for getting out of it and into a career that you want to have. Remember it is your choice and no one is stopping you, other than yourself. Life really is what you make it, how are you going to proceed with yours now?



# THANK YOU

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