

Chapter 12: The Power of Gratitude, Your Road to Joy and Inner Peace:

Looking at life through the eyes of gratitude first and always is not initially easy, still it is always rewarding. My suggestions in regard to gratitude may not be what you are used to, in that I suggest being grateful for *everything in your life*, and yes I do mean even being grateful for all of the pain you have endured in your life. I do mean being grateful for the traumas, the heartaches, the illnesses and the losses. This may seem to be a terrible statement. I hope not.

In my work I have met people who have endured experiences that are terrible beyond description or imagining. Their lives and their sufferings are private and I will not describe them here. What I have learned in my work is that they have all grown tremendously and powerfully from what they have lived through. I have seen them become great, wise, beautiful and wonderful people from these challenges. I personally believe in God and believe that there are always reasons, often beyond our understanding, for the problems and challenges we face in life. We often do not see the reasons for our trials or understand their benefits until long after we have experienced them.

I believe that we grow, learn and evolve from every free-will choice we make and every life experience we are blessed to have. I also believe that all lives, even painful lives, are given by God and that there must be some useful reason for them, if we are only willing to look for it. I am not suggesting a "Pollyanna" approach to life or dismissing anyone's painful life experiences as trivial. I am only suggesting that constructively and positively managing our perspective in regard to how we look at our lives means everything in how we deal with our challenges. If we can learn to consciously manage our perspective on life and how we interpret our life experience then our emotional state becomes manageable. Our emotional state is a direct reflection (for better or worse) of our interpretation of our life experiences, our relationship experiences and thus of the *memories we have chosen to record*.

Over and over I have seen people muster their courage and attain amazing insights from the challenges they have faced and ultimately risen above. Whatever you have experienced in life, however wrong it may have seemed, I personally believe that there is something positive and useful that you will gain from it. Though it may not in any way be obvious in the moment, and although it probably won't be what you expect to learn or gain. I have complete faith in this, otherwise I would not and could not make this statement, and would not trivialize your pain by being trite or offering you false promise or hope. I have shared the pain of those I work with day after day, and done my best to feel and understand their situations as much as I could. Of course, I did not fully experience or understand their pain and I do not claim to.

What I can say is that those I speak with have told me their stories and shown me their triumphs. They have told me of their developed empowerment and capabilities that they could only have gained from meeting their challenges. This learning I have received from them has led me to the understanding that at least *eventually* it is worthwhile to look at every moment of our lives, no matter how painful, confusing, seemingly wrong or unjust, with complete gratitude. Whatever we face in life it will help us grow in some

way. In some way gratitude will teach us, in some way we will realize that our life experience is a precious gift. The sooner we can achieve this gratitude, the sooner our pain will be relieved and our joy restored.

If you can immediately and continually look at *every moment* of your life in this way you will never feel yourself to be a victim. You will never feel less than anyone else, and you will literally never feel wronged or unloved. You will also never feel that God or the universe has abandoned you. If you can look at all of your life in this way you can find a state of complete inner peace and constant joy. If you want this joy, and if it is important enough to you to experience it, then you will make the *willful and conscious choice* to focus only on living in gratitude forever. You will make it one of your main life goals, and you will choose it as your single emotional focus and chosen emotional state and choose no other. If not, then you will focus on something else. You will focus on how unfair life is, how bad other people are, on how you were wronged, on how bad traffic is today or how bad the food at the local deli is or any of a million other discomforts of life and you will miss the miracle that all of life is. I hope and pray that you do not miss this opportunity that is available to you in every single moment of every day of your life.

Making this positive and powerful choice requires you to take charge of your life. It means choosing to become one hundred percent accountable for your emotional process at all times and to never again fall into the trap of blaming anyone else for what you choose to feel, or when, where, how or why you choose to feel it. This is not a process of controlling your emotions; it is a process of focusing on living in a single chosen emotional state of loving gratitude. Granted this is a very different way of life from the way most people have been taught or conditioned to live; still it is a wonderful beneficial option that is open to you now.

This may seem like preposterous talk, you may say or feel that it is impossible to make such a choice or to manage your emotional process from moment-to-moment and that life is far too complex and stressful to accomplish this. I assure you that it is not. Like all things in life gratitude is a choice and like every emotion you feel in a day, gratitude is a choice, not merely an emotional reaction that you are a slave to or are powerless to affect. I am not saying that gratitude is easily achieved; I am saying that it is simple. Many things in life are very difficult to achieve and quite simple, and all are a choice. In this process your conscious intention, your understanding and your will power are your greatest allies. I would also suggest that if you believe in God that God can help you tremendously to achieve this goal and that without God it is far more difficult. For if you are not grateful to God who are you grateful to and who can you pray to for help? Praying to be empowered to find gratitude in every moment, in every situation, no matter how seemingly challenging, negative, wrong or harmful is a great way to start. If you can find it within yourself to give up all of your pain to God in exchange for total gratitude, then God can help you reclaim your Joy!

Like any major change in life, changing to see all of life with gratitude can bring up our fear. Therefore, as stated earlier I suggest using the “I am my fear ...” method to release any fears that impede you in reaching your goal of being in constant gratitude. Some example statements that may help are,

“I am my fear:

- of living in fearless gratitude to God for every moment and experience of my life forever
- of failing at living my life in constant gratitude

- that it is not possible or that it is just too hard to live my life in constant gratitude
- that other people will take advantage of me if I focus on living my life in constant gratitude
- that other people will not understand or respect my choice to live in gratitude
- that living in gratitude is foolish and a waste of time
- that living in gratitude is not practical or realistic

When we are working to live in gratitude many daily situations may trigger us emotionally in negative ways, and we may feel judgmental toward people we meet or toward situations we experience. All of these emotional reactions make it difficult to live in constant gratitude, and it is easy to feel we are failing at living in gratitude. If you find yourself reacting to anyone, anything or any situation negatively or judgmentally (including yourself) I suggest that you first release the judgment or anger immediately. This monitoring and releasing of your negative emotions as they dynamically arise during your day-to-day activities can become a habit that eventually diminishes your tendency to have negative emotions at all. You can do this with statements of:

- I am my judgment of (add the name of the situation or the person)
- I am my anger or my irritation at (add the name of the person or the situation)
- I am my fear of (add the name of the person or the situation)
- I am my feeling that this situation is unfair, wrong, unjust or shouldn't be happening
- I am my feeling that this situation or relationship isn't the way I want it to be
- I am the stress, worry, pressure or anxiety that I am feeling
- I am the frantic feeling I am feeling
- I am my rage at (add the name of the situation or the person)
- I am my terror of (add the name of the situation or the person)
- I am my feeling that I am being overwhelmed by my situation
- I am the boredom I am feeling OR I am my boredom
- I am the disgust, distain or revulsion I am feeling toward ...
- I am the condescension that I am feeling toward ...
- I am my feeling that I "have to" make this situation be the way I want it to be or turn out the way I want it to (whenever we feel that something *has to be* any certain way or that we *have to* do anything we are *always motivated by fear*. The feelings of "have to" are always driven by trying to fix something that we fear we have done wrong or messed up or failed at in the past.)
- I am my judgment of (you add in the names, behavior or choices)
- I am my judgment of or anger at (you add in the names, words, emotions, behaviors or attitude)

All of the above statements can help you to release yourself from reactive emotional states *which are not* states of complete gratitude and usually have their roots in subconscious fear of some sort. You may find that there are many different "parts" of yourself that you were previously unaware of in this process of monitoring your reactions to others. You may only become aware of these parts of yourself as you begin monitoring yourself and come to realize just how "ungrateful" parts of you can be in any given day, and

in any given situation. You may find that you have many negative attitudes toward life and relationships that you were totally unaware of as you monitor your own tendency to judge others and life situations. You will only become aware of them when you compare and contrast them with the intentional and willfully chosen state of “complete and total conscious gratitude for God, and everything and everyone in every moment”.

If you constantly release these emotional reactive tendencies, and constantly ask God for help in doing so, these emotional reactive tendencies will affect you less and less over time. It takes time and discipline to find and methodically work with each of these parts of yourself that are not yet resonant with gratitude, still it is completely worth it to do so. Doing anything else can only lead to unhappiness, conflict, fear, anger, negativity, judgmentalness or something less than joy and inner peace.

Once you are out of these negative emotional states you are free to then choose to create a more consistent positive emotional state for yourself in all areas of your life. Learning to manage your emotional state from moment-to-moment is crucial if you want to someday attain consistent inner peace and joy by living in constant gratitude. Inner peace is a gift you can give yourself and one that you truly deserve.

You can release yourself from negative emotional states with the release techniques outlined in this book. As previously stated, there are many other methods and ways of releasing negative emotions and I suggest working with all of them. Your inner peace and happiness are my goal and hope. It will of course help to consistently pray and ask for help from God, and of course it helps to consciously willfully intend gratitude at all times. You can also apply *positive affirmations* in regard to your process of developing gratitude, for example.

“I am my feeling of complete loving gratitude in every part of my being for God, everyone, everything and every experience of my life, in every moment of my life, now and forever!”

What is necessary in the long run is that you attain *complete congruency and alignment* with gratitude, throughout all parts of yourself. This is necessary, because paradoxically, until you do so you will not want be able to fully manifest what you want in life. The reason this is true is because when you are in a state of gratitude *you always feel deserving*, therefore it is easy to manifest what you want. If you are feeling undeserving, for any reason, in any part of your system, you cannot be in a state of gratitude in that part of your system. Therefore, that part of you is not congruent with manifesting what you truly consciously want in life. It is busy doing “something else”, such as being angry, judging, fearing or expecting people to be something other than who they really are. This is a main reason why people cannot manifest their dreams and desires in life. They feel undeserving of doing so and they have not realized that if they simply choose to live in gratitude that this feeling of being undeserving can be “overwritten” by the feeling of total gratitude. If you are totally congruent in gratitude you will literally fear nothing because you are *totally focused on your feelings of gratitude*, meaning receiving good, happy results, not fearful painful results or losses. A useful prayer to create a completely congruent state of gratitude, and thus joy and inner peace in every moment of your life is the following:

"Please God help make every part of me, including mind, body, emotions and soul absolutely congruent in complete gratitude for you, and everyone and everything I have or will ever experience in every moment of my life, forever."

In the process of living in gratitude it is necessary to understand and accept that *you do have fear and all other negative emotions*. Do not deny it, accept the situation and begin to work to learn to focus on gratitude while you methodically and continually release your fears and all other negative emotions and all judgmentalness as they arise, day by day. In this way, you can eventually find inner peace, joy and *love for yourself and everyone else, all the time*. I know you have probably not yet experienced this feeling in your life, still you can! I have personally experienced this, I know it exists and that is why I am telling you about it, I would not waste your time otherwise. I would not waste my time and effort writing this book to you if I did not fully believe this to be true. So, every time you recognize that something negative has appeared on your "emotional radar", forgive yourself if you feel it is necessary, and do not judge yourself, because you are only human like all of us and you have not in any way failed. Then ask God to please help you to bring that part of yourself into total congruence and alignment with complete and absolute gratitude now and forever.

Until you look at all of life with gratitude you will not *believe and feel deeply* that you deserve to be loved and to receive total abundance of all kinds and to have it all fulfilled. You will also not feel that everyone else also deserves this just as much as you do. Meaning that if you have any part of yourself that feels undeserving, then it is still unwilling to receive and be loved and accepted. So that part of you won't allow yourself to receive and to feel loved by God or by anyone else completely. Even though you are already loved by God and always have been, these parts of yourself just haven't allowed themselves to feel it because they are not conscious enough to realize that they deserve it or they do not feel safe doing so. It is a "which came first the chicken or the egg type of situation". Which came first, total gratitude for everything and everyone or the letting go of the feelings of not being deserving of what we want to be in gratitude for? (i.e. The love of God, love of yourself, joy, fulfillment, freedom and total abundance of all kinds). This understanding needs to be fully grounded in all parts of your system, even the parts of yourself that feel or fear that this is just too difficult or impossible to achieve.

Some optional clearing statements that may help you achieve this state are:

"I am my fear that I do not deserve to live in constant gratitude for the rest of my life"

"I am my fear that it is not possible for me to completely live in gratitude forever in all areas of my life"