

December 2016

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Gratitude

Transform your life in 2017 by focusing on what you’ve got, rather than what you want!

Every Christmas and New Year the shelves of newsagents brim over with publications full of top tips and strategies on how we can change our lives for the better in the coming year. This year I am going to suggest something completely different for 2017, focusing on what you have, rather than what you want

Mark Shields Explains

There is no doubt in my mind that setting goals in life helps us to get focused and gives us something realistic and different to aim for. The power of having a plan and a set of goals, triggers progress, creates momentum and drives change. Having said that understanding how your emotions play a role in your overall happiness some would say is even more important.

Out of all of our choices of emotion, gratitude is now deemed the emotion that can lead us to joy, peace, true harmony and happiness in ourselves.

Let us look at this powerful emotion in more detail and take a look at how this can work

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude means thankfulness, counting your blessings, noticing simple pleasures, and acknowledging everything that you receive. It means learning to live your life aware on a continuous basis of how much you’ve been given.

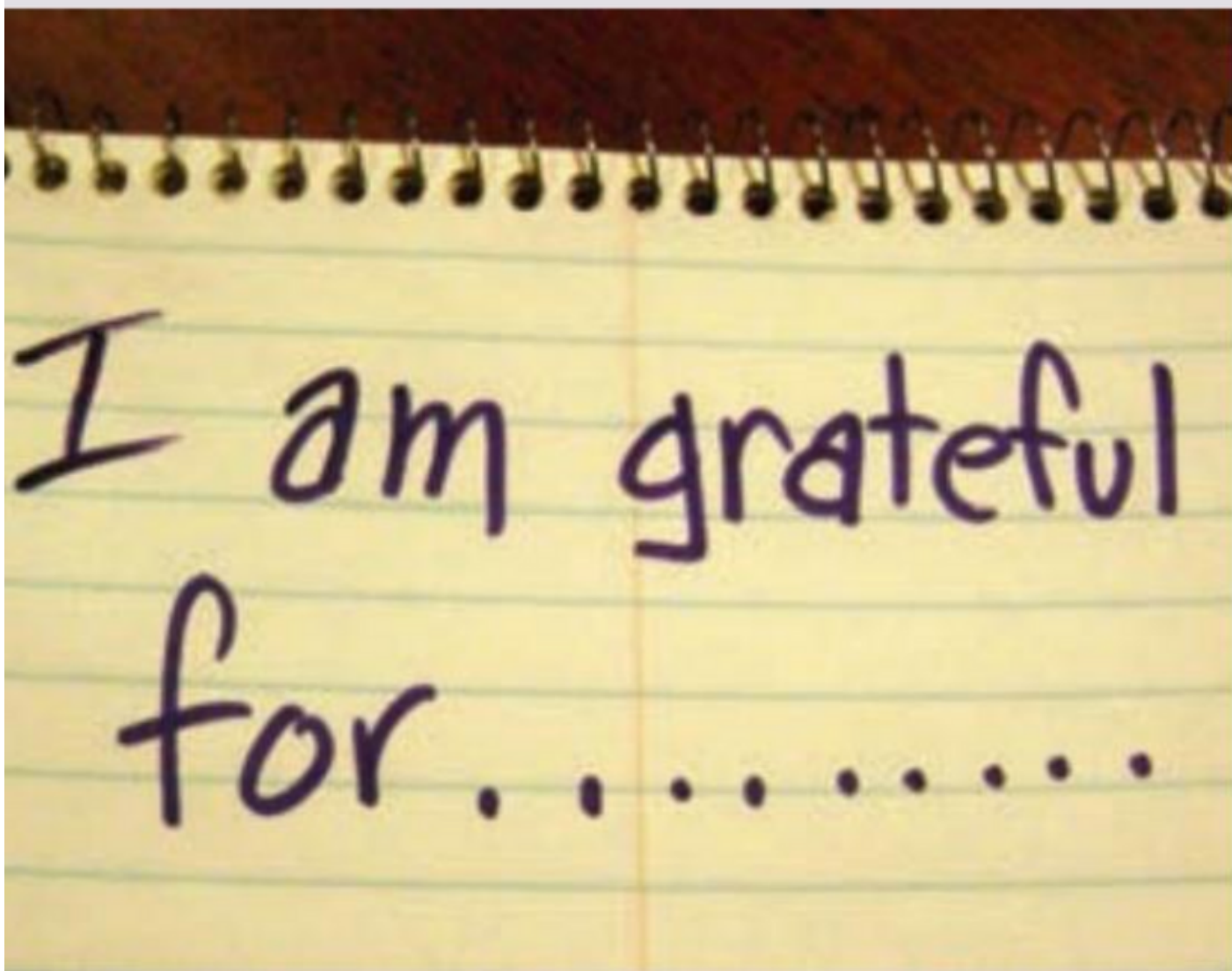
Gratitude shifts your focus from what your life lacks to the abundance that is already present. In addition, behavioral and psychological research has shown the surprising life improvements that can stem from the practice of gratitude.

Giving thanks makes people happier and more resilient, it strengthens relationships, it improves health, and it reduces stress.

Daily Rituals to re enforce your levels of gratitude?

- Use gratitude to restart your life by appreciating what you have in life
- Taking a few minutes every day to write down what you feel your grateful for will change your life
- Writing a gratitude diary is very popular with a lot of people and these people set themselves a target of finding 10 things they feel grateful for every day and write them down
- The more you realize and appreciate all that you already have and all that you already are, the more that you will get
- We all have two very resourceful meditative mind states, which we experience twice a day. The first when we first wake up in the morning and the second last thing at night just before we drift off to sleep. I call these the Power States when in fact they are natural theta brainwave states that are similar to natural states of self - hypnosis

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- Using positive affirmations directly linked to gratitude when entering both of these resourceful states will help our brains program our unconscious minds to focus on what we should be grateful for and by definition feel happier every day. Sports professionals use this same technique and they describe the results as “creating their own day”

Practicing gratitude has been scientifically proven!

The results of a study indicated that daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher report levels of:

- Alertness
- Enthusiasm
- Determination
- Optimism
- Energy

Additionally, the gratitude group experienced

- Less depression
- Less stress
- More likely to help others
- Exercised more regularly
- Made more progress toward personal goals

People who feel grateful are also more likely to feel loved.

Gratitude can become a positive habit, but only with discipline. With continued exercise, practicing gratitude will create more abundance, prosperity, well-being, and happiness than you ever thought possible.

We're flooded with so much negative biochemistry that we can (easily) get hijacked. So the only solution is to flood your self with positive experiences.

A Technique for you to practice everyday to help you feel more grateful

Stay in the Moment

First thing you want to do is shake your body out; then make your hands like claws and move back and forth, breathing in and out very rapidly.

Then, stop, shake your body out, clap and say yes five times.

Say: Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

Make a total excitement sound like when you were a little kid. Put your hand on your heart; close your eyes.

Feel Your Heart

We're going to go on a journey of things you're grateful about, but first, feel your heart. Feel the power of your heart. Feel the strength of your heart. Feel grateful for your heart.

Think about it: You didn't have to buy this heart. You didn't have to earn it. Someone thought enough of you to give you this heart, instantly, the moment you were born. As long as it beats, you're alive.

Step into a moment in your life you can feel deep feeling of gratitude for. Breathe in your heart; hear what you heard then; feel what you felt then, right now. Feel so grateful. Feel that moment; it was sacred; you were blessed.

Take It In

Don't just think it. Feel, see, be there. Reach out and bring in another memory you can feel grateful for. Step in and feel the power and grace of that moment.

Bring a third moment in. Maybe this moment could be a coincidence. We all love a coincidence because we did nothing for it—something just happened. You met somebody, you went somewhere, and it led to something magnificent. Step into the gratitude of that moment and feel it as well.

Take your hand off your heart and just continue to breathe, and go on a journey. Feel each moment, in your body, like you're there.

Shift to Moments You're Proud Of

Shift to a moment you're proud of. Bring in someone you're proud of. Breathe the way you do when you feel proud—along with the gratitude.

Think of something you've accomplished in your life—small or big. Think of a romantic, sensual moment and bring that in too.

Bring in a moment that made you laugh out loud. Did you ever laugh so hard that milk came out your nose or something like that? Bring it into your heart.

Bring in a special moment with family or friends.

Bring in a moment that was pure excitement. Make that sound of excitement out loud. Now, for 10 seconds, reach out and bring in moments from the future. Bring them in fast! And in the end, just shout the word "yes."

Now, open your eyes.

Summary

I think its fair to say that most readers will accept that doing daily rituals to help us achieve a gratitude mindset has to be worth a try. The concept makes sense and the daily exercises and affirmations are achievable. The advice I give you as a reader is exactly the same as I give my clients. Practice these exercises for ten minutes everyday before you do anything else in the morning for four weeks and record in a gratitude diary how different you feel each day. I know you will be amazed. I love reading reader experiences so when you feel great get in touch and let me know at mark@lifepractice.co.uk

Article written by Mark Shields
Educator, Speaker, Coach, Author
01462 431112
mark@lifepractice.co.uk

References and research Tony Robbins / Oprah Winfry Oct 2016