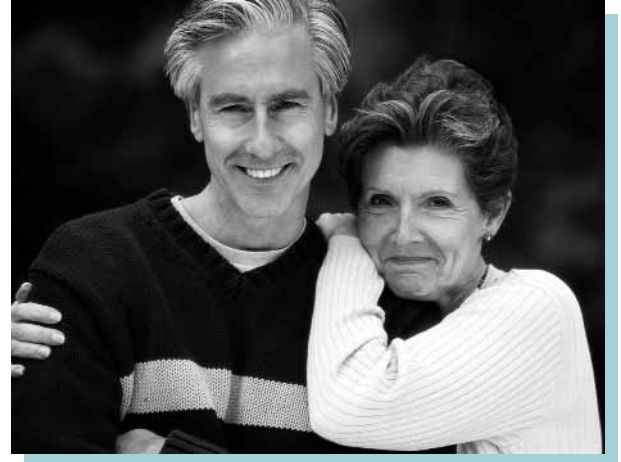


THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

by Suzy Spivey



Think of a time in your life when you felt truly grateful for someone or something. Can you remember how you felt in that moment? Did you feel love, connectedness, possibly a sense of wholeness? If so, you witnessed the power of gratitude in that moment. Now imagine if you could replicate how you felt in that moment and experience those sensations every day. How might your life change if you felt love, connectedness, and wholeness on an ongoing basis?

Gratitude is defined as the quality or feeling of being grateful or thankful. It's considered to be an emotion or feeling we express. But isn't gratitude more than that? Since the beginning of time, the expression of gratitude to a higher power or deity has been the hallmark of almost every religion. The central theme in most world religions today is giving thanks to God. In fact, gratitude can be developed into a daily practice and become a way of life. Gratitude will open the gateway to your heart's desire and put you on the fast track to manifesting your dreams.

In the past five years, gratitude has captured the attention of the scientific community and we now have scientific evidence of the power of gratitude. In a 2003 study conducted by Drs. Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough, they found that grateful people experience a greater sense of feeling connected to others, higher levels of life satisfaction, vitality, optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. Study participants who kept a weekly gratitude journal felt better about their lives as a whole, reported fewer physical complaints, and exercised more.

I first discovered the power of gratitude in 1998 when my world seemingly crumbled before my eyes. I left a successful, 15-year career in publishing to find my true calling. I knew in my heart that there was more to work than earning a good salary and getting the

next promotion. There was something deep inside calling to me, but the voice was faint and I found it difficult to access the volume control. So rather than embarking on my intended discovery process, I rapidly dissolved into a major identity crisis—who was I without a job title with which to identify myself? This crisis led to a crushing sense of despair and fear. My “soulmate,” who had encouraged this bold career shift, eventually decided that he couldn't handle my depression and moved out of my home and life, leaving me alone with nothing but my thoughts. As I struggled to pull myself out of the black hole, I found exercise to be the only reliable boost. That was taken away with a knee injury that required surgery and 4–6 weeks on crutches. So I found myself alone and home bound with no outlet for my one reliable endorphin boost.

My book shelves were filled with inspirational books that I had collected over the years, so I started reviewing the kernels that I had highlighted and underscored searching for some meaning in all of this. I discovered that they all delivered a similar message, which Buddha captured most succinctly with these words, “We are what we think.” Aha! I finally understood that the more I focused on what I didn't have or didn't want in my life, the more I got of just that. As I allowed fear and doubt to paralyze me, I shut off my connection to my higher power, making it impossible to receive what I wanted.

I was reading Sarah Breathnach's *Simple Abundance* and decided to take her advice and start a Gratitude Journal. So each night I would write down at least 5 things that I was grateful for that day—no matter what. There were days when I struggled to find 5 things, so I would write “I'm so grateful that this day is over” or simply “I'm

so grateful to be alive!” It doesn't really matter if you feel grateful in the moment. Expressing it regardless of how you feel is the important step. In fact, the most important time to express gratitude is when you feel it least.

Within a week of starting this daily practice, things began to shift. Friends showed up to take me out since I couldn't drive; on one of these outings, a new man showed up and brought a smile back to my heart; a new career opportunity appeared—literally—with a phone call intended for someone else. It didn't take much to convince me that gratitude works! It truly can transform your life if you will acknowledge the abundance you have right now in your life and open your heart to receive. It really is as simple as that.

Suzy Spivey is a passionate motivational speaker, abundance coach, and certified dance instructor. She helps people believe in their potential, move into their power, and create abundance in their lives.

“GIVE
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YOU WILL FIND A
LOT.”

~ The Hausa of
Nigeria