

## Gratitude

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### Introduction

In our busy, harried lives, it's tempting to focus on what we haven't accomplished and what we don't yet possess. That trap of *more, more, more* only alienates us from our loved ones and our connected-ness with a Higher Power. The solution to reconnecting to what's important in life can be as simple as getting in touch with the power of gratitude.

With practice, it is possible to redirect our focus from large, daunting problems to life's small, beautiful blessings that are ever present and ever sustaining.

Cultivating a true sense of gratitude is more than counting our blessings and saying thank you for what's good. When we're learning to speak the language of gratitude, we learn to say thank you for everything in our lives, whether we feel grateful or not. That's how we turn around circumstances that frustrate or disappoint us.

The benefits of nurturing an attitude of gratitude are numerous. A sense of gratitude immediately gives us a sense of perspective when facing problems. Gratitude helps us make the most of resources at hand. And above all else, a sense of gratitude helps us truly recognize the presence of a Higher Power in our lives.

When we hoard what we have been given, we block the door to receiving more. If you are feeling stagnant in your life, share some of what has been given to you. Let go of some of the sorrow that you have experienced by sharing your experience—and the compassion that you have learned from it—with another. Share your success by teaching someone else your methods. Share in the abundance given to you; donate to a favorite charity or church. Give of your time, your money, your abilities. When you give, you open the door to receive more.

Someone once asked the artist Georgia O'Keeffe why her paintings magnified the size of small objects—like the petals on a flower—making them appear larger than life, and reduced the size of large objects—like mountains—making them smaller than life.

"Everyone sees the big things," she said. "But these smaller things are so beautiful and people might not notice them if I didn't emphasize them." That's the way it is with gratitude and letting go. It's easy to see the problems in our lives. They're like mountains. But sometimes we overlook the smaller things; we don't notice how truly beautiful they are.

God, teach me how to enjoy and savor the pleasures, gifts, and talents that are spread out before me.

Be grateful you're where you are at this moment. Don't worry about trying to hurry the future along. Look for the joy in life now.

Let yourself have all your emotions and feelings about losing people and moments you loved and cherished. Feel as sad as you need to. Grieve. Then let the feelings and the past go. Don't let your memories stop you from seeing how beautiful and precious each moment in your life is now.