

“The Gratitude Journal”

By Dr. David Noble

A common problem for people is that they habitually think negatively or focus on what *isn't right* about their lives or what *isn't* working for them instead of what *is* right and being thankful for it.

When you pay so much attention to (therefore give power to) the negatives of life, you spend a lot more time *experiencing* these troubles and therefore, they appear to be bigger than they are. Whether it's obsessing over what you want and don't have, or reliving disappointments and pains from the past; you're hurting yourself, your health, and very possibly those you care about, by focusing on these negatives.

Your perception of life becomes so strongly associated with these problems that your quality of life becomes worse than it really is. And your perception then becomes your reality! Just choosing to think positively or recite positive affirmations doesn't work either because you are just pretending to be someone you're not. Since you cannot lie to yourself, you end up creating an integrity problem at the soul level.

But, you can **break the habit of negative thinking** by teaching your mind to focus on the positives in your life, therefore *experiencing* those positives more often. Whatever you feed – grows, whatever you focus on – expands, whatever crops you plant – you harvest (The law of seed time and harvest). You do this by choosing to be grateful for the good things in your life, thereby exercising your 'gratitude muscle'.

Being in a state of gratitude creates a state of emotional freedom and neurological balance which allows one to feel 'happiness'. The act of choosing to find something be grateful for turns “on” the emotional and physical response to the data that everything is great, which in turn, crowds out the natural stress response to what is wrong with your life both real and perceived. ...besides, God doesn't just suggest it, He commands it; **Phil 4:6, Col 2:6-7, Col 3:15-17, Col 4:2, 1 Thes 5:17-18**

A Gratitude Journal is a tool you can use to train your mind to “do” gratitude more naturally. It takes at least three weeks to develop a new habit so stick with it for at least that long. Keep up with it until you find that you're naturally focusing on the positives each and every day. (Caution; you may actually find more contentment, peace and happiness)

Follow these simple steps:

- 1. Keep a pen and notebook/binder/journal by your bed.**
- 2. Every night before 'lights out' and your good night prayer, write down 3 things that you are grateful for that occurred to you that day.**
- 3. Repeat this every night for AT LEAST 3 weeks, but never re-use the same thing twice! This forces you to get creative and think broadly during your day.**
- 4. By the 2nd or 3rd week, you begin to look for things during your day to be grateful for. Your intentions begin to shift to being thankful and content!**

This would be a great exercise to continue doing indefinitely. You will begin to appreciate life in a whole new way, simply because you decided to focus your attention on the good things. The world is full of abundant love and joy, but it is all too easy to focus on what's wrong. It is up to you which life you will live.

Break those old habits, have fun with this, and start enjoying life more. You'll be happier...and healthier!