

SUCCESS RULE # 27

Practice Gratitude



The practice of gratitude as a tool for happiness has been in the mainstream for years. Long-term studies support gratitude's effectiveness, suggesting that a positive, appreciative attitude contributes to greater success in work, greater health, peak performance in sports and business, a higher sense of well-being, and a faster rate of recovery from surgery.

But while we may acknowledge gratitude's many benefits, it still can be difficult to sustain. So many of us are trained to notice what is broken, undone or lacking in our lives. And for gratitude to meet its full healing potential in our lives, it needs to become more than just a Thanksgiving word. We have to learn a new way of looking at things, a new habit. And that can take some time.

That's why *practicing* gratitude makes so much sense. When we practice giving thanks for all we have, instead of complaining about what we lack, we give ourselves the chance to see all of life as an opportunity and a blessing.

Remember that gratitude isn't a blindly optimistic approach in which the bad things in life are whitewashed or ignored. It's more a matter of where we put our focus and attention. Pain and injustice exist in this world, but when we focus on the gifts of life, we gain a feeling of well-being. Gratitude balances us and gives us hope.

There are many things to be grateful for: colorful autumn leaves, body parts that work, friends who listen and really hear, chocolate, liberty and freedom, warm jackets, a job, the ability to read, roses, our health, butterflies. What's on your list?

Some Ways to Practice Gratitude

- Keep a gratitude journal in which you list things for which you are thankful. You can make daily, weekly or monthly lists. Greater frequency may be better for creating a new habit, but just keeping that journal where you can see it will remind you to think in a grateful way.
- Make a gratitude collage by drawing or pasting pictures.
- Practice gratitude around the dinner table or make it part of your nighttime routine.
- Practice gratitude around the conference table or make it part of your office routine.
- Make a game of finding the hidden blessing in a challenging situation.
- When you feel like complaining, make a gratitude list instead. You may be amazed by how much better you feel.
- Notice how gratitude is impacting your life. Write about it, sing about it, express thanks for gratitude



As you practice, an inner shift begins to occur, and you may be delighted to discover how content and hopeful you are feeling. That sense of fulfillment is gratitude at work.

May all of you and your families have a Blessed Christmas, Hanukkah or any spiritual celebration you may practice, a bountiful and extraordinary 2012.