



## Replenishing a Grateful Spirit

### Description

Feeling and expressing gratitude is so important. November is “gratitude month.” Thanksgiving is “gratitude day.” The happiest and healthiest people are those who live in a place of gratitude all year long.

Most people understand the *why* around practicing gratitude. Below are some gratitude tips to help with the *how*.

Gratitude doesn’t operate in a vacuum. It’s an extension of other values like generosity and forgiveness. Thinking of it in this context can help us act in ways that keep our spirit of gratitude replenished.

#### A FEW TIPS FOR BECOMING PERPETUALLY GRATEFUL:

**Get intentional about gratitude.** Start each morning with prayer. This is just one example of building habits that help you stick to your commitment.

**Throw the net broadly.** Helping others be successful, even when they are outside our immediate circle, creates a huge sense of gratitude. The idea that “every child is my child” resonates with me. Dr. Dana Suskind, the founder and director of the Thirty Million Words Initiative at the University of Chicago, talks about this in connection with her late husband, Dr. Don Liu. He drowned back in 2012 while trying to save children who were struggling in rough waters on Lake Michigan. People asked Dr. Suskind why he risked and ultimately lost his life for children who weren’t his own. She responded that he saw all children as his children.

**Consider how others experience you.** Many people are struggling right now. We can help by striving to become a soft place to land. When people feel safe enough to come to us and tell us the truth about things, it sets us up to be able to help in a meaningful way. This is so important as we work to destigmatize mental health issues.

Another way we can help is by giving feedback. It’s truly a way to show we care, but only if we can deliver that feedback in a loving way. When people see us as caring about them, they are able to

receive the feedback and make needed changes. Seeing people grow sparks tremendous gratitude.

**Words matter.** The words we say have a huge impact on how we feel. A simple change to make is moving from *got to* to *get to*. When we say I've *GOT TO* work on this project or go on this trip, it creates a sense of dread. When we say I *GET TO* do these things, it completely shifts our attitude to one of gratitude.

**Be kind to yourself.** We tend to be hard on ourselves, but this is antithetical to gratitude. When times are hard, pause for self-care. Don't try to keep pushing. People sometimes think resilience is about pushing through, but this is a misconception. We can't be resilient when we push ourselves to the breaking point. Neither can we be grateful.

**Recognize how fragile life is.** This naturally happens when something unsettles us. Somebody told me getting a cancer diagnosis changed everything. They started to notice every breath, every minute, how bright the moon is, etc.

We can unsettle ourselves. We are the fortunate ones. We are alive and can make a difference. A heart full of gratitude has little room for anything else.

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