

OPTIMAL

A newsletter for wellness and improved wellbeing

About OPTIMAL

OPTIMAL is a monthly wellness newsletter developed and circulated by Sages & Scribes Consultants aimed at informing, educating and improving the general wellbeing of readers by focusing on the essentials for improved mental health, and how to live a vibrant yet practical life in the present reality.

Life has its challenges, but we always have something we are thankful for, although there are some people who don't think so. How can everyone be grateful when life is so hard? Does being grateful have any significance on our wellbeing?

In this issue, we look at gratitude and how it affects our lives.

Improve your wellness, optimize your wellbeing and enhance your lifestyle with OPTIMAL.

Sages & Scribes
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GRATITUDE

By Ven. Adelowo Adesina

During a tutorial, a university professor once asked his students to write a list of things they were grateful for. The students scribbled everything they could think of that they were thankful for - events and places they had been to, people they had met, and the many other things they had experienced. Their lists seemed endless.

The professor defined gratitude as, "taking time to remember the good things that have happened to you in the past, without considering it is an event, a person, a good thought you had". This made the students to write even more.

Everyone has something they are thankful for. Our life's experiences are

unique, but the underlying feeling is the same - a spark of inner joy.

Gratitude generates a spontaneous feeling of thankfulness; a recognition of value, and appreciation of what one has or has experienced. Expressing gratitude gives one positive emotions, and a greater sense of self. Yet, not everyone is grateful in this life; there are people who are hardly thankful for anything. Is this even possible? Your guess is as good as mine.

That said, let us explore gratitude.





Gratitude and attitude are not challenges; they are choices.

Robert Breather



Understanding Gratitude

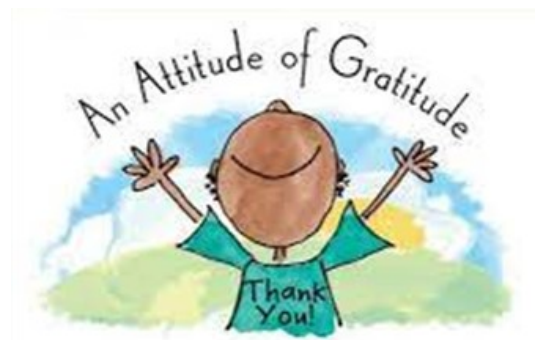
Gratitude can have a number of different meanings, depending on how it is used, and the perspective. The word ‘gratitude’ is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness (depending on the context).

Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives.

As a result, being grateful also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power. In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness.

Gratitude Is...

- ▶ Thankfulness
- ▶ Graciousness
- ▶ Gratefulness
- ▶ Appreciation
- ▶ The quality of being thankful
- ▶ Readiness to show kindness
- ▶ The willingness to show appreciation



Gratitude, thankfulness or gratefulness, from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning "pleasing" or "thankful", is regarded as a feeling of appreciation by a recipient of another's kindness, gifts, help, favours, or other form of generosity to the giver of such gifts.

Wikipedia

Why Is Gratitude So Powerful?

In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness.

Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. The capacity for gratitude originates with the presence of self-love and self-acceptance.

Benefits of Practicing Gratitude

Regardless of our present reality, as we strive through the veracities of life and the challenges that come with it, there are benefits for practicing gratitude.

- **Gratitude makes us happier.** It reduces stress, and makes us less anxious or predisposed to depression. Gratitude takes us to our happy place.
- **It improves our self-esteem.** It gives us a sense of positive self-worth and high levels of confidence.
- **It helps us be more resilient.** We imbibe positive values and have an optimistic world view.
- **Gratitude helps us sleep well** and improves our physical health.
- **It helps improve friendships,** our romantic relationships, as well as maintain positive social connections.



So... Does Gratitude Make Us Happy?

Yes, it does!

Gratitude has a strong positive impact on psychological well-being. It increases self-esteem, enhances positive emotions and makes us more optimistic.

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

The Ungrateful Are Amongst Us

There are some people who hardly see anything good in their lives, or even in the lives of others. They are unappreciative of everything, and constantly complain about everything or anyone, whenever they can.

Here are some of their traits:

- They have negative attitudes, emotions, values and world view.
- They are not as successful in their careers and businesses, and don't achieve as much as grateful people.
- They tend to be moody, grumpy, depressed and are not good company.
- They have the tendency to be materialistic, greedy, grabby, tight-fisted and corrupt.
- They find it difficult to see the good in people or around them.

Some mental roadblocks to gratitude include feeling impatient, having high expectations, or thinking that the subject is too sentimental. Devoting enough time to the practice can help change one's mentality about gratitude.

Life comes with its challenges; being thankless or ungrateful deprives us of the emotional rewards of gratitude. Happiness is free.



Gratitude can transform common day into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.

William Ward



How To Be Grateful When Life Is Hard

Life can be challenging, and we know it. But this is no excuse for us to be hard on ourselves. Gratitude allows us to be thankful, show appreciation and return kindness. When we lack gratitude, we aren't allowing ourselves to be open to receiving and giving love.

Here's what to do:

- Make an effort to notice the good, because when life's not going well, you tend to feel like nothing good ever happens to you.
- Learn to reframe bad situations. See things from a positive perspective.
- Adjust your expectations so you don't get disappointed.
- Celebrate the little things, and find joy in little places.
- Surround yourself with grateful people, because gratitude is contagious.

Resources: The Harvard Medical School, verywellmind.com, positivepsychology.com

In Other Words...

We hustle everyday; some days are good, other days not so much. Yet, there is always a constant— despite life happening, you are still standing. And that's something to be grateful for. There's more...

When you consider those positive actions and events that might seem small, common-place or inconsequential, you realize you can be grateful for many things around you. For instance, appreciate the roof over your head, or be grateful for the small acts of kindness that you forgot to pay attention to. Be grateful for your cup of tea, or that message from your friend who asked how you were feeling today. Take a moment to be grateful for the person who smiled at you, and perhaps smile at someone too. Everyone loves a little kindness.

No matter what life brings you, remember, there's always something to be thankful for. You are here. Cease the day. Be thankful for the little things... Practise gratitude.



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