Gratitude

How Gratitude Changes Everything
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Introduction

The great 13th-century German mystic Meister Eckhart once said, “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is ‘thank you,’ it will be enough.”

Gratitude is a sacred practice—a way of knowing and thanking God. Gratitude lifts our spirits, changes our perspective, and softens our hearts. When we are grateful, we are humble. We are awake. We are filled with wonder.

Gratitude helps us appreciate what we do have instead of focusing on what we don’t have. Have you ever been feeling sorry for yourself—and then encountered someone far less fortunate? Maybe it was someone who was homeless,
penniless, or severely disabled. Suddenly your problems seemed very small, and your blessings very big.

Perhaps you think gratitude is only possible in times of good fortune. On the contrary, gratitude can be a way of life. Unity cofounder Myrtle Fillmore suggested being thankful even in the midst of hardship. If you are experiencing difficulty, she advised, “Be grateful in advance for the good you know will come of this.” Our faith can be so sure, so unwavering, that even when we’re in pain, we know good will come from it.

A bold little book called *Thank God I …* illustrates just how pervasive gratitude can be. It is an anthology of inspiring stories from people who have had some of the worst things in life happen to them—but who later came to see their misfortune as a blessing. We read how a woman who had herpes learned to take such good care of her body that she was able to conceive and give birth to a healthy child—something the doctors had said was impossible. We learn about a convicted felon who used his experience to reinvent himself, and to go forth to serve others in powerful and meaningful ways. And
we hear of a woman who practiced gratitude religiously to help heal herself of cancer.


This booklet also includes gratitude prayers from other faith traditions, and a place to begin your own gratitude list. You’ll find tips, tools, and insights for developing an “attitude of gratitude.”

Gratitude changes everything. Most of all, it changes us. When we count our blessings, we see them multiply. We remember that life is beautiful, that God is good, and that all is well.

May this little booklet help you live in gratitude, knowing every day that you are blessed, and you are a blessing.

Your Friends in Unity
The Freedom and Decision for Gratitude

By Jesse F. Tanner, Ph.D.

Jesse Tanner holds a doctorate in theology and is a ministerial candidate at Unity Institute® and Seminary.

According to Arabic legend, a young man was roaming the desert and came across a spring of crystal clear water. The water was so delicious that he filled his leather canteen to the brim so he could bring some back to a tribal elder who had been his teacher. After a four-day journey, he offered the water to the elder who took a deep drink, smiled amiably, and thanked his former student for the excellent water. The young man returned to his home with a happy heart.

Later, the elder let another student taste the water. He spit it out, saying it was terrible. Apparently, over the four days in the old leather container, it had become stale. The student challenged his teacher: “Master, the water was awful. Why did you pretend to like it?” The teacher replied: “You only tasted the water, whereas I tasted the gift. The water was simply the container for an act of loving-kindness.”

This compelling story speaks to a profound truth about our lives. It tells us about the monumental importance of cultivating gratefulness in our lives and relationships. We often think of gratefulness especially during holidays or special events when we get an opportunity
to remember and celebrate what we are thankful for. However, gratefulness does not have to be relegated only to these occasions. We are able to tune in to our innate capacity for gratefulness each moment of every day.

Despite appearances, circumstances, or the outer forms, the tribal elder in the story was able to clearly perceive the spirit of the gift, the love from which it came. In other words, he was able to be grateful when he could have not been. He was able to experience gratitude even when circumstances were “distasteful.” Likewise, we can develop gratefulness just like any other spiritual capacity. We do not have to go out and get a gratitude injection, take some thankfulness pill, or await the “gratefulness fairy” to come and shower us with thanksgiving dust. Not at all! We become grateful by our own intention.

Each one of us has the innate spiritual power of free will. This means that we always have the ability to choose. While we may not always have a choice about what we experience in life, we definitely have a choice about how we experience
events. Even when we find ourselves in the midst of hardships or things not going like we want, we can decide to behold the good in the situation. This is possible because Spirit is always present. God the Good is abiding within every circumstance, but we have to attune our attention to the blessing that is there. Just like the biblical story of Jacob wrestling all night with God in human form, we can say to each condition, “I will not let go until you bless me” (Gen. 32:23-34). We, too, can find the gem, but we must look for it and claim it.

Gratitude comes when we continually opt to see the blessings in our lives—persons, relationships, events, places, memories, and ideas. Gratefulness is all about being FULL of GREAT-ness in our hearts, using our perceiving power of faith and free will to witness and embrace the good in every situation.

In Unity, we often refer to Jesus as Way Shower, Master Teacher, and Spiritual Example. One of the deep and momentous precepts of Jesus is: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mt. 6:21). There are many ways to interpret this, as with any text. However, given the context
of gratitude, Jesus may be alluding to the potent insight that whenever and wherever we resolve to find good and blessing (our treasure), then and there we will experience gratefulness (our heart). Gratitude arises in consciousness through the positive quality of our attention and intention.

Oftentimes, we can fall into those ruts of taking things for granted, not recognizing the value of what we already do have. How wonderful would it be if we were to live each moment of our lives not taking things for granted? What would it be like if we were to appreciate, or lift up and increase in awareness, the sacredness present in every experience, occasion, relationship, and person?

Sure, we can continue to focus on what we do not have or like. Yet underlying that line of thinking is an unspoken assumption that we do not already have within us the key to gratitude. As we come back to the truth that we have within us the freedom of choice and the power of faith, we can recognize and appreciate the blessings we do have and support each other in seeing it too.

Gratefulness starts within, but it does not have to stay there. The fullness of gratitude comes when we live it out, expressing it through our daily activities and relationships. The more we show appreciation for the good in our lives, and the more we simply and genuinely tell others and ourselves “Thank you,” the greater we will feel gratitude and peace within.

Whenever we encounter a difficulty or frustration, we may ask ourselves, “What is it I can be grateful for here?” “What do I already have that I appreciate?” “Where and how do I demonstrate my gratitude to others and to myself?” We can do great things when we cultivate grateful hearts.
Learning to Receive

By Rev. Tom Thorpe, from
Through a Loving Lens: Gentle Observations About Life, Love and God
The oldest daughter in a family I know enjoyed taking her younger siblings on outings. Often, those outings would include a stop at a favorite ice cream stand.

One of her brothers usually turned down her offer of ice cream until she practically begged him to let her buy him a cup or a cone.

Eventually, she became annoyed with his little game. So one day she took the kids out for a ride, and, following her usual practice, she asked, “We’re stopping for ice cream. Would you like some?”

“No ... no ice cream for me today,” her brother responded.

“All right,” she said and didn’t buy him ice cream that day. It was the last time he refused her offer. Her brother learned a valuable lesson from that experience. It was a lesson I, too, needed to learn.

There came a time when I recognized that my circle of love was incomplete because of my fear of being vulnerable to people. That fear caused me to build a wall around myself and kept me from receiving the love I might have received, in much the same way the boy refused his sister’s offer of ice cream. Eventually, I came to realize that in receiving love, I was giving a great gift to those who chose to share love with me.

It’s still far from easy for me, but far more often than I used to, I now say “yes,” or “thank you” to offers of gifts or kindnesses. The result more than justifies the effort.

Yes, being open to receive does make me vulnerable to others. It’s possible that someone might take advantage of my vulnerability. It’s also possible that, when I say “yes” to a simple gift or kindness offered in love, I’m helping the one who offered the gift discover the powerful joy of giving.
Do you understand how important you are?

You are a special creation of God, and only in you can God fulfill Himself. You are a living soul, original and unique, wonderful and strange.

Do you think that the wind-tossed, cloud-piled sky is vast and moving? Your life is no less vast and moving. Do you think that the sun is splendid and necessary? You are as splendid. You are as necessary.

Do you appreciate the wonder of your own body? Wonderful are your eyes that see and your ears that hear, apprehending shapes and colors, nearness and farness, silence and sound. Wonderful is the stubborn strength of your bones, the clean beauty of your limbs, the dexterity of your hands. Wonderful is the way of a thought in the mazes of the brain and the way of the blood in its vessels. Wonderful is the way of the breath that fans the fires of life. Wonderful is the way of food that is transformed into living cells. Wonderful is the way of the healing power that can restore its own tissues. Wonderful is the way of creative life that can fashion out of the substance of itself a new body for a living soul.

Do you appreciate the wonder of your own mind? With your mind you can create beauty and you can seek truth. You can dream dreams of perfection. You can feel the
divine discontent that is the human mark. You can dare. You can persevere. You can recall the past. You can plan the future. You can soar beyond the farthest mist of stars. You can explore the atom. You can go alone into the aloneness of yourself. You can mount up with prayer toward God. You can shape tools and acquire knowledge. You can gain dominion over the external universe. You can achieve the mastery of yourself.

Do you appreciate the wonder of your own Spirit? Do you know that you are one with the living God? You are one with the God who fashioned the physical universe, the simplest secrets of whose construction our wisest physicists are only now discovering. You are one with the God who in the laboratory of a living cell effortlessly creates substances that all our chemists in acres of factories cannot duplicate. You are one with the God who fashioned the human soul and made it so wonderful and strange that even you who possess it cannot see its full extent or meaning. You are one with the God who made life, and made it so interesting that He Himself enjoys the living of it. As the leaves are a part of the tree, as the sands are a part of the earth, as the cells of your body are a part of you, so you are a part of the Spirit of God.

Out of itself the sea advances in a wave. Out of themselves the heavens form the shifting cloud. Out of itself the Spirit of life unfolds the endless variety of living things. You are the crest of the wave and the shape of the cloud and the human form called you. But you are also the force of the sea, the movement of the heavens, the Spirit of life.

O threefold wonder, infinite creation of the Infinite, know how wonderful you are!
Be Thankful—and Reap the Health Benefits.

Each and every day, take a moment and be grateful for all you have in life. Gratitude, after all, is a great stress-buster. What you think about consistently brings more of the same into your life. So focusing on the positive, even during difficult times, is the best way to reduce and alleviate stress and transform your life.

—Susan Smith Jones, Ph.D.
“Practice gratitude daily and your life will change in ways you can hardly imagine.”

Gratitude, like the law of attraction, is one of the most powerful forces in the universe. When we feel gratitude, we feel love, joy, appreciation, humility, and peace. We also attract even more experiences into our lives for which to feel grateful.

Some people believe God is constantly sending abundance to us, but the truth is, God is the abundance. When we ask for something, we are simply tapping into that abundance. It is not our job to manifest abundance; it is our job to demonstrate our abundance, by understanding that God is the abundance we seek.

Gratitude attracts greater abundance and has wonderful effects on us. When I am grateful, I feel light. I am able to be present. I forget about the little things—and even the big things—I worry about. I feel peaceful. I am not thinking about myself, but am “outwardly” focused. I see what’s around me. I can sit quietly and watch nature. I can observe the birds and the flowers. They attract my attention, and I am grateful that I see them. My gratitude brings still more peace and awareness, and the upward spiral continues. My heart opens. I am happy and filled with joy. I watch the sky and the clouds and see them changing. Sitting by the ocean, I watch the sailboats and the birds as they dive for food. The world seems ethereal. I am one with God and all is well.
Gratitude brings me into conscious contact with God. When I become grateful, my body chemistry changes. I appreciate my life and all the people in it. I am grateful for my close and supportive relationships, for my loving relationship with each of my granddaughters, for my closeness to my friends and colleagues. Even as I write this, my heart sings.

When we feel gratitude, our faces shine and our eyes brighten. Others are attracted to us. When we feel grateful, we see God in everything and everyone. We are kinder, gentler, and more compassionate. We find the right words to say to help others.

When we’re grateful, we create an ontological space that is safe; a space filled with grace, peace, love, and joy. We are safe to be around; we are fun to be around. Thus, we attract more safety, more beauty, more love, and more fun. We make wonderful spiritual connections with people because we are present to the God-essence in them.

When we are grateful, we are present to everything in our lives. We are grateful for it all because we see God in it all.
Too often we think of gratitude as the result of something. Someone does something nice for us, and we feel grateful. That is passive gratitude. I am advocating active gratitude. Conscious gratitude. Active gratitude is a way of living, a way of being. When we choose active gratitude, we are choosing to change our energy. We are using the law of attraction to bring to us more love, more good health, and more abundance. We are cocreating our life with God.

One way to feel more gratitude is through prayer. Ask God to show you how to trust. Ask God to show how to create a loving relationship with a power greater than yourself. Pray yourself into a relationship with God that will comfort you, bless you, and sustain you. Allow God to love and bless you. Allow yourself to become aware of your good. By becoming aware of our good, we begin the upward spiral of gratitude.

As you begin a gratitude practice, you will be guided to the next logical step. Unity cofounder Charles Fillmore said, “Pray and move your feet.” If we don’t take the action we are guided to take, we are doing nothing but magical thinking. Nothing happens in life until we make a commitment. Infuse your mind with your vision. Commit to see your blessings and feel grateful for them.

One way to tap the power of gratitude is by keeping a gratitude journal. Get a notebook, and before you go to bed each night, write down 10 things for which you are grateful. They might be as simple as “I woke up.” We take so many things for granted each day. This exercise helps us remember how truly beautiful the world is and how God works in our lives each day.

Most of us focus on the 10 percent of our lives that make us unhappy instead of the 90 percent for which we are grateful.
Try reversing that. List at least 10 things from the 90 percent you are grateful for under the following headings: Health, Material Possessions, Relationships, Personal and Spiritual Growth, and Creative Expression. By focusing on these, you enact the law of attraction and begin drawing to you even more good.

Then look at the 10 percent of your life that includes the “problem” areas—the things you want to change. Write them down, but instead of seeing them as problems, look for the blessings in them. If you can’t see the good, then ask or, if necessary, demand to see the blessing. This is what Jacob did when he wrestled with the angel of God. He wouldn’t let the angel go until he got a blessing.

You can do the same. As you begin to see the blessing in each “problem” area, write the blessings down. You’ll be surprised at how many you find.

For journal writing, I recommend the three-page approach: Get a pencil and three sheets of clean paper. Sit in a quiet place and get centered. Turn on soft music if you like. When you feel ready, begin writing the things you are grateful for and how you feel as you write them down. Don’t stop writing until the three pages are filled. By the time you finish, you will experience the power of gratitude.

Practice gratitude daily and your life will change in ways you can hardly imagine. Discover the beautiful life you already have, right here and now!
My Gratitude List

Use this space to list what you are most grateful for. Hold in your heart the profound gift of each of these blessings. Let your spirit well up with gratitude. After concluding your list, say aloud or to yourself: “Thank you, God, for all the blessings in my life.”
Do you look at your life and long for it to be different, to be better? You take an important step toward having the kind of life you long to have by establishing the habit of giving thanks.

Do not wait to give thanks until every prayer is answered. Do not wait to give thanks until things are perfect. Give thanks where you are, in the present set of circumstances, in the conditions in which you find yourself. Give thanks for life; give thanks for this day at hand. Give thanks for the opportunities to grow and learn.

Your attitude of thankfulness lifts you out of any feeling of depression, out of any feeling of loneliness.

Give thanks to God and look at life with a thankful spirit. In your heart, say: Here I am, Lord. I open my heart to You. I offer my life to You. I come to You thankfully, joyously. Guide me, bless me, lead me with Your light.
Gratitude Prayers From Around the World

Provided by faith representatives on the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council

AMERICAN INDIAN SPIRITUALITY

Aho, Mitakuye Oyasin is Lakota for the Native understanding that Creator is imminent within All of Creation, all Beings, all situations in our life; present, past, and to come. We are thankful for all that has been given us; both the blessings and the hardships. We give thanks for our elders, ancestors, teachers, our families, and communities. We are mindful of our relationship and interconnection to All of Creation, The Great Web of Life. To you my brothers and sisters, then, Aho! Mitakuye Oyasin.

BUDDHISM

Eternal Spirit, You who go by many names. Let us offer thanks for the bounty of the earth and to the sun, the rain, and all of the sentient beings. Let us be mindful of the vast web of our interconnectedness to all beings, and celebrate our religious diversity. So let it be.

CATHOLICISM

Loving God, we acknowledge You as the only source of growth and abundance. With Your help we plant our crops and by Your power they produce our harvest. In Your kindness and love make up for what is lacking in our efforts. Make our work be fruitful and give us a rich harvest. Help us bring You glory by using well the good things we receive from You. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
HINDUISM
May Peace be unto the Heavens
Unto the Sky and the Earth be Peace
Peace be unto the Water
Unto the Herbs and Trees be Peace
Peace be unto All the Gods
Unto Brahma and unto All be Peace
May we all realize that Peace
Aum Peace Peace Peace.

This peace chant is from the *Yajur Veda*.

ISLAM
On this day of gratitude, Almighty God, thank You for clothing my nakedness: please help me clothe someone in need of clothing. Almighty God, thank You for feeding me when I was hungry; may I feed a hungry person. Almighty God, thank You for family and friends; help me give friendship and comfort to the lonely. Almighty God, thank You for guidance on my path; help me give guidance to the lost. Almighty God, thank You for the gift of knowledge after ignorance; please help me to share Your knowledge with those who need it.
**JUDAISM**

**Psalm 100**

A Psalm of thanksgiving. Shout unto G-d, all the earth.  
Serve G-d with gladness; come before G-d’s presence with joyful singing.  
Know that Adonai is G-d; it is G-d who made us, and we are G-d’s people, and the flock of G-d’s pasture.  
Enter into G-d’s gates with thanksgiving, and into G-d’s courts with praise; give thanks unto G-d, and bless G-d’s name.  
For G-d is good; G-d’s mercy endures forever; and G-d’s faithfulness to all generations.

**PROTESTANTISM**

Gracious God: Creation speaks of Your love for diversity. Today we embrace one another and Your world. Instill within us an appreciation for the wisdom that created humankind’s greatest beauty through our differences. Give us the courage to affect change through diversity. Let us stand as one as You, O Lord, are One. Amen.

**SIKH DHARMA**

For and to the One God we are grateful. As Sikhs we are grateful every moment of every day. And in this gratitude we remember: O blind and unhappy one, why do you cherish the ego? Why do you not enjoy the Love of your Lord within the home of your own heart? Your Creator and your essence is so very near, O foolish one, why do you search outside? Apply the Knowledge of God as the decoration to adorn your eyes, and make the Love of the Lord your jewelry. When, in Grace, your Lord accepts it, then you shall be known as the successful soul.

From the Sikh scriptures, the *Siri Guru Granth Sahib*. 
**SUFISM**

The only secret of happiness … is to keep our eyes open to appreciate every little privilege, to admire every glimpse of beauty, for every little love, kindness, or affection shown to us by young or old, rich or poor, wise or foolish. In this way, continually developing the faculty of appreciating life and devoting it to thanksgiving, we arrive at a bliss which no words can explain, a bliss which is beyond imagination: the bliss that we find ourselves having already entered the kingdom of God.

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM**

I give thanks for the gift of awareness, which allows me to feel, to think, and to love. I give thanks for the smell of rain, for the sight of each red-gold leaf of autumn, for the warm touch of a friend's hand, for the beautifully crafted sounds of Bach, for the taste of an orange. I give thanks for the ability to think and act responsibly, knowing that my choices and actions affect myself and others. I give thanks for the ability to love and be loved, for the gift of friends and family. Spirit of Life, I give thanks for my awareness of the precious gift of life.

**UNITY**

Today we open our awareness to the many profound blessings in our daily lives. We give thanks for the diverse ways in which God expresses through each of us and through our faith traditions. Our paths are many but our spirit is one. Thank you, God, for your life, love, wisdom, and substance infilling us today and every day. We are unified in thought and purpose and inspired to take right action for the benefit of all humanity.
A breathtaking crimson sunset … the sound of children laughing … an exquisite landscape painted by a brilliant artist … the majestic plume of a peacock. There are so many beautiful things in our world to behold and be awed by. For me, however, there truly is nothing more beautiful than experiencing or bearing witness to a moment of Namaste.

Namaste is an ancient Sanskrit word that essentially means “The Divine in me honors the Divine in you.” There are three key components to the practice of Namaste. First, we come
from a place of understanding that we are made in the image and likeness of God and that our true essence is Divine.

Second, we recognize that truth for another.

Finally, we not only recognize that truth but we act accordingly. When we come from a consciousness of Namaste, we seek to honor, to bless, to appreciate, to serve, and to love others.

In my 25 years in Unity, I have experienced thousands of Namaste moments. In a ritual called an “Angel Wash,” I have walked down the center of two lines of people who blessed me with honoring touch and whispered words of affirmation in my ear as I passed by. At retreats I have led participants in finding a partner, looking into their eyes and singing “You Are the Face of God” by Karen Drucker.

Time and time again at youth events and church services, I have joined in the practice of extending our hands toward an individual or group and saying, “We love you, we bless you, we appreciate you, and we behold the Christ in you.”

In each of these moments my heart has been opened and I have felt the presence of God.

Namaste moments like these always bless me but, given the context, never surprise me.

Just recently I was truly blessed and pleasantly surprised by a magnificent moment of Namaste. While on vacation in Orlando, I was awakened by beautiful singing coming from the hall. I got dressed and went out to discover that in the expansive atrium of our hotel, a Hindu wedding was taking place. The singing I heard was sacred chanting welcoming the bride down the aisle. The entire thing was an incredible sight to behold. Guests and wedding party alike were dressed
in traditional finery. The women wore intricately beaded saris and sarongs, and a jeweled bindi adorned the center of each forehead. The ceremony was filled with rituals and traditions involving the families of the bride and groom. I wept at the beauty of the entire scene.

Many hotel guests had gathered to watch this amazing sight. On the balcony next to mine, a woman sat and watched, her eyes wide and wet with tears. I noticed that she was wearing a name badge from the Catholic convention that was taking place in the hotel. She turned toward me, and as our eyes met, she said, “Isn’t it all just so beautiful?”

There it was—Namaste. She could see the holiness, the sacredness, and the beauty in the people, and the illusion of religious separation was shattered in that moment of oneness. I felt my heart break wide open and allowed the tears of gratitude to flow. I believe we are here to practice Namaste, not only in the comfy confines of our happy Unity world, but everywhere, every day, with everyone.
The Great Fullness of Life

By Rev. Kelly Isola

Rev. Kelly Isola, M.Div., is a consultant, speaker, author, and adjunct faculty for Unity Institute® and Seminary, specializing in personal and professional transformation.

I have often heard the phrase “In all things, we give thanks.” I must confess that sometimes I have silently wondered, “Really? All things?” I don’t know about anyone else, but I have been met by plenty of people and experiences where giving thanks or extending gratitude was not even on my radar screen.

It is on these occasions that I recognize the invitation to return to a thankful heart, and even more than that, a return to the consciousness of gratefulness.
A long time ago, when I was fresh off the streets of addiction, a beloved in my life encouraged me to notice the things I was thankful for as part of the beginnings of a spiritual practice. At that time it seemed fairly easy—I had a roof over my head, I was clean, I was beginning to have friends that wanted nothing from me, and I wasn’t alone, suffering in silence.

The longer I stayed clean, the more freedom I experienced—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. However, what I hadn’t expected was that with this great freedom came great responsibility, not only for my whole life, but also for others in the world. This was my introduction to gratitude.

The longer I was in recovery, the more I could hear the sense of responsibility asking me to also acknowledge and give thanks for the things in life that I didn’t like, or even hated! At first I didn’t get it. So I asked a beloved who had walked this path before me, and he told me, “Kelly, gratitude is saying
‘Thank you, God, and let me show you what it means to me.’”

I wasn’t feeling very thankful, but I decided to trust his words.

For a long time I practiced this when I found myself slipping into some form of self-centeredness. I practiced it in times of despair, anger, frustration, and loneliness. What I discovered in this practice was that I couldn’t experience the freedom or fullness of life if I disliked or hated anything. In order to see life differently, I had to love what was in front of me. Once I loved something, it came to me, unfolding gently and gracefully, like a freshly ironed linen tablecloth.

It wasn’t enough to simply recognize the things in life that were easy to like; I had to embrace it all, love it all. I had to look at the things I didn’t like, appreciate them, and even take a step toward them with awe and wonder, like silently approaching a butterfly that is slowly fanning its wings on a flower. Stepping into what I didn’t like or want in life became a form of gravity that drew me into the web of all life. This is why gratitude is such a powerful and compelling tool; it reminds us of our place in this world, in the universe.

I now know that those beginning days of saying “Thank you, and let me show you what it means to me” were a commitment to action, to connect with the world outside myself. Therein lies the freedom and responsibility. Today it reminds me that whatever I do, I leave an echo in the world for all life to hear. Those echoes are moments of wholehearted belonging, where I am showing the world what my life means. Therein lies my thankfulness and gratitude.
Morning Carol
By James Dillet Freeman

On a spring morning, like a child
That loves all creatures great and small,
I feel akin and kind to all
The little creatures of the wild.
With every bounding lamb I leap
Up through the flesh in which I sleep;
I hear the hidden field mouse cry;
I feel the heartbeat of the hare;
And no bird rises on the air
But I put forth my wings and fly;
Nothing that lives but we are one.
God came to me and called me son;
My Lord Christ came and called me brother.
Small creatures of the field and wood,
You are part of our brotherhood—
We are all one with one another.
Thanksgiving

By Myrtle Fillmore,
from How to Let God Help You

Thanksgiving and gratitude are qualities of the soul too little understood and exercised. Heaven and earth listen and respond to the soul that is quickened into praise and thanksgiving. Praise is gratitude in action. Try it in your home.

If giving thanks has in the past increased meager supply into super-abundance, the thing can be done again. Elisha did it. Jesus did it. The same power is latent in you. Why not bring it forth?

If you have never practiced daily thanksgiving in your
home, you have left unused one of the most potent factors available to you for bringing about ideal conditions in your household …

Truth is freeing us from all the limitations by which we thought we were bound. We do not have to be sick. We do not have to endure unpleasant experiences. If we dwell in the secret place of the Most High, the guardianship of Truth is about us and the angels will bear us up so that we shall not dash our feet against a stone. If we would get into the habit of thinking truly about our food before we eat it, thinking where our food comes from, and then thinking back of that to Spirit, the great life that makes our vegetables and our fruits grow, there would come into our minds great praise when we ate. This praise would give new values to our food and make it taste better. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the words of God …

**On Prosperity in the Home**

You are not to take your prosperity as a matter of fact. You are to be as deeply grateful for every demonstration as you would be for some unexpected treasure poured into your lap. You are to expect prosperity because you are keeping the law, and you are to give thanks for every blessing that you gain. This will keep your heart fresh. Thanksgiving for good may be likened to the rain that falls upon the ready soil, refreshing vegetation and increasing the productiveness of the soil. When Jesus Christ had only a little supply from which to feed a multitude, he gave thanks for what he had, and that little grew into such an abundance that all were satisfied, and much was left over.

Blessing has not lost its power since the time when Jesus Christ used it. Try it and prove its efficacy. The same power
of multiplication is within it. Praise and thanksgiving have within them the quickening spiritual power that produces growth and increase.

Never condemn anything in your home. If you want new articles of furniture or clothing to take the place of those which may be at the point of giving out, do not talk about what you have as being old or shabby. Watch your ideas; see yourself clothed as befits a child of the King, and your house furnished as pleases your ideals. Use the patience, the wisdom, and the assiduity that the farmer employs in his planting and cultivating, and your crop will be as sure as his.
I’ve got an attitude, I’ve got an attitude,
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

I thank the universe for each new day
Whether it’s sunny or it’s pouring rain
In any situation, time, or place
My grateful heart creates a state of Grace.

I’ve got an attitude, I’ve got an attitude,
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

The darkness taught me how to praise the light
Wrongness made me hunger for what’s right
Now there’s not any place where I don’t see
Heaven’s blessings pouring down on me.

I’ve got an attitude, I’ve got an attitude,
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

I won’t be waiting when my ship comes in
Won’t trade my “here and now” for something “then”
I’m finding pleasure in the simple things
It doesn’t matter what tomorrow brings.
I’ve got an attitude, I’ve got an attitude,
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

When Jesus fed the hungry multitude
he did it with a grateful attitude.
Although it looked like there was not enough
he thanked his Father for abundant love.

I’ve got an attitude, I’ve got an attitude,
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

I used to cry for deliverance
Send desperate pleas to the heavens
But it wasn’t until I gave up and got still
I could see all the gifts I’ve been given.

I’ve got an attitude
I’ve got an attitude
I’ve got an attitude
I’ve got an attitude of gratitude.

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Thank God I Lost My Dream Job … and Found My Dream

By Steve Bhaerman, from Thank God I ... Stories of Inspiration for Every Situation

Next time you utter the phrase, “a funny thing happened,” consider this. Maybe that “funny thing” is just an example of the Universe’s sense of humor, where you think you’re headed down one path and you’re really headed down another. Like the time I thought I was a college professor, but a funny thing happened … and I ended up becoming a comedian instead.

The story began when I found my dream job at Weekend College, where I could teach autoworkers as part of Detroit’s
Wayne State University. The day I found I’d been hired, I literally cried with gratitude.

The job was even better than I imagined it would be. I had a knack for making the classes I taught—like Labor History and Ethnic Studies—interesting as well as educational. Sometimes the men would bring their wives to class, because apparently it was the best edu-tainment around. More than one student told me I was the first professor they’d ever had who actually spoke to them like a person.

That summer there were no classes, and I took off to research a book I was writing on education, expecting to have my job when I returned in the fall. And that’s when the not-so-funny thing happened. Wayne State needed to replace the part-time employees with tenured professors—most of whom hated the notion of teaching the autoworkers as much as I enjoyed it. I was out of a job.

I moved to Ann Arbor and the Ann Arbor Department of Parks and Forestry was looking for an equipment operator. Since I had operated farm equipment before, I was hired. My job was helping to take down trees that had Dutch elm disease.

For the first several months, the job was great. I enjoyed being outside, using my body, and giving my brain a rest. At night, I worked on what would be my second book on education … As summer gave way to fall and then winter, I started getting depressed. It’s one thing working outdoors in the summertime. But in September, the college kids who’d been working part time returned to school. Then there was me—college professor and published author—and here I was getting up each cold, dark morning, putting on a jumpsuit, and spending the day chipping brush …
One bone-chillingly cold February day, they put me with a new guy, Larry, who turned out to be a brilliant psychologist disguised as a truck driver. As we rode and worked together, Larry came up with an idea. “You’re a writer,” he said. “Let’s start a little newspaper.” And so, for the sheer fun of it—and to alleviate boredom—I said, “Sure.” It was a decision that would change my life. Larry and I ended up producing an anonymous humorous biweekly publication for the 25 or so people we worked with. We called it States Wire Service, and our masthead slogan was “All the News Before It Happens, Guaranteed to Be Fallacious If Not True.” … The guys discovered the paper, and it was all about them. For the next two years, we continued to tell the truth through humor. We created what could best be described as an ongoing, interactive situation comedy. We would write something in the paper, and our fellow workers would respond to it …

At a place steeped in habitual unconscious behavior, all of a sudden there was a spark of creativity. Two of the workers—both highly intelligent but illiterate—returned to school to learn how to read. Those who worked in other city departments would get hold of the paper and wished they, too, could have a crazy newspaper about them. Within months, I’d forgotten about that serious book I’d been writing, and it
forgot about me. I discovered two important things: The first thing was, for the first time I recognized the power humor has to generate sanity, balance, and creativity. The second thing I realized, I was really good at it. One day, while generating material for the paper, a funny name flew into my head … Swami Beyondananda.

A year later, a friend and I decided to start a publication to reach Ann Arbor’s newly forming holistic community. We knew that people took their health, growth, and spirituality way too seriously, so we decided the paper needed humor. We gave Swami Beyondananda the inside back feature, and the Swami’s been running the show ever since.

Very quickly, the Swami became the most popular feature in our magazine. Swami’s early columns like “Teach Your Dog to Heal,” “Tantrum Yoga,” and “Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sects,” made their way into syndication around the country. In late 1986, my wife, Trudy, and I took to the road with the comic Swami act, and the Swami and I have been inseparable ever since. We’ve met wonderful people, been to great places, and watched thousands and thousands of people laugh. It turns out the joke was on me, and a fortunate joke it was.

How fortunate I was to have a job I loved, and then lose it only to find a truer calling. Thank God the universe had a bigger plan for me than I had for myself. Thank God I lost my dream job and found a dream I never would have dreamed.
Five Ways to Live in Gratitude

1. Count your blessings—especially if you’re feeling low.

2. Light a candle for someone in your home—or online at www.gratefulness.org.

3. Start a gratitude journal. Each day before going to bed, write down five to 10 things you’re grateful for.

4. Make gratitude part of your daily routine. Give thanks as part of every meditation and prayer practice.

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