

PATHWAYS THAT LEAD TO MASSIVE APPRECIATION

The upcoming Thanksgiving holiday prompts most of us to look for those aspects in our lives that we appreciate. One year, I sent appreciation letters to several people I wished to acknowledge. What I noticed during this exercise was how great I felt as I focused on "What do I really like about this person?"

I admit that at first, I could only think of a few attributes for each one since we tend to fixate on what frustrates us about people. It helped me by starting with someone that was easier for me to appreciate.

In some cases, I realized that I had taken certain positive aspects for granted and in expressing them now, my connection with each person became richer! As a result of my *appreciation quest* (and feeling wonderful during this process!), I wondered why on earth we don't do this more often?

Challenging yourself to look for opportunities to appreciate others (instead of letting yourself be consumed by placing your attention on mostly what's troubling you) contains the benefit of becoming less critical of yourself, too!

Pathways to Developing a Daily Appreciation Habit:

1. Have a list.

Identify who or what you always feel good about. It could be your favorite pet, grandchild, nature scene, or best friend. Lately, I've been focusing on my beautiful maple tree - the one I can easily see from my sliding glass door. For best results, keep adding to your list.

2. Stay focused on what you like.

Expand the good feelings you have (based on your list) and enumerate all of the reasons why you appreciate what you're focusing on. For example, I especially love the unique beauty of the tree's fall foliage. Milk it as much as you can and you'll see even more things that you can appreciate.

3. Choose how you want to feel.

Write down how you feel when you are in the midst of appreciating someone or something. When your mind wants to insert thoughts of what you don't like, read what you've written and select a thought that matches your goal to appreciate. Remember, it isn't possible to feel good and bad in the same moment.

4. Make it a ritual.

To begin your day on a positive note, consider having the following ritual. Before you go to sleep at night, remind yourself of all of the things that worked out well for you. Keep it simple:

... My dinner was delicious
... The wait staff was friendly
... My timing was perfect
... The traffic flowed smoothly

Think of as many examples as you can. At the height of your good thoughts and corresponding feelings, tell yourself that when you awaken in the AM, you'll remember the great feelings you had the night before. It's a fantastic way to start the day!

5. Keep a log.

To accelerate your ability to experience feelings of appreciation daily - not just on special occasions - write them down. Keep a log so that you can revisit your entries. Include what you like about others as well as yourself! In doing this consistently for a minimum of 30 days, you'll be pleasantly surprised at how your life will become much more satisfying.

The best of success to you!

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The Savvy Success Coach

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