

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

In a previous issue of this Newsletter, I wrote an article on gratitude. This current article will address the misconceptions that block gratitude.

Most people, as part of their childhood training, were encouraged to express gratitude. The simplest form of this training was to say “ta” or thank you when receiving from others. Often the training came in some form of: “You should feel grateful”. Some of us may have a memory of the loaded judgement: “You are ungrateful”.

This later form of training presents the greatest block to gratitude. This is because gratitude, in this context is neither free nor valuable. Instead, there is a sense of obligation attached to it: gratitude is something that you should feel. It is not valuable in this context because it is not retained, but is given away.

Because of this experience, I think most of us do not value gratitude. We do not think of it and, therefore, do not affirm it. Our most likely assessment of ourselves is: “I could be or should be more grateful”.

There is great benefit for us and others if these misconceptions about gratitude are reversed and the cultivation of gratitude becomes a dominant theme in our lives. Gratitude, like love, is free. We can have as much of it as we want. Gratitude is heart energy. Therefore, its qualities are a mixture of love, power and courage. We can fill ourselves with it simply by saying: “I am so very grateful”. In doing so, we identify with it and become it.

By filling ourselves with gratitude most of life’s problems fade away. I will give you an example from my life: a few years ago, I was directing a building project. I felt the builder was perfectly executing the design. But I was frustrated by the seemingly endless delays, cost over-runs and dishonesty of the builder. At the end of a particularly frustrating day, I found myself driving home in an angry and resentful state of being. A stream of critical thoughts were in my head.

Then, I remembered gratitude. For about fifteen minutes I verbalized gratitude for everything I was aware of. Some of my statements were comical: I expressed gratitude for the fence posts at the side of the road, for the smell of the exhaust pipe, for the sound of the wind. Eventually, I was swept by and expressed gratitude for the builder and every experience that I had had with him. And, then I expressed gratitude for me: my loving, my stubbornness, my anger, my persistence, etc.

At the end of this experience, there was such an abiding sense of peace and acceptance. It felt as if all the tension which I had been carrying had been removed from me.

Gratitude is our birth right. We can have it all the time. No one can stop us from taking as much as we want. The more we take gratitude on board, the more we empower ourselves to stand free of all limitations. Gratitude opens up the channel for higher energies to flow into us: the energies of the soul surfs in on waves of gratitude.

Once we are filled with gratitude, we are ready to solve our most pressing problems: relationship problems. Whether silently or verbally expressed, gratitude for another person opens a heart channel to that person. It becomes possible for you and the other person to express the good that you hold. Enough gratitude expressed, makes the old problematic relationship pattern obsolete.

Gratitude grows with exercise. So, every day find moments to consciously express gratitude. Reverse the old conditioning about how you should be grateful and affirm:
I AM GRATEFUL.