GRATITUDE BEFORE ALL ELSE

by Lindsay Pera

In traditional indigenous cultures it's believed that "gratitude are the words spoken before all others." In the Mystics universe, gratitude is woven into all that we do. We establish core routines that include gratitude practices like journaling or daily celebration. We bring ourselves into a oneness of heart and mind at every opportunity and gathering through a gratitude practice which draws from the teachings of those who have gone before and the Thanksgiving Address of the great Peacemakers of the Iroquois Nation. We acknowledge gratitude as the key to transformation, manifestation and so much more. When we place gratitude front and center on the altar of our lives, things cannot help but begin to shift for the better. Unseen forces are set in motion by the very awareness of what we are grateful for that allow for more of the things that we enjoy to be present in our lives.

We tell ourselves we are grateful for the things that we like, but ultimately it's key to cultivate grateful for all of our experiences. All of it is living. All of it is the opportunity to be present, to be aware. When we we inadvertently create barriers to truth and connection. reject what is happening because we don't like it, we are rejecting life. When we do this, we create stories that create barriers and limitations to accessing the everyday magic in our lives. When we block gratitude

Gratitude, as a state of being across the positive and negative spectrums running in waves throughout our existence, is connection to the universe.

It's not easy to be in the moment. It's not easy to love what is, but you can cultivate the practice, and the practice is just being thankful. There is no right or wrong time for gratitude, and it can be difficult to feel it with authenticity even when you have cultivated the practice for years. The key, however, is to start by catching yourself in the moments where you actually do feel gratitude. Once you have cultivated gratitude in this way, finding gratitude when you may not feel grateful for your present situation will become a more natural state. When your natural inclination is a reach for gratitude, whether the situation is desirable or horrible or plain, you will find gratitude. Where there is gratitude, there is the possibility of grace in otherwise painful scenarios.

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Practicing gratitude has the power to transforms your perception of reality because you are accepting, surrendering, and maybe even celebrating. It unmasks what is happening and allows you to deal with what is genuinely occurring instead of stories. It cuts through the veil and brings for the clarity.

We don't discriminate as gratitude grows within us. Gratitude becomes the experience.

In this way, gratitude is both a verb and a noun. You practice gratitude but it also is something you cultivate.

The Gratitude Secret - the how, when, why of gratitude

Gratitude is like a magnet; the more grateful you are, the more you will receive to be grateful for. - Iyanla Vanzant

The amazing thing about gratitude is that it is magic hidden in plain sight. What you think is outside of you, is actually right within you. What you think is something you need to acquire, cultivate or obtain, has actually been with you all along.

The secret of gratitude is just that. That you have it, no one can take it from you, that you can cultivate it to make it stronger and reap the rewards of its gravitational pull of more of what you love and enjoy, and that experienced intentionally over time you create subtle shift that lead to profound transformation. A life more aligned. Bringing your desires into form. Everyday magic. And all you have to do to claim it is identify the things you are grateful for.

S Shift

E Experiential

C Connection to Y.O.U.

R Resonance

E Everyday

T Transformation

The "Gratitude Secret" is an acronym or framework for the transformational magic that gratitude can usher in. It answers the "how" and "when" and "why" of having a gratitude practice - and over time reveals the secret to co-creating (with Spirit, with your higher self) the life and experiences aligned to your intentions and desires.



S | Shift
It's the subtle shifts that gratitude calls our attention to. Shift is how we invite quantum leaps in our life without the "grand lead" or the trauma of exponential change up front. Even the tiniest shifts of the rudder of a ship can significantly alter the course of the boat. Trust in the subtle nature of the change that results from practicing gratitude over time.



E | Experiential
So here's the thing, when people are seeking to create a gratitude practice in their life they often say they "think" about the things they are grateful. And thinking about gratitude can be powerful. But the real trick is to identify the moments when you are actually feeling grateful.

feeling grateful for something - big or small - the feeling of a warm mug in your hands on a cold morning, or the sound of the voice of someone you love - you are experiencing the physiology of gratitude. Your body chemistry reacts to the stimulus of appreciation - and your cells respond in kind. Stress releases, worry subsides, joy supplants fear, and a deep sense of calm and well being is fostered from the inside out.



C | Connection to Y.O.U.

Y - *Yourself*
O - *Others*
U - *Universe*

In addition to bringing more peacefulness and wellbeing into our lives, cultivating a regular gratitude practice has the additional benefit of alleviating the sense of disconnect or loneliness so prevalent in our times. Gratitude brings you closer to you - as you deepen your understanding and awareness of what brings you pleasure, peace and calm you develop insights of how to invite more of that goodness into your life. In time this deepening of connection extends to our relationships with the world around us, people, places and things. New relationships form with deeper meaning and deeper relevance to our soul's

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desires. The greatest sense of peace and meaning comes from the connection that eventually forms between ourself and our sense of higher meaning, purpose, Spirit or the Universe. Whatever concept you have with a "higher power" or spiritual energy - gratitude is a clear path to accessing more of it, and with a sense of knowing and trust that can sustain you through even the toughest times.



R | Resonance
Our resonance is the energetic or vibration we are putting out. It is the frequency at which we create – therefore it directly affects the frequency of what we attract. Putting out a positive 'vibration' attracts positivity, and visa versa. At its most simple, your resonance is what people are picking up, feeling, or sensing underneath, or behind what you are putting out in the world. It also goes much deeper, to subtle levels of resonating with what the world needs, what the world is calling forth from you. When we cultivate a gratitude practice, we begin to resonate at the frequency of gratitude. What you put out, returns to you, and you begin to experience more of the things you are grateful for. It's a glorious feedback cycle of goodness. And it all start with feeling thankful.



E | Everyday
How often do I "need" to do my gratitude practice? This is one of the most common questions when someone is considering a practice. What's too much? Too little? Just right? The truth is gratitude has a snowball affect, the more you access true thankfulness, the more your life is filled with things to be thankful for, and the gratitude just grows and grows. But to feel truly grateful for all things in all moments is a goal most of us will be unlikely to attain in our lifetimes, so somewhere between "all the time" and "once in awhile" is likely the sweet spot. Try for daily. Try for upon waking at the very least. Then maybe toss in a statement of gratitude before meals. Then maybe at the end of your day? Gratitude does not have to take time or resources from the rest of your day - even the most simple act of thanks - done regularly, over time can usher in the most magical transformation. After just one week of having a daily gratitude practice the weight of the world begins to lighten. After one month, your intention will become habit. After one season, your old burdens will seem distant And after one turn of the sun, 365 days of gratitude, your past self will seem unrecognizable in the best possible ways. And that will only be the beginning of all the magic already set in motion and on its way.

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T | Transformation

Quite simply, gratitude has the power to transform in the most subtle yet profound ways. Instead of radical shifts that require herculian courage and strength - all you needed was awareness and intention. There is no way to not invite positive change once you align to embodying thankfulness. And transformation leads to awareness of the power of positive change, which brings us back to where we began. In the appreciation for subtle shifts and the magic they bring downstream.

The Gratitude Secret is a way to think about the benefits and rewards of cultivating gratitude. Choose a practice, keep it simple, and show up each day, in gratitude.

A Simple Practice

Upon waking, just say thank you. You've received another day. Yes, you can layer it with intentions and desires, but, to practice gratitude is simply to say thank you. To practice gratitude is to acknowledge that all of this life is a gift. It is a blessing and a gift to get another chance each day, to simply wake up in the morning after going to sleep at night, to have the sun rise for you again. Each time the sun rises and you wake, you get a new start, a fresh, blank page before you. This is the page on which you get a new chance, each day, to write the story of your life. Start with gratitude before all else. You'll soon be grateful you did.

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