

Gratitude

So much has been given to me; I have no time to ponder over that which has been denied. ~ Helen Keller

There is absolutely no point in parroting a practice of gratitude, if you do not actually have insight, joy, enjoyment, for all the gifts of life. This constitutes spiritual by-pass and sanctimoniousness.

Gratitude is the natural consequence of doing the inner work. Gratitude then arises, not only for the gifts of love and joy and beauty, choice and opportunity, education and wealth, but also for the ways in which you have suffered that you yourself have used as gift to gain greater awareness and expansion.

The truth of the matter is that if you believe yourself to not “be enough,” then all of what life has to offer is not enough to fill the hole in your soul - a soul that believes itself to be worthless, of no value, never good enough. If you believe yourself to be not good enough, then nothing externally will ever be good enough either.

The gifts of life are poured forth, available in every second. You are surrounded by love, beauty, the ineffable wonder of creation, the gift of oxygen, life, food, shelter, stimulation, choices - and yet you cannot see them, experience them, know them. You may understand this in your head, but you are like a starving person and nothing external can feed the depth of misery and lack you are creating within yourself with every self-judgment, hatred, shame, neglect, lack of inner relationship. You eat and eat and eat, but nothing metabolizes into growth internally. This profound split internally which is non-relationship with yourself means nothing can be experienced in joy or wonder. As long as you internally perpetrate against and separate from your wounding, so victimizing yourself over and over again, nothing external can be enough. The healing does not come from without - only within.

The awakening to moments of joy, pleasure and wonder - and so the natural expression of gratitude, is the mark of someone who is doing the deep inner work of re-connection in Love, instead of disconnecting in self-hatred and self-negation of “I can’t.”

If you do not **feel gratitude** yet, and merely parrot gratitude, practice waking up to what is around you, the immense good fortune of being given a human life, the amount you have been given in terms of inner and outer resources and realize how you really do not yet know gratitude for all that is given freely. Do this, **not to guilt yourself**, but to recognizing the dissonance between all your privilege and your inner discontent. And when you can recognize the dissonance, then go inward and find a way to relate internally to the misery and perpetration within, with some of the grace and beauty that surrounds you and is within you. If you are not willing to relate graciously with everything within that is impoverished, neglected and hated by you yourself, then how will you even recognize beauty and love externally when you do not know it internally. Not only must you learn to relate graciously to the part that is victimized by you, but also the part that perpetrates against you too.

So, notice your relationship to everything around you - how you cannot accept or let in the love or the joy or the beauty that surrounds you in others and the world. Notice your grumbling, complaining, whining, judgment, despair, discontent, dissatisfaction, “not enough,” “not good enough,” grasping for more, and more and more as if this could finally fix the inner suffering - and how this inner relationship is then your outer relationship to your life and world. Notice how you blame God, others and the world for not giving you enough to fix the inner suffering.

It is literally spitting in the face of God. Don't judge that you do this, just SEE it and SEE your CHOICE in how to work internally with yourself. Stop grasping for more and more and more externally - more of the "good" stuff like alcohol and food, and vacations and possessions and power and attention and love and admiration and realize that it CANNOT ever fix the inner and will still leave the inner untouched and abandoned in its despair. Notice your complaining, your fantasies of "more," from others, God and the world. Start relating to your inner impoverishment, your inner demands and entitlement on God, others and the world for "MORE." Start giving yourself something substantial and meaningful which is your own presence, love and truth. Then suddenly the world pops into multidimensional beauty and the gifts of life seem like a cornucopia of blessing and excess. Gratitude will be on your lips in every moment - spontaneous, arising from the joy and wonder of the miracle of your precious life.

Recommended Reading: The Last Battle. C.S.Lewis

"Aslan raised his head and shook his mane. Instantly a glorious feast appeared on the Dwarfs' knees: pies and tongues and pigeons and trifles and ices, and each Dwarf had a goblet of good wine in his right hand. But it wasn't much use. They began eating and drinking greedily enough, but it was clear that they couldn't taste it properly. They thought they were eating and drinking any of the sort of things you might find in a stable. One said he was trying to eat hay, and another said he got a bit of an old turnip and a third said he'd found a raw cabbage leaf. And they raised golden goblets of rich red wine to their lips and said 'Ugh! Fancy drinking dirty water out of a trough that a donkey's been at! Never thought we'd come to this.' But very soon every Dwarf began suspecting that every other Dwarf had found something nicer than he had, and they started grabbing and snatching, and went on to quarreling, till in a few minutes there was a free fight and all the good food was smeared on their faces and clothes or trodden under foot. But when at last they sat down to nurse their black eyes and their bleeding noses, they all said:

"Well, at any rate there's no Humbug here. We haven't let anyone take us in. The Dwarfs are for the Dwarfs."

"You see," said Aslan. "They will not let us help them. They have chosen cunning instead of belief. Their prison is only in their own minds yet they are in that prison; and so afraid of being taken in that they cannot be taken out."

(How The Dwarfs Refused To Be Taken In)

"We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures".

~ Thornton Wilder

"Fame or integrity: which is more important? Money or happiness: which is more valuable? Success or failure: which is more destructive? If you look to others for fulfillment, you will never truly be fulfilled. If your happiness depends on money, you will never be happy with yourself. Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you."

~Lao-tzu