

Gratitude is one of the biggest little hinges in my life.

But it wasn't always so. It's so easy to get sucked into complaining - the same old toxic thoughts and the same old everything. Gratitude opens your heart and helps you to see the possibilities instead of the limitations; to see solutions instead of problems; and to see the empathy and grace instead of the put-downs and impatience - not just with others but with yourself too.

Gratitude is like honey to bees - you become more attractive and people want to buzz into your orbit.

You feel better and you find yourself more positive, with less pain, more appreciation, more deliberate and being present in the moment, and smelling the roses.

Gratitude energizes, elevates your mood, inspires and absolutely transforms your life.

We are told in the Good Book to repeatedly give thanks; in fact 72 times in the Old Testament and 71 times in the New Testament.

Why? Because it's polite and right to do so?

Of course, but on a deeper level it's because thankfulness and gratitude are not just saying please and thank you, but a way of life. It's how you show up for others, yourself, and for your purpose.

Gratitude is how vibrancy begins to show up in your life - but not until then!

Gratitude creates physiological changes in your body. It releases the "feel good" chemicals oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine.

A study at Harvard says that gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. It creates positive emotions, improves health, and leaves you better equipped to deal with adversity and disappointment, and to have stronger, better relationships.

Your brain even structurally changes! Your new thoughts create new neural pathways. Just like a house that needs rewiring because the technology is outdated and could even cause a fire (remember the old tube and knob, yikes!), your thoughts could be equally outdated and dangerous to your well-being and gratitude, they've got to change just like the old wiring does!

Complaining is the polar opposite of gratitude and in my coaching, I've addressed that repeatedly with clients who can't seem to move forward--it's 99% of the time a negative attitude with inability to see the positive--in anything.

Complaining shrinks the hippocampus - that's the part that is CRITICAL for problem-solving, intelligent thinking, and the ability to adapt. It literally makes you dumber.

Even listening to complaining - doing it in any way or participating in it brings zero value.

So how do you create a gratitude practice?

1) Write it down - your Take Back Your Life Journal will prompt you to write down 3 gratitudes each day.

2) Great big problem? You need a great big gratitude journal.

3) Say a gratitude prayer before each meal.

4) Watch your language - BIG TIME! Remember your reticular activating system will look for evidence to support what you say.

5) Use quotes, vision boards, etc. to create a supportive environment.

6) Why - you want vibrancy? Gratitude is the way.

7) Being grateful is thankfulness for what you have, right now.

Yes, you can want more. Yes, goals are fine.

But how you see things is a direct correlation to how much you fill your cup with gratitude.

Shakespeare called ingratitude "the vilest weed that grows."

So if we want to live our lives vibrantly and in Full Bloom, gratitude requires that those vile weeds be pulled and the beautifully fully bloomed flowers be cultivated...by beginning a daily gratitude practice!

