

A Change in Perception



Being grateful is something a lot of us have heard about, have read up on, and put into practice. Some of us have gratitude books, such as a gratitude journal wherein we write what we are grateful for on a daily basis. As those of us who do this have discovered, being grateful opens up the way for more things for us to be grateful for to come into our lives. When we express gratitude we are thanking the universe for what we have received. When you are thanked for something you have given someone, you feel like giving them more. Being grateful also changes our focus from what we lack to what we have. And we get what we focus on, so what makes more sense than to focus on what we have. Focusing on lack just brings more lack into our lives and makes us miserable.

Some things are easy to be grateful for and when we start expressing our gratitude to life, we usually think of these things first. We are grateful for our loved ones, for friends, for health, for our work, for our homes, water, electricity, food, etc. As we continue to practice gratitude we notice more and more things that we often take for granted to be thankful for. Those quiet moments of rest. A good night's sleep. The smiling face at the cashiers.

But what about the really tough stuff? What about those situations that we hate and wish would just go away? What about the horrible boss who finds something mean to say every day? Is there anything to be grateful for? And your partner who has just dumped you and run off with your so-called best friend? And what about that flat tyre you got yesterday? It is easy to be grateful for what we want. It is easy to be grateful for the positive stuff. What about what we don't want in our lives? Or what we think we don't want.

Now just to be clear we are talking about gratitude and finding things to be grateful for. I am not for one moment suggesting you should like unhappy or unfair circumstances. I am also not saying go out and find them – being a martyr is not something I advocate. I am also not saying don't hold people accountable. People who treat you poorly need to be held to

account. People who cheat or lie or steal should be confronted. What I am saying is, can you see something to be grateful for in the situation?

We all have our understanding as to what a negative or a positive situation is. But do we really know whether the situation is positive or negative from our limited understanding of the world and our life's journey. Who is to say that being fired may not turn out to be the best thing that ever happened in your life? We see a lot more clearly with hindsight. Maybe if you hadn't been fired you would have stayed in your dead end job with your spiteful boss instead of being forced to find another job which turned out to be your dream job. Maybe if you didn't get that flat tyre you would not have met one of your future best friends. Maybe your ex cheating on you meant you got angry enough to stand up to people and stop being a doormat. You learned to be assertive and no one will ever be allowed to walk all over you again.

So carry on being grateful for all the good things. But remember we don't really know what is truly good or not a lot of the time. And when you face challenges, learn to be grateful as well for what you can learn from the experiences. That negative situation may be the best thing to happen to you. You just don't see it now. You see, the thing is, when you are grateful for challenging situations, situations in which it is really hard to be grateful, that is when the miracles happen.