

“Understanding the Power of Gratitude that Brings Us Together”

By: Laurie Goodman (11-16-25)

WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

Definition: “The state of being grateful; thankfulness.”

- May be the definition, but it barely scratches the surface of the power of the “gratitude”

At the Mile Hi Church of Science and Mind in Denver, it was preached “There are a lot of prayers, but the most powerful prayer is: “Thank you”. Thank you for:

1. My Family
2. My Health
3. My Safety
4. The Rain
5. Help, when unexpectedly needed
6. Etc. Etc.

Gratitude is SAYING “THANK YOU”, but the **STATE OF GRATITUDE** can be so much more, for the receiver – and the giver:

- “Thank you for providing coffee every Sunday because it keeps me warm and I can concentrate on listening.”
- “Thank you for bringing gluten-free foods ... so my belly doesn’t ache and I feel better.”
- “Thank you for playing the piano and singing so beautifullybecause it enriches my soul.”
- Thank you for... the service announcement on Thursday.... for the flowers at the entrance and the arranged chairs when I walk in... for the alphabetized nametags... and the technology that works Because it shows you care about me and makes me feel wanted and comfortable here.”

And on and on... The words “Thank you” are just the beginning words that CAN bring you into the **State of being Grateful**, when you can express: I appreciate you... I see you.... I value you.... You are important to me. Gratitude binds people together, and reminds us that we are not alone. One cannot be grateful for something that was not caused by another:

- The sunrise that Shannon watches every morning would not be there but for a power greater than humans that gives us life.
- The rain that intermittently forms over the mountains sustains our land and provides us food, water, and a climate that comes from a source that is beyond our personal doing.
- Receiving a “Hang in there” emoji text from someone who was thinking about you can fill your heart with gratitude and remind you that you are not alone, that you have friends and are a part of a bigger circle with other people who care about you and love you.
- **The simple GIVE AND TAKE of gratitude allows each of us to feel more EMPATHY SOLIDARITY, MUTUAL RESPECT, and HOPE. Without being in the STATE OF GRATITUDE and first saying “Thank You” and going on to say WHY we are thankful, we miss the opportunity to “SEE” another person, or recognize another power, and the experience goes down an entirely different emotional road and our daily experience is far different.**

THE STATE OF GRATITUDE is a complex cognitive and emotional phenomenon that involves recognizing how other things contribute to our wellbeing and enhances our appreciation of positive outcomes in our life.

IT’S IN THE BRAIN:

Gratitude is correlated with the brain activity that is associated with moral cognition – so when a person is grateful, their brain activates the neurotransmitters associated with reward circulation that are associated with social interaction and the social cognitive processes. This happens in the prefrontal cortex, the anterior cingulate cortex, the ventral striatum; and the insula, and at the end, the neurotransmitters triggered by gratitude end up in the hypothalamus which then boosts serotonin, which produces more dopamine, and viola – **YOU’RE IN A GOOD MOOD!**

Living in a State of Gratitude – much greater than a singular comment or journal entry – **INCREASES YOUR BRAIN’S GREY MATTER** where sensation, movement, perception, speech, learning and cognitive tasks reside. These **Gratitude neurotransmitters** trigger hormones which regulate our immune system and increase our compassion for emotional pain of others. This helps us sleep better, be less depressed, feel less stress, and have improved cardiac functions. And all this without one penny paid out of pocket!

Simple ways to be in a STATE OF GRATITUDE:

- Appreciate Yourself Daily
- Faithfully Keep a Gratitude Journal
- Make Gratitude Visits – not just a text or email!
- Have a Daily Meditation Practice focused on Gratitude
- Practice Gratitude through Being In-Service to Others

Living in a State of Gratitude is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of life and the positivity that comes from relationships, experiences and challenges. Living in this state helps us to elevate our consciousness and begin to see life through a lens of abundance rather than scarcity.

AND IT'S UNIVERSAL:

Christianity: Apostle Paul preached that GRATITUDE distinguishes “believers from unbelievers” – actually making GRATITUDE a condition of being a Christian, if you will.

And the Bible is replete with stories of Jesus constantly THANKING God BEFORE committing miracles: Feeding thousands at Sea of Galilee

- Raised Lazarus from the Dead
- Turned Water into Wine
- After his Resurrection.

Of course he gave thanks AFTERWARDS – but think of the powerful state He lived in by expressing thanks BEFORE an event:

- Thank you for your spiritual guidance;
- Thank you for the powers you have given to me as a human being;
- Thank you for the opportunity to show others my love, and your love.

Islam: “SHUKR” is a way of life that cultivates endless worldly *and other worldly* rewards.

Muslim philosophy claims that a full half of the Islamic belief rests in practicing SHUKR:

- FELT in heart;
- VERBALIZED by tongue;
- ACTED OUT through obedience and devotion.

Judaism: Expressing gratitude to God for material blessings and the good land provided is a central tenet of Jewish faith found in stories throughout the Torah.

- “Good things, says Moses to the next generation, will happen to you. Everything, however, will depend on how you respond. *Either* you will eat and be satisfied and bless God, *remembering* that all things come from Him – or you will eat and be satisfied and *forget* to whom you owe all this. You will think it comes entirely from your own efforts: “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” Although this may seem a small difference, it will, says Moses, make *all* the difference...”. [Renewal of the Sinai Covenant]

Buddhism: Gratefulness = INTEGRITY. Without gratitude, a person lacks thankfulness and they are considered rude. Gratitude:

- DEVELOPS PATIENCE
- ANTIDOTE TO GREED
- DEVELOPS MINDFULNESS OF THE MOMENT
- KEEPS ONE CONNECTED TO OTHERS

Animism:

A belief that EVERYTHING is alive: Thank you walls, and windows; Thank you Cup; and Thank you water.

- I See You.
- I Thank you.
- I Honor you.

Animism recognized that everything has energy, and everything responds to intention – and it’s all circular. Gratefulness begets Thankfulness which begets Appreciation... which Leads to Kindness.... Which leads to Awareness....which leads to Empathy.

Hinduism: (which I like listing last because I think I like it the most right now!)

KRTAJNATA: In Sanskrit: Gratitude is a virtue that connects individuals to the divine, fosters contentment, and brings joy to life.

Gratitude is not just a polite gesture – it is a profound spiritual practice that aligns one’s consciousness with the cosmic order.

In the Bhagavad Gita, one of Hindu’s most sacred scriptures, the concept of PRASAD is explained: Offering to a deity which is then returned to the devotee as a blessed gift.

- Daily express of thanks within the family
- Then express thanks to nature, animals, and inanimate objects
- This expression of Gratitude then CHANGES YOUR KARMA.

In Hindu countries, businesses incorporate PRASAD into business management to boost morale, increase job satisfaction, and foster a sense of belonging at the place of employment.

The Diwali – the Festival of Lights – (Oct 19-23, 2025) is a Hindu holiday explicitly to EXPRESS GRATITUDE for the past year.

CONCLUSION:

When all feels so out of control, when we wonder how to connect with others who are so different from us, when we feel all alone in our beliefs and the way we see the world – we need to return to conscious activities that create **a State of Gratitude** in which we live, where our interconnectedness with others WILL be revealed:

I See You. I Thank You. I Honor You.