



## **A Mindset of Gratitude**

There has been a significant amount of research done on the effects of gratitude. Dr. Robert Emmons (University of California Psychologist and Professor) found that our level of happiness and positivity is permanently altered by practicing intentional gratitude. His studies[1] concluded that "participants in a mindset of gratitude felt more joyful, enthusiastic, interested, attentive, energetic, excited, determined and strong" These same participants were also more willing to offer others emotional support.

Participants experiencing gratitude reported sleeping better, increased positive feelings, and increased life satisfaction. They were 25% happier overall than before they began this experiment. Psychologist Glen Affleck also conducted a study that indicates those heart patients "who feel appreciative of life" after a heart attack have reduced risks for subsequent attacks.

These studies and others prove that having an "attitude of gratitude" can have very positive physical effects on one's life. How we feel about our lives matters. Being grateful, even for the smallest things, lowers our stress, prevents disease, can extend our lives, and causes us to experience more enjoyment. Expressing gratitude makes those around us feel good as well.

One of the best ways to circumvent negative reactions and thoughts is to focus on those things you are grateful for. Gratitude is one of the most positive emotions we can experience.

If you spend a few moments each day, particularly in the morning, focusing on those things that you are grateful for, it blocks many of the negative emotions you may habitually struggle with. This is especially helpful at first when you are becoming aware of how much negativity there is in your life.

Gratitude keeps you hopeful and allows you to move forward instead of staying mired in negative thoughts and emotions. Gratitude creates positive thoughts and thinking positive thoughts creates positive actions, which leads to positive results.

[1]Emmons, Dr. Robert A. "thanks!" (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)