

4 Quick & Simple Ways to Change Your Life NOW!

Lesson Three - Gratitude

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” - Melody Beattie

I began keeping a **Gratitude Journal** a few years ago. I had heard about it for a long time and kept meaning to do it. Oprah had talked about it way back in 1996 when she embraced the book, **Simple Abundance**, by Sarah Ban Breathnach. As serendipity would have it, a friend of mine who was cleaning out her bookshelves in preparation for a move, gave the book to me, when I mentioned that I had wanted to read it for some time. Well, it sat on my own bookshelf for about five years, until I was moved by some of my own life's contrasts to put a more structured spiritual practice into place to deal with stress. So, every morning, along with reading each day's essay from **Simple Abundance**, I wrote five things in my **Gratitude Journal** for which I was grateful.

Sounds so simple and it was. I could always find **something** I was grateful for, even when it seemed that the long, dark night of the soul would never end.

I was grateful for hot showers, thunderstorms, the smell of honeysuckle drifting through my window in the morning as I wrote, good wine, a dog who loved me, clean sheets, great clients, the crunch of tires on a gravel drive, living in a county with no traffic lights... In the beginning, it made me feel good to be reminded that there really were good things in my life and that I was fortunate to have them. As the months wore on and I continued the journal, I began to notice something else, although I didn't attribute this to the journal at first.

I began to notice that **everyone** around me was complaining **ALL** the time about **everything!** They complained on their posts on Facebook and Twitter, they complained about the wait in the line at the grocery store! They complained that the weather was too cold and the soup was too hot. (*Complaining, by the way, is a form of resistance. Remember resistance from Lesson Two - Acceptance?*).

At the same time, I also noticed that I had pretty much stopped complaining. In fact, life seemed great! **It finally hit me that life WAS great!** I had so much going for me - all the important things anyway - like dark chocolate and freshly ground coffee and a great relationship and work I loved and great health and the most comfortable bed in the world and a kid I was proud of and access to technology that lets me do things like we're doing today!

And, you want to know what else I found out by keeping a **Gratitude Journal**? I found out the secret to **The Secret** - ya know, this whole **Law of Attraction** thing everyone talks about? I'd been a follower of the teachings of **Abraham-Hicks** for many years

and intellectually, I “got it.” Yet, like many folks, I had a hard time manifesting all that I wanted. And, from listening to other women, they are having the same problem. Put out to God and the Universe what you want and feel how that would feel if you had it. Okay, sounds simple and we can work to do that, yet, many times it feels like we’re **lying** to ourselves. How can I tell myself that I have enough money to pay the bills when I know I don’t have enough money to pay the bills? Quandary....

I finally realized that I already had all that I wanted that was important to me and that my needs were taken care of - money to cover the bills always showed up in time, from somewhere. I already **was** abundant beyond belief!

YOU are, too, and the **Gratitude Journal** practice is a great way to truly embrace and believe it! And, as I realized how blessed I was, other opportunities began to come my way - financial opportunities, business opportunities and just other little things that my heart desired. **It was a miracle!** Suddenly, the mysterious *Law of Attraction* was working for me - like attracts like - and I was feeling abundant and joyful, thereby, attracting the same.

Gratitude is the first step in creating a joyful life, because it makes it easier to see what is RIGHT with our lives.

Questions for Pondering and/or Jotting

1. Make a list of all the things that are going **well** in your life, that you **love** and that you’d like **more** of.
2. Each day for the next week, jot down five things you’re grateful for. If moved to do so, make the **Gratitude Journal** part of your daily spiritual practice.
3. Another idea I just discovered: Start keeping track of all the good things that happen to you throughout the year: Write each one down on a piece of paper and put the notes in a big jar. At the end of the year, remove all of your notes and reflect on all of the wonderful things that happened to you!

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