

A BRIGHTER OUTLOOK THROUGH AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

It is quite often said that perception is more important than reality. A positive outlook truly can lead to positive outcomes as a result of the more accepting, enthusiastic and motivated manner in which situations are approached. It is easy in theory, but often difficult in execution, considering the highly pressurised and time-poor world we exist in.

Creating an *Attitude of Gratitude* can help you see situations in a more optimistic light, while also prompting people to seek out positive, rewarding and even enlightening situations. This can be done in a multitude of ways, but the method we have found most effective is using/creating a gratitude journal. All this requires is 5 minutes at the end of each day. Prior to going bed, take a few moments to reflect on your day and what “wins” you had. These won’t always be earth altering events, but it’s more about the cumulative effect and the habit forming process. Some recent personal examples are as follows: A student saying “Thank You” for a good lesson; My daughter saying “I love you, Daddy” for the first time; A colleague celebrating a drop of two dress sizes following our physical activity challenge. You should try to come up with 3 separate and different events, per day. Personally, I only do this on weekdays, and during term time, to make the process less onerous.

In addition to the three positives, reflect on one negative situation and *Flip It* to find a positive takeaway. In essence we are trying to find the metaphorical silver lining on that grey cloud. For example: My class did absolutely no work period five today; Our off-topic conversations improved our teacher/student relationships through greater knowledge of our shared interests and experiences. Identifying these small successes each day, helps us to offset the negatives and as time goes on you tend to seek out and create opportunities to have “wins”, making the journalling process easier while also making your your day significantly more enjoyable and rewarding.

The benefits are varied and wide-reaching, with improved sleep quality, decreased rates of depression, better social interactions and even lower cortisol levels noted in research as possible outcomes for those who consistently utilize this skill. The most striking change I have noticed is an improved ability to move on from challenging days and enter the next one with renewed vigor. The process of looking for things to be grateful for ultimately makes you better at finding them, creating them, and enjoying them. Thus, providing a platform for an improved level of holistic well-being.

What more could you hope for from only 5 minutes a day!

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