

Gratitude Meditation Technique

By Peter de Ruyter – © 2011

“Gratitude Meditation” – A Transformative Technique

So, what on earth is a Gratitude Meditation, I hear you ask? And how could something so innocuous, seemingly naive and idealistic possibly help if you're feeling really stuck in your life; when it's all too painful and you just don't know what to do anymore?

Indeed, when things are going badly for you, the concept of 'gratitude' will hardly be the first thing to come to mind! You're more likely to be consumed with emotions of uncertainty, insecurity, confusion; feeling lost; overwhelmed; probably angry, if not at least frustrated, and wanting to yell and scream at the world.

Ironically, it's precisely when your life seems to be falling apart the most, that this apparently bland technique for life can offer a self help program with an amazing 'oomph' to turn things around. It truly could become your very first, empowering action to dealing with a seemingly insurmountable crisis in your current situation, with no clear path forward, and with perhaps a lurking fear in the back of your mind that there may in fact be no solution to your woes.

Suffering – whatever the cause – is something that each one of us will confront sooner or later in our life Journey. Indeed, it's highly likely we'll face it more than once! So, what could be that first tentative step with which to begin a Journey out from the dark and gloomy place you may find yourself in at such times?

Well, the surprising – and for some, the rather confronting news! - is that the emotion of deep appreciation, engendered by the Gratitude Meditation has an enormous capacity for Healing on core levels of our being. However, for some, trying to create a feeling of gratitude when you're in the depths of anguish is hardly an appealing option! In a weird sort of way, it may feel much more 'comfortable' to just remain with your rage, or sadness, or...

The first reaction people usually have to hearing these sort of statements is a sense of affront; indignation or disbelief... *'how could you possibly expect me to feel grateful when my life is in a serious melt-down?!'* Nevertheless, doing the Gratitude Meditation can become a powerful turning point in a Journey of pain and suffering.

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Despite the possibility of feeling quite annoyed at these seemingly inappropriate comments... just try to hang in here for a while. Perhaps – right at this moment – you're feeling stuck in deep suffering of some sort. Or you can clearly remember such an experience from the past, and how difficult it may have been to claw your way out of the emotional 'black hole' that came with it.

You have a choice – also right now! – to simply close this screen, and thus avoid what may be rather confronting assertions, or you could choose to read on... just a bit further. The worst that can happen is that you've 'wasted' 5-10 minutes or so! But you might also discover you have before you an empowering cross-roads, with an option for positive and constructive change in your life.

As far as suffering is concerned, in the end it doesn't matter what initiated this state of distress. The main objective is to get out of there as soon as possible! However, the unfortunate reality is that there can also be a subtle seductiveness to deep anger, resentment, sorrow or despair, which on some subconscious level may be quite difficult to give up.

Such emotions can give us a sense of validity; or get us attention; or sympathy. Ironically, it may even give us a platform from which to gain a sense of purpose in our lives, whereas before we may have felt lost; with no sense of clear life-direction.

It's completely normal to respond to unfair or difficult life scenarios with a wide range of emotions. However, far too often it's also so easy to allow ourselves to get trapped into a negative spiral of anger, resentment, fear or sorrow at whatever has precipitated our crisis.

You may feel that there is 'nothing you can do'; that you are the victim to another's shenanigans, and that unless they relent or change their attitude or strategy, you will remain a victim to circumstances.

By the same token, your suffering may have nothing to do with another's actions. Perhaps you've just been diagnosed with a terminal illness; your house has burnt down due to a lightning strike; you've lost your job due to an earthquake destroying your place of work; you tripped and broke your back... and the list goes on endlessly.

On one level you have every right to your feelings, but the deeper question to ask yourself is whether those feelings will ultimately help you get on with your life again – or not. For some people, they feel they need to retain their rage because they have

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instigated a litigation trial, and until they've won and got their compensation, there's no way they're going to let go of their distress!

Again, an infinite number of life examples could be thought of why you need to hang on to your present suffering; and the kicker is that all too often - from your present perspective – those emotions *feel*, and *seem* so utterly justified! And no doubt they are; this is not the issue being debated here.

However, even if a range of emotions serve you in the short term, feeling overwhelmed; feeling stuck, or angry, or hopeless, or sorrowful, or whatever.... eventually these also become a form of Energy which can be incredibly corrosive to our health and wellness. This is particularly the case when we allow them to perpetuate beyond their 'due by date'. So, what to do when Life seems to come along and hit us around the proverbial ears?

Acknowledged; when you first hear about this concept, focusing on being grateful for things in your life may seem completely crazy. Aside from that, it would be the exact opposite of what you'd *feel* like doing anyway. However, the fact remains that this simple Gratitude Meditation technique could truly revolutionize your life – if you're willing to give it a chance!

The point is that when you're inundated with suffering; when life seems grim and dark, with no apparent way out, that is precisely the time we most need some sort of 'anchor' with which to give us back a sense of stability.

Even a tiny 'pin-point of light' at the end of a 'dark tunnel' can give us something to focus on; a psychological hook we can attach ourselves too, with which to then reel ourselves out of our despair and pain.

The Gratitude Meditation may sound ridiculous, counter-intuitive, and a waste of time, but enough people who have used this technique swear by its truly miraculous ability to slowly but surely start transforming our lives.

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Emotions Can Turn 'Toxic'

Within the human condition, one could argue that there are several phases we go through when we're challenged by something tragic, painful or overwhelming. Initially, it's completely 'normal' to feel any of a wide range of human emotions coursing through our mind and body – from fear, to sadness, to anger, and much more.

However, there does come a time beyond which the continued flow of such emotions turns toxic to not just our minds, but our bodies too. The mind:body connection cannot be separated, and hence there does come a point in the Journey with our *initially* valid emotions, where a choice needs to be made.

Do we continue playing with the feelings we are caught up in, as legitimate as they may be, and as authentic as our experience of them may be? Or, do we allow a dawning recognition to trickle into our awareness of how potentially dangerous that emotional energy can eventually become to our system?

It is precisely at this point in the Journey - of what started off as a completely valid, human response to a very human experience - that the Gratitude Meditation can become a potent catalyst for allowing us to step out of what could otherwise become a destructive and negative cycle.

A stage is reached where we could continue railing against the injustices or tragedy that may have befallen us. Or, we make a conscious *choice* to start using that pain as a transformative force to now propel us into a Higher perspective of ourselves and the human experience. Another option is to remain the victim; drowning in our sorrow, anger or other emotions - as valid as they were initially - but which have turned 'sour' at this point in time.

A powerful 'portal' through which we can make the necessary transition back to a Higher sense of self-empowerment is to train ourselves to be fully focused in 'The Moment'. And in 'That Moment', to start seeing the many things we still do have in our lives for which we could be most grateful. Using this line of attack, Gratitude becomes the 'gasoline' with which to power ourselves out of what could otherwise become a dangerous emotional – and physical - impasse.

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Losing One's Sense of Perspective is Easy

A major problem is that when we are truly suffering, we can also become so absorbed in that pain that we lose perspective of our reality. Hence, despite all the grief you may presently be experiencing, the first step in trying to scramble out of your 'dark night of the soul' is to step *out* of your life and *look back in* - even if only for a short while initially. When you're willing to do this, you'll find that there are things in your life for which you could be grateful.

Taking Life For Granted

The reality is that this concept of a Gratitude Meditation can be activated in very simple ways, which are also easy to incorporate into your daily routine. They won't necessarily be the sort of things you'd initially think of. However, compared to what most people have to contend with on this planet of ours, as Westerners, most of us have become unbelievably spoiled with so much that we also take for granted. It's not till we choose to look at things in a different way that this statement starts to make sense.

Every day, we wake up and simply presume that there is a bathroom to go to; that this will have running water piped right into it; that we also have instant *hot* water for our comfort, without any need to first go and collect wood; light a fire; boil the water....

Once our ablutions are complete, we equally take for granted that there is a kitchen to go to; with a range of switches to give us light and heat; with a stove that can instantly provide us with an ability to cook our food; a fridge that allows us to store a wide range of foods that would otherwise have already long gone off.

Most of us *have* food in that fridge, or in the cupboards – often crammed to bursting-point with so many 'goodies.' And the list of similar examples of very real luxuries and blessings we do have in most situations in the West could go on for pages.

Compared to a great majority of the nearly 7 billion people on this planet, there are many comforts, and often extravagances we enjoy every day... and take for granted every single day.

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At first, upon hearing such comments, a remarkable number of people will look at you with disbelief, and say... ‘So? *What of it? I’m Australian, and ofcourse we have those things.*’

Indeed; but the point is that the greatest majority on this planet *don’t!*

However, on reflection, you might like to realize that those of us who do live in a country like Australia – or the USA, the UK or many parts of Europe – are in many ways living a life of comparative luxury and untold blessings.

Yet, far too many of us in the West live our lives as if all those fundamental things we have such easy access to somehow are our inherent right. For most of us, we tend to forget – or conveniently ignore – the fact that the rather indulgent lifestyles the majority of us so nonchalantly accept as ‘normal’ are more the consequences of a very lucky fluke indeed – that we happen to have been born in one of these fortunate countries!

Hence, it’s by re-orientating how we perceive what we *do* have in our lives that can also start giving us a greater sense of perspective to our overall life situation – even if at the moment your suffering is genuine and intense.

But the point is that we still need something to act as a catalyst in helping turn our lives around, where feelings of gratitude flood - not only our minds - but our bodies too. And using such comparisons can indeed be transformative to our own pain – as real and valid as the latter may be.

But First, We Need To Honor Our Pain

However, a major step in such a transformation is to first honor our pain. It’s real; it’s there for a valid reason, and it hurts. Trying to pretend it doesn’t really exist, or doesn’t matter... also doesn’t work! But there does come a point where it becomes crucial to learn how to step *out* of it, and allow an aspect of your Awareness to become the Witness to your situation.

Try and see it more from a second-hand perspective; as if you have somehow been able to step out of yourself, and now find yourself looking back at all that suffering

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– but also within a broader context. And what broader context could there be than to compare it to what the *majority* of the *billions* of people on this planet have to content with – day in; day out!

When we can truly start to connect with this greater reality, then our *own* reality – as genuine and awful as it may presently be – starts to shift in quite a profound way.

You're probably thinking by now... *'well, yeah, I already know all this philosophical gobbly-gook; hardly an earth-shattering revelation about reality in general.'*

Fair enough, but the more important question you may need to *then* ask yourself – and answer honestly! – is... *'but, have you actually tried to **live** this 'not-so-earth-shattering-concept?'*

Aah.. there's the rub! Just *thinking* or *knowing* about such a concept is *not* the same as *doing* something with it! Right here; right now.

Learning How To 'Be' In The Moment

And that brings us to the next step in this process; learning how to be with our pain and suffering - in the Moment. Not off in the past, endlessly going over what may have precipitated the suffering. Not off into the future, creating some sort of story-line as to how this will probably 'go on forever.'

It's as if we need to step through a 'portal' of sorts, which then starts to give us access to the potent and magical power which Gratitude can produce within all levels of our reality. And learning how to 'Be' in 'The Moment' becomes that portal!

As an important aside, for those who are interested in Creative Visualization, or Co-creation, this feeling of Gratitude is also the 'fuel' that allows us to successfully start manifesting different – and more constructive – realities into our lives.

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So, How Does One Do This Gratitude Meditation?

One way of doing a Gratitude Meditation is to do it in a more formal way, where, for instance, you set aside some time, and then focus on a long lists of what you could be grateful for in your life – *despite* your very real suffering at the moment.

However, another very useful technique is to become Conscious and focused enough during the day, to give thanks as you are going through your daily activities. You can start to incorporate this practice into many areas of your life; it's not as if you have to set aside a specific 10, 15, 20 minutes of your precious daily life schedule to do this.

For instance, as you are cooking dinner, this provides a wonderful opportunity to internally voice your gratitude - that you have a house; within which you have a kitchen; within which you have a stove; on which you can cook food; that you have pots and pans *within* which to cook the meal; that you have a fridge to store your food; that you have a table at which you can sit to eat your meal, etc. So many good things we just take for granted in our affluent, Western culture!

If you're brushing your teeth, give thanks for the fact that you live in a country or situation where you have running water; that you have access to good dental care; that you still have your teeth. If not... be grateful you live in a country where it was possible to get a good set of false teeth!

If you are cleaning the house, give thanks that you have a house; a vacuum cleaner; an electrical supply – and so much more. It's actually not all that hard to find things to be grateful for.

It's just that, as mentioned previously, in the West we take far too much for granted – as if everyone else in the entire world also has these things. The stark, but often forgotten – or ignored! - reality is that the majority don't.

Another opportunity is when you are stuck in traffic, or waiting for the lights to turn. These all provide some odd, free moments. When you are standing in the queue at the supermarket or the bank, you've got a few moments of otherwise 'wasted time.' When you are doing a range of routine, daily chores which don't really need your full

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focused, conscious attention, you can be elsewhere in your mind, going through a list of things you can be grateful for.

Tying In The 'Gratitude Meditation' & Creative Visualization Together

Another twist to the 'Gratitude Meditation' is to go through the list of all the things we feel we are genuinely grateful for, building up a wad of 'Gratitude Credits' – as it were. Then right at the end, when you have really got yourself into the swing of it, and have a bit of momentum going, now also start affirming and giving thanks for the things you are Consciously desiring and visualizing for - *even though they haven't yet manifested!*

But what you *have* manifested thus far is that enormous sense of genuine gratefulness, which is the 'juice' that fuels our Co-creative desires. Hopefully, by tying this in with your Co-creative projects, this genuine sense of gratefulness - *for what you really do have* – generated by doing the Gratitude Meditation, will then spill over to those future things you hope to manifest into your life.

For those wishing to explore the concept of Creative Visualization, or Co-creation more fully, an easy-to-read and empowering eBook, titled: '*Creative Visualization – manifest physically to transform yourself spiritually*' - is available on this topic by going to the sub-link on Peter de Ruyter's website, at: : www.self-help-ebooks-and-alternative-health-articles.com/creative-visualization.html

Nothing To Be Grateful For? Try The Local Hospital Wards!

And if you can truly state that there is absolutely nothing in your life to be grateful for, or you generally feel so terribly hard done by, then a powerful experience can be to go to any ward in any hospital. Just walk around, and see the many things people are going through in their life - which most of us hopefully will never have to experience. After such a hospital visit, you may find it much easier to create quite a long list of things to be grateful for. Or you'll realize that life hasn't been so harsh with you afterall.

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Sometimes we can become very pre-occupied with our own miseries, to the point where it seems we're the only ones who are suffering so dreadfully. But ultimately, everything is relative, and using this technique will quickly allow us to find even a few things for which we can indeed be grateful. Perhaps, something as simple as the fact that you still have sight; can walk; can talk; still have all your limbs – despite the joints aching!

It truly doesn't matter how small or seemingly insignificant those initial crumbs of gratitude may appear; just start with them to get the ball rolling. Over time, you'll be amazed how this process starts to open you up to so much you hadn't seen before.

It's easy enough therefore, to start incorporating this technique or practice into your daily life, even if initially it's only in those occasional moments, scattered throughout the day. But as time goes by, you'll find you actually want to set aside 5 or 10 minutes of quiet, focused, meditative time.

During such quiet moments, it becomes much easier to focus your entire mental attention and Energy into this 'Gratitude Meditation' practice. This in turn will allow you to raise your vibration to the inherent and most primary quality engendered by Source; by Higher Self – which is a Vibration of Love itself.

The 'Gratitude Meditation' can thus become an on-going daily prayer of sorts, but one which is also constantly shifting our Energy point into a Higher vibration or pattern. This occurs, simply because a positive and grateful focus automatically raises our Energy, whereas being critical and negative automatically decreases our Energy.

If you want to look at it in the sense of 'Energy credits,' being non-critical; being grateful, increases the Energetic 'bank balance' of 'credits.' This in turn then provides you with a lot more to 'invest' or spend on Co-creative projects that can draw more positive experiences into your life.

However, if you are constantly critical or miserable, then in a sense you are going more into 'over-draft' of your Co-creative 'credit account.' And so it becomes a lot harder, not just to 'finance' your Co-creative projects, but also to Energetically draw them into your reality, via the concept of Energetic resonance.

Ironically, the reality is that critical, negative emotional states are like a repelling magnetic force, keeping what it is we want at bay. Being in a positive, non-critical state is turning the 'magnet' into a more attracting Energy status. This therefore allows for a

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greater ability to be in resonance with what it is we want, and thereby allowing it to manifest.

Gratitude As A Powerful Energy-Converter

Doing the 'Gratitude Meditation' is not just about rattling off a list of things you can be thankful for. It's about changing the dynamics of your internal Energy status, which in turn creates a much more powerful and productive platform from which to do your Co-creation.

So, it's about using every tiny scrap of something good you feel you can genuinely be grateful for, as a way to start re-orientating your Energy; away from anger; bitterness; disappointment; disillusionment; fear or whatever it might be.

By keeping focused on what you *can* be grateful for, you start to invest in and pile up your 'positive credits,' which then start to create – like any investment – a positive return on your 'investment.' But it takes time, effort, focus, commitment and perseverance.

Nevertheless, if we keep the above concepts in mind, step by step, we can then walk our way out of what may seem to be an impasse, tragedy or other painful situation. Slowly but surely we'll find ourselves moving into a much brighter life situation and reality.

In the end it's all about 'balancing the books,' via our emotional 'inputs' versus our 'outputs.' Continuing to fight, and in a sense hang onto the awfulness and the horror of where you may be at, ironically also becomes the 'fuel' that keeps drawing such negative and painful experiences into your reality. The Universal 'Law of Attraction' will absolutely guarantee such a phenomenon to occur.

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Accept Where You're At... & Then Choose To Move On

Hence, it's not about denying where you are at; you need to definitely honor that. But also focus on coming to a Space of being at peace with your suffering, rather than relentlessly fighting it. In this way you can start focusing on turning your Energy around, and, inch at a time, literally crawl your way out of your present dilemma.

Nevertheless, you'll be moving – and shifting increasingly *away* from your pain or suffering. When we can come to a Space of peace in regard to whatever is ailing us in life, this will also increase the possibility of escape from our suffering.

Simple? Perhaps just too plain basic or idealistic to deal with the magnitude of *your* pain or suffering? Well, so it may seem. But don't underestimate the power of simple gratitude, done as a daily 'prayer.' From such humble beginnings you actually create a powerful platform from which the good things you wish for can more easily manifest into your reality.

[Traditional Meditation can be another powerful tool in this process of turning your life around; away from its present pain and suffering. An easy-to-read eBooklet you might like to explore is: '*Meditation – The Simple How, Where & Why's to Creating Peace & Stability In Your Life*', available via: www.self-help-ebooks-and-alternative-health-articles.com/meditation.html]

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