

A dramatic landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright sun low on the horizon to the right, casting a golden glow. The foreground is a vast, rolling field of tall grasses, some green and some golden. In the distance, there are dark, silhouetted mountains. A large bird, possibly an eagle or hawk, is in flight, its wings spread wide, positioned behind the word 'in' in the title.

LIVING *in* GRATITUDE

*The Power of Thankfulness
in Our Lives*

RICHARD J. CAVANESS

The background of the cover is a landscape photograph. It shows rolling hills in shades of green and yellow, leading to a dirt road that curves through the fields. In the distance, there are dark mountains under a dramatic sky with dark, heavy clouds and a bright sun setting on the horizon, creating a golden glow. A bald eagle is captured in flight, its wings spread, flying across the sky above the hills.

LIVING *in* GRATITUDE

*The Power of Thankfulness
in Our Lives*

RICHARD L. CAVANESS

RICHARD J. CAVATNESS

Living in Gratitude

The Power of Thanksgiving in Our Lives

“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.”

Marcus Cicero

Richard J. Cavaness

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Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to everyone who is a leader, director, trainer, volunteer, financial contributor, and prayer warrior for The Road. It is because of you that tens of thousands of lives have been changed and transformed since 1998. Every month as The Road conducts weekend experiences, I see the miracles that happen and I am overwhelmed with gratitude for how the Lord works in people's lives.

www.TheRoadAdventure.org

For a powerful movie that greatly impacted me personally about the aspects of gratefulness, visit: www.thegratitudeexperiment.com or

www.DouglasVermeeren.com

Thank you, Dr. Robert Emmons, for your research and amazing insights into the science behind and the health benefits of gratefulness. I appreciate all your studies and practical applications of how gratitude impacts our lives. <http://gratitudepower.net/science.htm>

Introduction

I remember my son's Marine boot-camp graduation on November 16, 2012, like it was yesterday. Being at the Marine Depot in San Diego, California, was like being on hallowed ground. Watching the perfectly formed lines and perfect timing while the new Marines marched, listening to the Marine leadership speak to parents and family, and how proud I was to be an American as I attended that special weekend. Everything was done with intention and purpose. All I can say is how thankful and grateful I am that we have a group of people called Marines who sacrifice their lives for our freedom and protecting the republic we are so proud of; The United States of America. I am grateful to all our military personnel past and present in all branches for what they do, day in and day out to preserve our bastion of freedom. I am humbled that my son is one of them, and I am so proud of him and his accomplishment, and grateful that he is healthy, safe, and receiving the best leadership training in the world. I have so much to be grateful for today.

Being grateful is a challenge for all of us because it doesn't come naturally to us. In America we tend to be very self-centered and narcissistic, operating out of fear and tending to focus more on what we don't have than what we do have. Many of us live with a sense of entitlement for the lifestyle and benefits we have available to us. Therein lies the challenge. To have a grateful heart and overall thankful attitude, a person needs to be humble, unselfish, content, and joyful in the journey of life, rather than getting everything at the speed of sound in the here and now.

How about you today? *Is your attitude more inward and focused on yourself, or are you finding joy in all things of life, being thankful for whatever comes your way?*

So what does it mean to truly be thankful for something? What does an attitude of gratitude really look like?

Plain and simply, gratitude, thankfulness, gratefulness, or appreciation is a feeling or attitude in acknowledgment of a benefit that one has received or

will receive.

Gratitude has been said to have one of the strongest links with mental health of any other character trait. Numerous studies suggest that grateful people are more likely to have higher levels of happiness and lower levels of stress and depression.

So how will reading this book help you? Very simple. This one virtue, gratitude, will literally change the course of your life. It has the power to help you see the world through a different set of glasses, which can powerfully change your perspective. The whole purpose of this book is to encourage, equip, and empower you to live with gratitude and thankfulness every day, as long as you have breath. We'll look at every aspect of gratitude, from a physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and financial point of view, so you can walk in strength and confidence. My hope is that this book will inspire you to commit to live life gratefully each and every day.

Richard J. Cavaness
Executive Director
The Road

Why Being Grateful Makes Such a Big Difference in Our Lives



*“Develop an **attitude of gratitude**, and **give thanks** for everything that happens to you, knowing that every step forward is a step toward achieving something bigger and better than your current situation.” Brian Tracy*

Definitions of Gratitude: A feeling of appreciation, thankfulness, or satisfaction when a person has an awareness that they are receiving something of benefit to them and understand where it’s coming from.

Being grateful is a *conscious choice* to receive and access all the abundant blessings that are there for us.

Being grateful is about personal awareness and admission of how fortunate we are for all the good that we have received.

The link between spirituality and gratitude has recently become a popular subject of study. Researchers have found that spirituality is capable of enhancing a person’s ability to be grateful. Gratitude and thankfulness are viewed as high level principles in the Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, and Hindu traditions. Worship with gratitude to God is a common theme in most religions, as the concept of gratitude permeates religious texts, teachings, and traditions.

Recent studies have shown that people who tend to be more grateful have higher levels of subjective well-being. Here are some findings from Dr. Robert Emmons studies:

- Grateful people are happier, less depressed, less stressed, and more satisfied with their lives and social relationships.
- Grateful people have higher levels of control of their environments, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.
- Grateful people have more positive ways of coping with the difficulties they experience in life, being more likely to seek support from other people, reinterpret and grow from the experience, and spend more time planning how to deal with the problem.
- Grateful people have less negative coping strategies, being less likely to try to avoid the problem, deny there is a problem, blame themselves, or cope through substance use.
- Grateful people sleep better, and this seems to be because they think less negative and more positive thoughts just before going to sleep.
- Grateful people coped better with a life transition. Specifically, people who were more grateful before the transition were less stressed, less depressed, and more satisfied with their relationships three months later.

While many emotions and personality traits are important to well-being, there seems to be evidence that gratitude may be uniquely important. The positive effects of being grateful are more far-reaching than many of the other possible virtues you can choose for yourself. Your overall well-being, environmental impact, manner of handling challenging circumstances life brings, and coping mechanisms are all greatly impacted by the power of gratitude and your attitude towards it.

American playwright and novelist Thornton Wilder said this about gratitude:

“We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.”

Something to Think About: The benefits of being grateful can radically change your personal well-being.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”*
Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

Key Questions to Consider: Despite all the negative things happening all the time around us, how can I remind myself that there is always something for which to be thankful and grateful each day?

Practical Application: Looking at the list of positive benefits to our well-being that gratefulness brings us, in which area do you see more gratefulness helping you the most? When you are not grateful, which areas above suffer the most in your life?

Impact on Me Journal: Write down 5 things for which you are grateful today.

Having Gratitude Towards the Creator



“Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His steadfast love endures forever.”

Psalm 107:1

Gratitude and thankfulness are viewed as foundational principles in the Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, and Hindu traditions; however, this book is based on the Christian biblical perspective of gratitude and thankfulness.

In the Bible there are many references to giving thanks. In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word “*yadah*” means to praise and give thanks, and be thankful. In the New Testament Greek, the word “*eucharisteo*” means to be grateful, thankful, and to give thanks.

The Levites were the priests of God before the people of Israel. In 1 Chronicles 23:30, we see one of their primary duties was to thank God daily. “*They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord. They were to do the same in the evening.*” The principle here is to be grateful in the morning as you start your day and in the evening when you finish your day.

In the middle book of the Bible, Psalms, the author who is mostly King David, has a common theme running through his poetry. *“Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His steadfast love endures forever.”* You can reference Psalm 100:4-5 and Psalm 107:1.

In the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, we find Jesus Christ giving thanks for the simple basic needs of life. In Matthew 14:19 we see Jesus giving thanks for loaves of bread and fishes, and in Matthew 15:36 He is giving thanks for loaves of bread and fishes again.

At the last supper with His disciples, in Mark 14:22-24, Jesus gave thanks for the bread and the wine. Jesus did the same thing again on the Road to Emmaus, in Luke 24:30, He gave thanks for the food put before Him. In John 11:41, at a burial of one of His best friends, Jesus had the stone rolled away, gave thanks to His Father for hearing His prayer and helping to open the eyes of the people around Him. So we see a consistent pattern by Jesus Christ to be grateful and thankful for the basic needs of life and for God hearing our prayers.

It is no accident that oftentimes Jesus thanks His Father *before* His desired outcome occurs. Jesus is thankful for the granting of His requests before they happen, even as He makes His appeals for them. It is an important act of faith to declare in prayer that not only do you believe that God *can* do what you request, but that He *will*. There’s a new concept for you, to be thankful before you ever receive it.

The Bible also has these things to say about being thankful:

Philippians 4:6, “Don’t be anxious for anything, be thankful and let God know your hearts.”

Colossians 3:15, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “Be joyful always and give thanks in all your circumstances.”

In Summary: Be specifically grateful to God at the beginning and end of your day. Give God thanks for all things, the good, the bad, and the difficult. Be grateful for the small things, for they lead to bigger things. Have a continuous attitude of gratitude and thankfulness in your relationship with God, with your family, and with your neighbors.

Something to Think About: How you begin your day can determine how the rest of your day will go.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.”* Psalm 107:1 NIV

Key Questions to Consider: Are you only thankful when you receive things or before you actually ever receive them? How might your life be different if you started your day verbalizing the things for which you are thankful?

Practical Application: Please read in your Bible, Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. From these Scriptures, how do you see the connection between peace, joy, and giving thanks for all things? How do you think thanking God for *“all your circumstances”* will help you with anxiety and fear?

Impact on Me Journal: If you could thank God for anything that you know beyond a shadow of a doubt He provided to you through the Holy Spirit, what would it be? *Why?*

Health Benefits of Living a Grateful Life



"Gratitude research is beginning to suggest that feelings of thankfulness have tremendous positive value in helping people cope with daily problems, especially stress."

Dr. Robert Emmons

Studies have shown that gratitude and thankfulness make a marked difference in the health and well-being of a person. Gratitude infects our thoughts because when you are thankful and appreciative of what you are receiving this increases our mental capacity and optimism for life.

Robert Emmons, Ph.D., and professor at the University of California, Davis, has written the first major scientific study on gratitude, its causes and potential impact on human health. In his work titled ***"Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier"*** , Dr. Emmons concluded that, *"grateful people experience higher levels of positive emotions such as joy, enthusiasm, love, happiness, and optimism, and the practice of gratitude as a discipline protects a person from the destructive impulses of envy, resentment, greed, and bitterness."*

Emmons's book reports on several studies. In the first, he and his colleagues divided participants into three groups, each of which made weekly entries

in a journal. One group wrote five things for which they were grateful, another group described five daily hassles, and a control group listed five events that had affected them in some way.

Those in the gratitude group were:

- 25% happier;
- exercised 1.5 hours more weekly;
- slept more soundly and awoke more refreshed;
- felt better about their lives overall;
- were more optimistic about the future; and
- had fewer health problems than the other participants.

Results from a second study suggested that daily writing led to a greater increase in gratitude than weekly practice.

Summarizing the findings from studies to date, Emmons says, “*those who practice grateful thinking reap emotional, physical and interpersonal benefits.*” People who regularly keep a gratitude journal report fewer illness symptoms, feel better about their lives as a whole, and are more optimistic about the future.

Bottom Line: Gratitude has nothing to do with conditions! It’s our choice to be grateful in whatever situation we might be.

In another related study, researchers at the University of Connecticut found that gratitude can have a protective effect against heart attacks. Studying people who had experienced one heart attack, the researchers found that those patients who saw benefits and gains from their heart attack, such as becoming more appreciative of life, experienced a lower risk of having another heart attack.

It's no secret that stress can make us sick, particularly when we can't cope with it. It's linked to several leading causes of death, including heart disease and cancer, and claims responsibility for up to 90% of all doctor visits. Gratitude, it turns out, can help us better manage stress.

Here is another very interesting study on gratitude and health. According to Dr. Lisa Aspinwall, Ph.D., a psychology professor at the University of Utah, "Grateful people tend to be more optimistic, a characteristic that researchers say boosts the immune system. There are some very interesting studies linking optimism to better immune function."

Something to Think About: Being grateful is proven to boost your immune system.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."* 3 John 2 NKJV

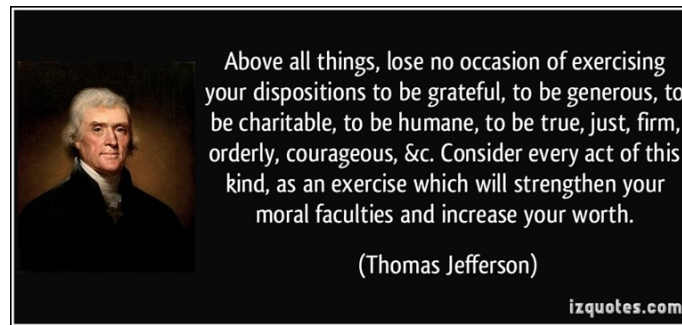
Key Questions to Consider: What would your life be like if you were 25% happier overall?

Practical Application: How do you think being more grateful will reduce stress in your life?

Impact on Me Journal: How does anxiety and gratitude play a role in your life? Which is more prevalent? How is my anxiety affecting my ability to be more grateful?

The Road is a place where gratitude and thankfulness for your life experiences come to light. Please visit our website at www.TheRoadAdventure.org.

Being Grateful *In* All Your Circumstances



Gratitude is so much more than happy thoughts and a state of mind. It's about feeling, and it begins to affect who you are, not just what you do. Remember, gratitude has nothing to do with conditions; it's a choice that we make. Here is an interesting principle of gratitude:

If we say, "I am grateful *for*," then what we are thankful and appreciative for are *things* like money, house, family, job, etc. There is nothing wrong with being grateful for things, we should be. But if we say something different, it can change our whole perspective of how we look at our lives.

If we say, "I am grateful *in*," now whatever condition we find ourselves in, we are choosing to be grateful. If you are grateful "*where you are*" then you can receive more for which to be grateful. The ultimate form of gratitude and thankfulness is being positive and optimistic even when the conditions of our lives aren't what we want or like. That's why the Bible says in **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**, "*Be joyful always and give thanks **in** all your circumstances.*"

If we are grateful, all goodness can be added to us. The reason is because, that which we are grateful in and appreciate, expands and grows. We have all seen how this principle works. When a person is grateful for the "*little things*" in this life, they begin to receive more.

Question: *How can somebody be grateful when they have nothing?*

I used to ponder this thought when I went through the lowest time in my life, the summer of 2008. I was alone, struggling financially, and immersed

in guilt and shame from choices I had made regarding my family. As I processed this question and looked at my life, I realized one fundamental truth:

The truth is that nobody really has nothing! We all have something for which we can be grateful and oftentimes, it takes little consideration to realize that you have so much more than you first thought.

The art of getting more in life is to first have the firm foundation of gratefulness for what you already have, and then simply ask for more.

“He is a wise person who does not grieve for the things which they have not, but rejoices for those which they do have.” Epictetus

Question: *How can past trials and present crises help us build gratitude in our lives?*

Trials and suffering can actually refine and deepen gratefulness, if we allow them to show us not to take things for granted. A great example of this is our national holiday of gratitude, Thanksgiving, which was born and grew out of hard times.

The truth is, when times are good, people take prosperity for granted and begin to believe that they are bullet-proof. Just like what happened to me in my personal crisis in 2008, in times of uncertainty, people realize how powerless they are to control their own destiny. If you begin to see that everything you have, everything you have counted on, may be taken away, it becomes much harder to take it for granted.

While crisis can make us more grateful, research says gratitude also helps us cope with crisis. Consciously cultivating an attitude of gratitude builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can cushion us when we fall. There is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient to stress, whether minor everyday hassles or major personal upheavals.

According to Dr. Emmons, remembering how difficult life used to be and how far we have come sets up an explicit contrast that is fertile ground for gratefulness. Our minds think in terms of counterfactuals — mental

comparisons we make between the way things are and how things might have been different. Contrasting the present with negative times in the past can make us feel happier (or at least less unhappy) and enhance our overall sense of well-being. This opens the door to coping gratefully. This implies that grateful coping entails looking for positive consequences of negative events. For example, grateful coping might involve seeing how a stressful event has shaped who we are today and has prompted us to reevaluate what is really important in life.

The power behind this is about realizing the power you have to transform an obstacle into an opportunity. It means reframing a loss into a potential gain, recasting negativity into positive channels for gratitude.

Another way to foster gratitude is to confront your own mortality. In a recent study, researchers asked participants to imagine a scenario where they are trapped in a burning high-rise, overcome by smoke, and killed. This resulted in a substantial increase in gratitude levels, as researchers discovered when they compared this group to two control conditions who were not compelled to imagine their own deaths.

Something to Think About: By reframing your past you can be grateful for where you are today.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances.”* 1Thessalonians 5:16-18 NIV

Key Questions to Consider: What childhood event that was negative in your life could you reframe so you can be grateful and appreciative for it today? How can that change your life for the better?

Practical Application: Clean out and clean up your home. Go through everything: closets, drawers, shelves, refrigerator, books, CDs, DVDs, etc. Pay attention to all you really have. What can you give away to benefit and bless others?

Impact on Me Journal: Imagine you only have three months to live, how do you see the world differently? What will you be grateful for now that

What Keeps People from Being Grateful?



Being grateful is defined as a feeling of thankfulness for receiving something of benefit to us. We all have something for which to be grateful, but sometimes things can blind us to that reality. Here is a video for you to watch that really puts things into perspective:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWIMNldudso>

American playwright and novelist, Thornton Wilder, said this about gratitude:

“We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.”

One of the biggest challenges to building up a virtue in our lives is that we must diminish or reduce the influence of a vice in our lives to obtain it. A virtue and vice cannot coexist. So that leads us to a very basic question:

What are the things that block us from being grateful in our lives?

1. **Attitude of complaint or dissatisfaction.** Do you have a tendency to focus more on what you don't have than what you do? Unfortunately, many tend to focus on what they don't have, when in reality they are sitting on a pile of blessings! Unrealistic expectations and comparison to others leads to jealousy, and being envious of what others have only serves to make you unhappy with what you personally have. It's hard to be grateful when all you can think about is what you don't have or think you should get.
2. **Sense of entitlement.** This attitude places us in the place of God Himself. We think sometimes we are guaranteed to have special privileges over others because of our belief in Him. We can be demanding of God, presumptuous, and often miss the blessing God has for us in the here and now. If we all got what we truly deserved, nobody would be happy with it, I guarantee you that! Stop taking things for granted and having the attitude that somebody owes you something, because until you are grateful with today's blessings, God will not give you more.
3. **Pride and control.** A grateful heart realizes that everything you have and all your successes involved others. Pride and ego tells us we did everything on our own. Many of us operate under a self-serving bias and need to control outcomes. This means we take credit for our successes and believe that all good things happen because we did it. Consequently, when we fail or have setbacks, we blame others and circumstances. Gratitude is all about giving credit to others for our success and, instead of controlling, accepting situations for the way they are.
4. **Anger, Fear, or Sadness.** These are three very prominent negative emotions that exist in our world today. Anger is a result of being offended, and the only solution to eliminating that is to forgive. Then we experience peace. Fear is a result of a rejection, and the only solution to eliminating that is acceptance. Then we experience what love really is. Sadness is a result of a loss, and the only solution to eliminating that is to go through the steps of grieving. Then we experience joy, which really is a form of happiness not tied to

circumstances. Gratitude cannot exist when we are engulfed in anger, fear, or sadness.

5. **External distractions.** These would be things such as television, media, internet, traffic, busyness of life, etc. Take a few deep breaths, look around, quiet your mind, and be thankful for all your earthly blessings.
6. **Bad habits.** A habit is a tendency that is repeated until it is done automatically without thinking or conscious intent. Take time to evaluate your time usage and thought focus during your day. *How does it impact your ability to be grateful?*
7. **Negative focus.** That upon which we focus and place our energy becomes our reality. Gratefulness is a positive principle whereas focusing on what you don't have is a negative principle. You either feel abundant or you feel lack, it's one or the other. We will cover this more in-depth in a later chapter.
8. **Suffering.** Sometimes just because we have had so many bad things happen to us over time, we grow callous and cold in our attitude towards life. This can make being grateful challenging, because you will need to reframe those bad things and see them from a different perspective to build thankfulness and gratitude in your life.

I am sure many of us can relate to at least one of these gratitude killers in our lives. The key is to recognize when you are falling into a negative pattern and catch yourself before you get too deep.

Something to Think About: When we think about what we don't have we are operating with a mentality of lack and scarcity.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *“You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”* Isaiah 14:13-14 NIV

The Top 20 Benefits of Having an Attitude of Gratitude



As I was researching for my gratitude blogs, I came across a website by the author Amit Amin, www.happierhuman.com. Amit had a great article with incredible insight on gratitude and the amazing benefits of it. I dedicate this particular chapter to those ideas and his insights.

Gratitude helps us with our emotional and physical health, work, character, personality, and social aspects of our lives.

Here are the top twenty benefits of expressing gratitude in your life:

1. **Gratitude makes us more optimistic.** Gratitude is the act of focusing on the good in life. If we perceive our current life to have more good, we will also believe our future life will have more good. Optimism is correlated with gratitude because those with an optimistic disposition are biologically more likely to focus on the good than on the bad.
2. **Gratitude reduces materialism.** Gratitude reduces our tendency to compare ourselves to those with a higher social status and opens our eyes to the immaterial blessings of life. An attitude of gratitude is more likely to produce an environment of giving and wanting to help others.
3. **Gratitude increases a desire to be open to God.** When we have a more grateful mindset, it opens us up to acknowledge that many of our blessings and successes come from outside of ourselves. It opens us to

admit there is a creator God who is greater than ourselves and in more control of our lives than we are.

4. **Gratitude makes us less self-centered.** To be truly grateful is to humble ourselves to receive that which is given to us. It takes the focus off of “I did this” to admitting there were others who were part of the process of making it happen.
5. **Gratitude increases our self-esteem.** There is no need to control or do something to add to your value or worth. You are confident and strong in acknowledging appreciation to others for what you have or are doing.
6. **Gratitude improves a person’s sleep.** Gratitude increases sleep quality, reduces the time required to fall asleep, increases sleep duration, and reduces insomnia.
7. **Gratitude keeps a person away from the doctor.** In fact, some recent science shows just that – those who regularly practice gratitude have been shown to feel less pain, go to the doctor less often, have lower blood pressure, and be less likely to develop a mental disorder.
8. **Gratitude lets you live longer.**
9. **Gratitude increases your energy levels.**
10. **Gratitude helps us to be more resilient and bounce back from trauma and stress.**
11. **Gratitude makes us feel good.** According to Dr. Emmons, gratitude is just happiness that we recognize after the fact to have been caused by the kindness of others. Gratitude doesn’t just make us happier, it is happiness in and of itself!
12. **Gratitude reduces our feelings of envy.** Gratitude is the act of perceiving benevolence, while envy and jealousy is the act of perceiving inadequacy. Benevolence and inadequacy cannot be completely perceived at the same time.

13. **Gratitude helps you relax.** This is due in part because you are content with what you have and you are not competing for what you don't have. You are at peace.
14. **Gratitude makes you friendlier.**
15. **Gratitude helps your marriage.** Can you imagine how many couples could improve their marriage by just saying "Thank you" and "I appreciate you" more often?
16. **Gratitude makes you look good and gain the respect of others.** It takes a strong person to acknowledge that they didn't get to where they are all on their own – that without others they may never have made it.
17. **Gratitude helps you to make and deepen friendships, increases your likability.** Again, it's not about me, myself, and I. Giving credit where credit is due and appreciating others is endearing.
18. **Gratitude increases your goal achievement capability.**
19. **Gratitude improves your decision-making.**
20. **Gratitude increases your productivity and helps you reach more goals.**

Be grateful every day, and you'll see your life go in amazing directions and opportunities become readily available.

For more reasons why to practice gratitude, check out this info-graphic created by www.Heresmychance.com

Something to Think About: Gratitude is not a cure-all, but it is a *massively underutilized tool* for improving life-satisfaction and overall happiness within our lives.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."* Proverbs 14:30 NIV

Key Questions to Consider: Of the 20 reasons why gratitude is good for us, in which ones are you strong? In which ones are you weak? Think about it and ask yourself *why*?

Practical Application: Look in the mirror and be honest with yourself right now. Do you look old or young for your age? What has contributed to that fact and how do you think being grateful or not being grateful has played a part in how you have aged throughout your life?

Impact on Me Journal: Write down the decade in your life in which you were the most grateful for things, as well as the decade in which you were the most ungrateful for things. What made the difference?

The Road is a place where gratitude and thankfulness for your life experiences come to light. Please visit our website at www.TheRoadAdventure.org

The 7 Ways to Develop Gratitude in Your Life



1) **Don't get pulled into negative talk.** When a conversation you're in goes in a negative direction, don't be afraid to be the one who changes the subject. If that doesn't work, be willing to excuse yourself. Garbage in = Garbage out. Gratitude lives and thrives in a positive state, not a negative one.

2) **Help others turn away from negativity.** If someone you know persists in talking about negative things all the time, find a tactful way to tell them that you really don't appreciate it. They may not even realize that they're doing it, and you could be doing them a huge favor.

3) **Show gratitude.** Willingly express gratitude and appreciation for those around you. Tell them specifically what you appreciate and why. Then you can feel grateful that you were able to shine a little sunshine into their life. Everyone loves to hear "thank you," "I appreciate you," and "Great Job." Feeling useful and appreciated is one of the top five reasons why people stay at their current jobs.

4) **See the big picture.** When you find yourself in a challenging situation, look for the beneficial aspects created by that situation. Ask yourself: “What have I learned here that will benefit me in the future? When I look back on this experience a year from now, for what will I be grateful?”

5) **Control your response.** If someone criticizes you, don’t get defensive. There is a big difference between responding and reacting. You can respond by saying something like: “Thank you for bringing that to my attention, I’ll give it some careful consideration.” Or, simply, “I will consider your opinion.” You can be grateful that you didn’t allow them to push your buttons, and who knows, maybe their point was valid and your life will be better for considering it.

6) **Look for reasons to say thank you.** When other people sense that you appreciate them, it changes the dynamic of your relationship with them. Everyone loves to be appreciated. They’ll be more inclined to do nice things for you because you appreciate their efforts. In turn, you’ll have even more reasons to feel grateful.

7) **Have a gratitude review.** Do this as soon as you wake up in the morning and before you go to sleep at night. Remember to count your blessings daily. Think of all the things in your life for which you have to be grateful. If you start and end each day with gratitude, your whole life will shift in a more positive direction. It only takes a minute or two to allow gratitude to fill your heart and mind.

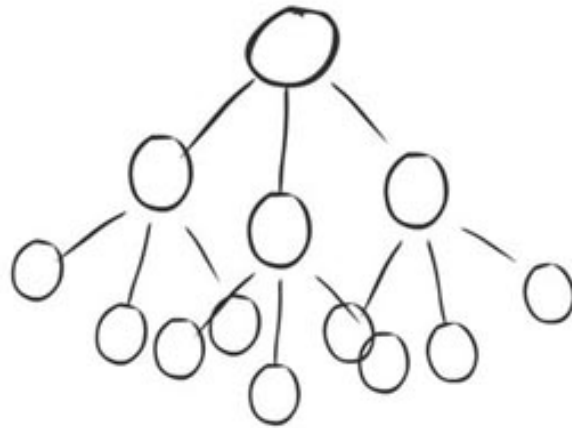
Something to Think About: Negativity and gratitude cannot live in the same place!

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”* Ephesians 4:29 KJV

Key Questions to Consider: Are you a more reactive personality or a responder? Overall, how does that impact your ability to be a grateful person?

The Greatest Form of Gratitude: Pay It Forward

PAY IT FORWARD



To “pay it forward” means that if someone does something good for you, you should turn around and do good for someone else. The idea here is that instead of paying back to the person who has helped you, the good deed is passed forward to someone else.

Where did the phrase “pay it forward” originate?

The phrase “pay it forward” is referenced as early as 1951 in Robert A. Heinlein’s book *Between Planets*. The idea was more recently popularized in the movie *Pay It Forward*, released in the year 2000. In the movie, a young boy by the name of Trevor is assigned a school project requiring him to find a way to bring about a change in the world. Consequently, the boy develops the concept of “paying it forward” threefold to set forth a far-reaching chain of good deeds.

A historical instance of the pay-it-forward concept can be found in a letter from 1784, written by Ben Franklin to Benjamin Webb. In the letter, Franklin expressed his intention to help Webb with the money he requested. In return, Franklin wanted Webb to help some needy person in the future

who may require some financial assistance – in effect “paying it forward” to him.

How does "paying it forward" actually work?

When a person is performing a truly kind deed, they don't expect anything in return. The concept in the movie is that the recipient of a favor does a favor for three others, rather than paying the favor back. However, it needed to be a major favor that the receiver can't complete themselves.

One person living by the pay-it-forward philosophy can multiply and grow the chain of good deeds in society exponentially.

How can you pay it forward?

Be attentive wherever you are for opportunities to help someone.

Perhaps you have an elderly or disabled neighbor who is too proud to ask for help with their yard work, or maybe you're in a restaurant and see someone who looks like they could use some kind stranger to pay for their meal. You can change people's attitudes about the world through your unobtrusive acts of kindness.

Do something nice for someone you don't know (or don't know very well). It should be something significant, and not for a person from whom you expect a good deed — or anything at all — in return.

Spread the word. If the person thanks you and wants to repay you (that is, pay it "back"), let them know that what you'd really like is for them to pay it forward — you'd like them to do something nice for three people they don't know, and ask those three people to do something nice for three more people. The idea is to consciously increase the goodness in the world.

Pay it forward. It begins with you. When you notice that somebody has done something nice for you, make a note in your mind to practice three acts of kindness towards other people.

Pay it forward in a powerful way. Invite someone to attend The Road so they can experience what life transformation is really about. Check out our

Gratitude Can Make Your Business and Workplace Flourish!



The highest Return on Investment (ROI) management tool I know is one that is available to everyone, costs essentially nothing, and is a proven driver of workplace productivity. That tool is *gratitude*.

As obvious as this may sound to some, it is oftentimes overlooked, particularly in highly competitive industries with demanding workplace standards. Yet, developing a high-performance culture and one that encourages the expression of *gratitude* shouldn't be at odds. To the contrary, recognition can be an invaluable source of motivation and subsequently inspire people to do their best work. Looking back on my career, I've seen and experienced this dynamic more times than I can count, and conversely, have witnessed the negative repercussions of managers who take their teams for granted.

Here are a few things to consider the next time you're inclined to show your appreciation for a job well done:

1. Be thoughtful

Not all thank-yous are created equal. Be thoughtful about the how. Sometimes it's best to do it in person, in the moment. Other times, an email or call might make sense, especially if the person is remote. A handwritten note can pay huge dividends in many ways as well.

2. Be genuine

More often than not, the words you communicate are not nearly as important as the thought and energy behind them. The person on the receiving end can tell the difference between someone going through the motions and someone expressing deeply heartfelt appreciation. When it comes to expressing gratitude, always be 100% genuine and don't do it so often that it becomes routine or no big deal to the receiver. Express your gratitude often but don't overkill.

3. Pick your moments

When thinking about when to give thanks, make sure to apply The Goldilocks Principle: Compliment someone too often and your words will ultimately ring hollow. Don't say thank-you enough and your top talent will ultimately feel so under-appreciated you'll potentially face retention issues. However, express appreciation at just the right time, and you'll make a huge difference in the way that person thinks about their role and what it means to be a part of your team.

4. Solicit suggestions

This is going to sound very simplistic, but just ask the employees. From time to time, ask your directors to mention individuals or teams you may have less direct contact to, but who they feel are deserving of a special call-out. The further away from headquarters they sit, and the more junior they are, the better. You'll be amazed at how appreciative the people on the receiving end of those calls and emails will be.

5. Learn how to take a compliment

The better you are at receiving a compliment, the more effective you'll be at giving one. The next time someone compliments you on a job well done, try grounding yourself from the feet up, look the person straight in the eye, and let them know how much it means to you. That sense of recognition and connection is what we're all trying to achieve. It's also what ultimately makes the difference between a perfunctory 'thank you' and an expression of gratitude the recipient won't soon forget.

Abundance Mentality vs. Scarcity Mentality: From which mindset do you operate?



“People with a scarcity mentality tend to see everything in terms of win-lose. There is only so much; and if someone else has it, that means there will be less for me. People with an abundance mentality see things in terms of there is plenty out there for everyone.”
Stephen R. Covey

Let's start out by really educating ourselves by what it means to live with an abundance mentality. I want you to see the ideal, the standard for having an attitude of gratitude.

The definition of “abundance” is a large amount of something; to have plenty, an ample quantity; and to be more than adequate.

Those who live with an abundance mentality operate under four basic premises:

1. Victory means success that brings mutually beneficial results to all involved. They want others to succeed, they think in terms of Win-Win, and they give willingly, knowing that in giving they also gain in many ways.

2. Recognizes unlimited opportunities for positive growth and development.
3. Realizes that there are three ways to do things, my way, your way, and a better way. They receive graciously, which means they have the confidence and self-worth to receive from others, and are thankful to them for helping them succeed.
4. Appreciates and is grateful for the uniqueness of others and their part in another's success.

When people operate with an abundance mentality they don't begrudge others' success, because they know that success is limitless. Being grateful for so many opportunities helps them appreciate others and their input, rather than resent or fear it. Gratefulness rules the perspectives of those who have an attitude of abundance.

Bottom line, when operating under the umbrella of abundance, there is no comparing, no competing, and no criticizing. They are simply grateful for both life's blessings and its shortcomings, because they know that personal growth is tied to what they do with their own lives and not what others do. They have a deep sense of personal value and worth for themselves.

Now let's take a look at what it means to live with a scarcity mentality. This is the killer of gratitude and overall thankfulness in your life.

The definition of "scarcity" is to have a short supply of something or a perceived shortage. It means to not have enough and be deficient, or to be in a condition or attitude of lack.

Those who live with a scarcity mentality operate under four basic premises:

1. Victory means success at the expense of someone else. They secretly hope others will fail. They think in terms of I Win/You Lose. They operate in a hoarding manner.

2. Difficulty showing happiness for the success of others, including family, friends, and business associates. They show little gratefulness towards others. They actually operate with a sense of entitlement.
3. Difficulty sharing credit, recognition, power, and profit while blaming others for failures.
4. Difficulty being a team player, because differences in opinion are perceived as disloyalty. They also operate under a mask that they know it all.

When people operate with a scarcity mentality, they take on a victim mindset and blame other people and circumstances for their lack of success. The theme song for this mentality was sung by the rock group Queen back in the late '80s titled, "*I want it all.*" They are not grateful when others succeed, but instead are jealous and envious. They are not grateful for anything and only see limitation and lack.

Bottom line, when someone is operating under the umbrella of scarcity there is comparison, competition, and criticism. They constantly complain about what they don't have and are not grateful for all of life's blessings. They feel threatened and intimidated by those who don't have to be in the spotlight and love to share in their success.

To read more on this subject and to understand how it fits into a much bigger picture of your life, please read and study the material from Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

www.franklincovey.com

Something to Think About: To be grateful means to operate with an abundance mentality.

A Key Bible Verse to Process: *Jesus Christ said, "I have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."* John 10:10
NKJV

Powerful Quotes on Gratitude to Give You a Daily Lift



“Gratitude is a dialysis of sorts it flushes the self-pity out of our systems.”
Max Lucado

“You cannot be grateful and bitter. You cannot be grateful and unhappy. You cannot be grateful and without hope. You cannot be grateful and unloving. So just be grateful.” Unknown

“Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; *It is He who* has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.” Psalm 100:1-5 *NKJV*

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.” Unknown

“Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” William Arthur Ward

“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Colossians 3:15-17 *NKJV*

“Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.” Eckhart Tolle

“Gratitude and appreciation are wonderful things. They make what is excellent in others belong to us as well.” Voltaire

“The deepest craving of human nature is the need to feel appreciated.” William James

“To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything He has given us – and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.” Thomas Merton

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *NKJV*

“Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful.” Buddha

“Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy.” Dietrich Bonhoffer

“Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20 *NKJV*

“It’s not happy people who are thankful, its thankful people who are happy.” Unknown

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary." Margaret Cousins

"Nothing new can come into your life unless you are grateful for what you already have." Michael Bernard

“Both abundance and lack exist simultaneously in our lives, as parallel realities. It is always our conscious choice which secret garden we will tend... when we choose not to focus on what is missing from our lives but are grateful for the abundance that's present – love, health, family, friends, work, the joys of nature and personal pursuits that bring us pleasure – the wasteland of illusion falls away and we experience Heaven on earth.” Sarah Ban Breathnach

“Feeling grateful or appreciative of someone or something in your life actually attracts more of the things that you appreciate and value into your life.” Northrup Christiane

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” Psalm 136:1 *NKJV*

“God has two dwellings; one in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart.” Izaak Walton

“Grace is available for each of us every day – our spiritual daily bread – but we've got to remember to ask for it with a grateful heart and not worry about whether there will be enough for tomorrow.” Sarah Ban Breathnach

“Gratitude is the ability to experience life as a gift. It liberates us from the prison of self-preoccupation.” John Ortberg

“Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.” Henry Van Dyke

“Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.” Charles Dickens

“Gratitude always comes into play; research shows that people are happier if they are grateful for the positive things in their lives, rather than worrying about what might be missing.” Dan Buettner

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, and confusion into clarity. It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow." Melody Beattie

"When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears." Tony Robbins

“Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day, which must be done, whether you like it or not.” James Russell Lowell

“We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.” Harry Ironside

“Count your blessings and you will have the attitude of gratitude.” Sir John Templeton

Bringing Everything Full Circle

Remember in the introduction how I explained how reading this book will help you? The whole purpose of this book is to encourage, equip, and empower you as a reader to live with gratitude and thankfulness every day as long as you have breath. My hope is that now that you have read this book you are inspired and committed to live life gratefully each day that you have in this life.

One of the main points I hope you discovered is that gratitude is so much more than just positive thinking or having a positive mental attitude. The truth is, that being grateful is not always easy, and it does take some work as well. To recognize your dependence on others, to humble yourself and become a good receiver, this is not always easy since most of us are better givers than receivers.

Another key point I hope that gripped you was that it is possible to be grateful even in the midst of suffering. Being grateful is not just another feeling, but a habit, a virtue, an attitude, and a mindset of life. History shows us many who, while going through very dark times, grew to have a deeper appreciation and were thankful for that experience because it made them better people and helped shape their perspectives. People like Nelson Mandela, John McCain, Apostle Paul, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Theresa, and Gandhi, all experienced difficult circumstances while keeping an attitude of gratitude.

You have the power to transform any obstacle into an opportunity. It means reframing a loss into a potential gain and recasting negativity into positive channels for gratitude.

Another powerful reality is that your entire life can either be one filled with health, wellness, strength, and helping others, or you can be sickly, weak, depressed, and self-centered. It's all a choice that you make. Gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciation are there for the taking, but you must choose to make this a foundational virtue in your life.

Think about this: Every aspect of your life can be positively influenced by living with an attitude of gratitude. How much better could your life be today, tomorrow, or five years from now, if you made the choice to live from that perspective? Choose life and abundance today; live with an attitude of gratitude!



The Road Experience

The Road helps people find love, joy, and peace within themselves, their relationships, and in their spiritual lives by providing the right tools to overcome emotional damage from the past and/or present, as well as face the challenges of life in the future. The Road is all about changing lives through encouragement, equipping, and empowerment so that you can live your life to the fullest.

Our weekend experiences provide life-changing guidance for those looking to improve their lives in any of these areas:

- Maintaining healthier marriage relationships
- Understanding more about your life purpose
- Getting rid of the guilt of past mistakes
- Dealing with anger in a healthy way
- Breaking the cycle of bad habits in your life
- Healing from past hurts
- Understanding more about healthy boundaries
- Getting rid of the shame others have placed on you
- Working through loss, whether it be of a loved one, a marriage, a dream, a job, or innocence

- Developing a healthy dating relationship *before* you commit yourself to marriage

The great news is that if you are looking for more confidence, better relationships, healing from past hurts, and freedom from baggage of the past, The Road is just the place for you. If you are 18 years or older, everyone and anyone is welcome.

Check out our website: www.TheRoadAdventure.org

For more information please contact:

Email: admin@TheRoadAdventure.org

Phone: 972-690-5128

Address: The Road, 1701 N. Greenville Avenue, Suite 1113, Richardson,
TX 75081

Rich Cavaness e-mail: rich_cavaness@msn.com



The Road E5 Marriage Enrichment Weekend Experience

The Road offers 12 powerful sessions addressing the major reasons most couples get divorced. Whether you just want a checkup with your spouse or you currently have serious marriage issues, this experience is designed for you.

Every marriage has issues, some more than others. This particular Thursday through Sunday marriage experience is designed to have each couple address one of the twelve reasons couples get divorced today. This way, each couple is assessing their marriage in that particular area and working through a positive process of understanding how it affects them today. Then each couple puts together a game plan on how to strengthen that particular area in their marriage.

This weekend experience is designed to be more experiential than academic, and it is highly interactive, with a no-holds-barred approach, helping each couple work through their issues and challenges. The E5 Marriage Experience includes an information packed workbook plus 26 hours Thursday-Sunday experience with other couples. The fee per couple is \$299.00.

Check out our website: www.TheMarriageExperience.com or www.TheRoadAdventure.org

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Additional Resources

Contact Rich Cavaness for speaking engagements:

- Keynote addresses
- Business training
- Church seminars
- Community motivational conferences

Topics include:

- Leadership and Non-Profits
- Emotional and Mental Health Issues
- Living a No-Limits Life Conference (one day or weekend)
- Law of Attraction Conference (one day)
- Finding Balance in an Out-of-Balance World Conference (one day)

For Seminar or Ministry Information

Check out Rich's website: www.LivingANoLimitsLife.com

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About the Author

Rich Cavaness and his wife Libia currently make their home in Dallas, Texas. His passion and gift is teaching people how to improve every aspect of their personal lives: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial, and relational. He is the founder of the global personal development and life-enrichment company www.LivingANoLimitsLife.com and the current executive director of The Road, a non-profit, faith-based, personal development organization offering weekend experiences in Richardson, Texas. Rich helps married couples develop their best marriage now through the E5 Marriage Experience offered through The Road, www.TheMarriageExperience.com.

