FEATURE | PERSONAL GROWTH

An Attitude of Gratitude

For the magic to stick, gratitude has to become an active part of our daily lives.

by **Sarah Robinson**

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I was introduced to the whole concept of gratitude when I was in my mid-twenties. At the time, I thought my life was pretty miserable - so miserable that I complained about it loudly and a great deal. A friend of mine suggested that I make a Gratitude List. "*A what?*", I remember replying with great indigence. "*I have nothing to put on a list like that*." He kindly replied, "*Well then, you are the most pitiful person I know*," and left it at that.

Needless to say I did not like being called pitiful, so I stuck my lip out, pulled out a piece of paper and grumbled through my very first attempt at a Gratitude List. Much to my dismay, I felt better after writing down about five things. I called my friend. "*You stink*," I said. "*You've ruined a perfectly good self-pity party*." He laughed - and then I laughed, for the first time in ages.

What is the secret of gratitude? What transformational magic does it hold that can turn around the most dismal of attitudes?

> ***I believe gratitude's power mainly lies in its ability to get us to stop thinking about ourselves for 30 seconds - our woes, our cares, our burdens, how unfair everyone and everything is.***

For the most part, we humans are really skilled at complaining. It is so easy - because we do have woes, cares and burdens, and life can be

unfair most of the time. In spite of those facts, we still have much to be grateful for - especially if we live in the free Western World.

I can hear the Yeah Buts already. I know life can hand us a raw deal. I know that the pain can be tremendous. I know because I've been there and it is exhausting. As I see it, though, we can choose one of two paths: 1) Wallow in all that self-pity and continue to be miserable or 2) Make a conscious choice to find something-anything-that we appreciate in our daily lives. Which kind of person do you want to be?

> ***By choosing to look at all that we have rather than all that we don't have, we choose to short-circuit (even if only for a little while!) our self-pity mechanism.***

For the magic to really stick, though, gratitude has to become an active part of our daily lives.

For example, the friend I mentioned above has a daily habit of writing out a gratitude list - whether he feels like it or not. That is active gratitude. So is doing something nice for somebody else. Look around. It won't take you long to find someone who is worse off than you are. Lend a helping hand, whether you feel like it or not. Put your heart into it and your heart will feel lighter.

> ***With time and practice, gratitude will become part of who we are and how we interact with the world will be forever changed.***

Sarah Robinson, Executive Coach and founder of Profit, Purpose and Beyond, teaches Direct Selling and Network Marketing Leaders how to reduce the stress of their career, increase the profitability of their businesses and find time to have fun and live the life they desire. For free tips on creating an extraordinary business and an extraordinary life, visit www.profitpurposeandbeyond.com.