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February 2016

Be Grateful for Gratitude

Hope you are having a great 2016! At the end of last year, we sent a gratitude-themed holiday message, with an opportunity for you to share what you and your family are grateful for. We were thrilled by the number of responses received and created a wreath with your expressions of gratitude. Thankfulness is truly the gift that keeps on giving. We would like to start this new year by continuing to explore the power of gratitude.



The Gratitude Journal

Having feelings of gratitude is only the beginning of its benefits. Expressing those feelings expands the inner calm and happiness. Take the benefits to a higher level privately by keeping a Gratitude Journal. Reflect on what you are grateful for and record experiences (on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis) when family, friends, mentors, animals, places, and things create gratitude. The result can be a continuous awareness of happiness and appreciation for good fortune. Here are four tips that make Gratitude Journals effective:

1. Make your journal a habit, but focus on experiences of gratitude and look for the meanings you can take from them.
2. Negative experiences can lead to breakthroughs, so write about what you learn from mistakes and turn missteps into small victories.

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3. Sometimes you will experience gratitude as an “aha” moment, but it may take a long look backwards to appreciate the gifts you have received.
4. And while you may be grateful for what you possess in your life, recognize that how you use what you have earned can give you deeper gratitude and happiness.

The Gratitude Cure: “Vitamin G”

Researchers have tagged gratitude as an important component of physical and mental health. Here are 10 results from several studies over the past few years:

1. Feelings of gratitude and similar positive emotions lower stress hormones in the body.
2. Making nightly lists of things you are grateful for improves the amount and quality of sleep.
3. When subjects recall feelings of appreciation, blood pressure and heart rate variability go down.
4. Grateful people more effectively kick bad health habits and make better health choices.
5. Gratitude and optimism improve immune response by increasing white blood cells to fight illness.
6. People who feel gratitude spend more time exercising and are more health conscious overall.
7. Psychological studies found lower risk of depression and fewer toxic emotions in people who have feelings of gratitude.
8. Gratitude helps improve mental resilience in stressful times and overcomes traumatic experiences more effectively.
9. Gratitude is linked to the ability to empathize and can lower the aggression response when faced with negative experiences.
10. Perhaps the most promising result in these perilous times is that gratitude improves self-esteem and confidence.

The Gratitude Challenge

Gratitude has hidden powers for anyone no matter what stage of life.

We see the role gratitude plays as we help families and their businesses expand and protect financial success across generations. We understand the natural motivation to achieve a legacy that assures financial security and family harmony for decades. It is more than the careful planning to transfer assets to the right people in the right manner at the right time and cost.

As challenging as that process can be, transferring an attitude and aptitude for stewardship to the next generation can be a bigger challenge. Relying on rules for living you set half a century ago may not have the impact you expect. And you may find that the next generation thinks traditional values need a makeover and an upgrade. They may be right.

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What does work is the power of gratitude. This emotion comes in our DNA—eternal and immutable and always an inspiration. Stewardship is driven by gratitude, and you can prime the engine for the future of your family. Begin working on your own gratitude story for them—a story taking them back through all of your successes, all of your obstacles, and all of the people and lessons learned that awakened your sense of gratitude. It is a foolproof way to transfer values and extend a family heritage forever.

Best Regards,

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