



52 Weeks of Gratitude: Transformation Through Appreciation (Volume 1)

Lisa Ryan

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"Be consistent with your gratitude practice, and you'll be awed by your blessings." Lisa Ryan Would it interest you to learn a simple practice that takes less than five minutes a day and will change your life for the better? The answer is simple - it's the daily expression of appreciation. In her book, *52 Weeks of Gratitude: Transformation Through Appreciation*, Lisa Ryan shares the compilation of the first year of her "Gratitude Thoughts of the Week". Since its inception in 2011, these articles have touched the lives of thousands of people who respond and share their stories of how gratitude has impacted their lives. Lisa discovered this magical practice when she started keeping a gratitude journal. Every day, she wrote down three to five things for which she grateful. Over time, it became a habit. When a myriad of positive events started happening, she realized that the only thing she had changed was her daily gratitude practice. Thus her research began. After reading hundreds of white papers, reports, books, and articles, attending classes and programs, Lisa discovered there was a lot more to gratitude than she would have imagined. Research shows that gratitude is more than a feel-good emotion. Studies show that gratitude changes our perspective and the way we evaluate what happens in our lives. Gratefulness has a physical impact - it strengthens our heart, bolsters our immune system, and gives us more restful sleep. Relationships improve and we all get along better. Business also benefits from thankfulness. When employees and customers feel appreciated, they stick around longer and are more productive and profitable. Expressing thanks positively affects us in all areas of life. The key is to start writing your 'gratitudes' down in a journal. Whether you write in the morning or evening doesn't matter. Whatever works for you is just fine. Also, don't be concerned about journaling for pages and pages. A gratitude journal can be as simple as writing down five sentences that begin with "I am grateful for..." Take two minutes to write your sentences, and another three minutes to contemplate what you just wrote - getting into the experience of the emotion of gratitude. These five minutes will potentially be your BEST five minutes of the day Gratitude is a PRACTICE, so you don't have to be PERFECT. Do what you can, with what you have, where you are and you'll be happier - guaranteed. Still not convinced? A recent study on gratitude by Psychologist Robert Emmons found the following benefits of a daily practice of gratitude: 1. Greater happiness. People who kept a gratitude journal were 25% happier than those who just kept a journal of routine daily events. 2. Better sleep. People who kept a gratitude journal slept 12% longer and woke up 15% more refreshed than those that didn't. 3. Physical. Gratitude journalers exercised 30% more than their non-journaling counterparts. 4. No side effects. Optimism, gratitude and other self-development practices are being studied to determine their ability to short- circuit depression and reduce blood pressure. Whether you believe this will work or not, Lisa challenges the reader to give it a try. The only stipulation is to go into it with an open mind and open heart. Negativity doesn't cut it in life, and it doesn't work here either. Are you up for it? For the next 52 weeks, read a chapter and contemplate the lesson and how you can apply it to your life. Look for ways to implement gratefulness into your life. Keep track of all that is changing for you - as well as the reaction of others. You'll be glad you did.

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