**Motivational Minutes on Gratitude from 2015**

**(Also see Thoughts and Attitude files.)**

1. **The Magnet of Gratitude**

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**Quote of the day:**

"The unthankful heart… discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings!” — Henry Ward Beecher

**Reflection:**

I was thinking about gratitude today and what a wonderful thing it is. It reminds me of this quote from Henry Ward Beecher*.*

*If one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and now would it draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the mere power of attraction. The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no blessings; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings.*

I have found using the magnet of gratitude has attracted gold into my life. When I use gratitude I bring all good things to myself, such as happiness, well-being, contentment, good relationships, fulfillment and the list goes on.

Why not try using the magnet of gratitude to bring goodness into your life?

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1. **The Glad Game**

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**Quote of the day:**

“Some people are unbelievably cheerful in the midst of difficulty or obstacles; others bemoan the slightest inconvenience. Those who look for the upside of any trouble are the ones who come out ahead in quality of life, and the radiance of their positive attitude sheds light on the paths of others.” —Chloe West

**Reflection:**

Perhaps you have seen the old movie or read the book, Pollyanna, written by Eleanor Porter. It is the story of a little girl whose parents died, and thus she went to live with her only relative—her rather stiff and staunch aunt. Pollyanna was an optimist who found a bright side to everything by playing what she called the "Glad Game," a technique she had learned from her father of trying to find something good in every situation, no matter how bad the circumstances. Through her cheerfulness and positive attitude, Pollyanna not only changes her Aunt but the whole town. This story so impressed me from the very first time I viewed the movie, that I have endeavored to play the Glad Game ever since.

To some the “Glad Game” is considered an air-headed escape from reality, but I have found that trying to look for the good in every seeming difficult situation has great power to transform not only your life but those around you, like it did Pollyanna. Try it and see what it does for you.

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1. **Bruce Diaso Memorial Challenge**

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Quote of the day:

"Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.” — Aesop

Reflection:

Most people have no idea how often they complain. The reason is that we live in a culture of complaint. It's going on all around us all the time. Why is it we complain, when we have so much to be thankful for?

I decided to put myself to the test in the complaint department. I took up the Bruce Diaso Memorial Challenge, which entails of going the next twenty-four hours without complaining about one single thing—starting now!

The story behind this challenge is as follows:

*Bruce was paralyzed by polio when he was a senior in high school. When he arrived at university, he was in a wheelchair. The only parts of his body he could move were his hands (but not his arms) and his head. Inside that head was a great brain and inside his heart was a greater disposition. No one ever heard Bruce complain. His friends were in awe of how upbeat he was. One day he was asked how he managed to be so positive all the time. His answer was simple, wise, and profound. He said, "I didn't want to live the rest of my life feeling sorry for myself or being angry, so I decided to be thankful instead." Bruce graduated with high honors. He earned a scholarship to law school, and went on to a successful career as an attorney. Sadly, he died when he was only thirty-one. But Bruce left a great legacy behind because he touched the lives of everyone who met him. He’ll be remembered for a lot of reasons. One, is that he was the most thankful person you could ever know. He taught others to focus on the good in life and to be thankful for it. No one ever heard Bruce complain about anything.*

After taking up the challenge for 24 hours I was astonished how much I complain, especially as I like to think of myself as being a positive person. It seems I am good company as out of sixteen thousand people who took up the challenge only five were able to complete it successfully. Needless to say, it has given me something to work on.

Why not take up the challenge and see how much you complain?

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1. **Every Day Is the Best Day of the Year**



**Quote of the day:**

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Consider:**

What would you feel if you knew it was your last day to live? While considering and reflecting on that question read this story about the novelist, Dostoevsky.

*He told the story of the time he was arrested by the czar, and sentenced to die. The czar played a cruel psychological trick on people who rebelled against his regime by blindfolding them and standing them in front of a firing squad. They heard gunshots go off but felt nothing, and then slowly realized the guns were loaded with blanks. The emotional trauma that went with the process of dying, without experiencing death, had a transforming effect on people. It certainly had an incredible effect on Dostoevsky; He talked about waking up the morning of his mock execution with full assurance that that would be the last day of his life. As he ate his last meal, he savored every bite. Every breath of air he took was taken with an awareness of how precious it was. Every face he saw that day he studied with intensity. He wanted every experience etched on his mind. As they marched him into the courtyard, he felt the sun beating down on him and he appreciated the warmth of the sun as never before. Everything around him seemed to have a magical quality to it. He was seeing the world as he had never been able to see it before. All of his senses were heightened. He was fully alive! After his captors removed his blindfold and he realized he had not been shot; everything about him changed. He became grateful to people he had previously hated. He became thankful for everything about life, but especially for life itself.*

What do you think your life would be like if you were sentenced to death, but then got your life back again? What kind of changes would you make in your life? Why wait for a life and death situation to change? Why not start making those changes now?

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1. **Thanksgiving**

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**Quote of the day**:

“Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul.” — Henry Ward Beecher

**Reflection:**

Thanksgiving is an annual national holiday observed across North America. In the U.S., this holiday, held on the fourth Thursday in November, commemorates the harvest festival celebrated by the Pilgrims in 1621. A similar holiday is held in Canada, on the second Monday in October. In the Netherlands they have a “Dank Dag” or “Thank Day.” It usually takes place on a Sunday, sometime in the fall, when a number of churches dedicate a service to giving thanks for not only the harvest, but all of God’s many blessings.

The actual word “thanksgiving” is defined as an expression of gratitude, especially to God. I like that definition.

Thanksgiving to me means remembering to be thankful for things on a daily basis. Only people can offer thanks to God for life and every other blessing. Other animals can walk upright, some even seem to have the capacity for communicating. But, so far as we know, humans alone have the capacity to realize that we enter the world with nothing and leave with nothing. Everything in between is a gift—and worthy of offering thanks to the One who provides all things.

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1. **New Year Gratitude**

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**Quote of the day:**

"When it comes to life the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.” — Gilbert K. Chesterton

**Reflection:**

It’s a little early to be thinking about the New Year when Christmas has not even come, but seeing as these exercises might take some time and thought I thought it best to send them out early.

At the start of each New Year, most people make their list of resolutions and goals for the year ahead, and move on without taking time to complete the past year. They miss out on the tremendous power of gratitude for all that was accomplished and learned. If you really want to get the New Year off to a brilliant and powerful start, take a few minutes to write down all the things you are thankful for that transpired last year. Then, write down all the things you accomplished, as well as all the challenges or obstacles you overcame, along with the qualities you acquired or developed to overcome the obstacles—things such as patience, persistence, courage, humor, etc. Remember to include business, family, personal and spiritual events, both large and small, because it all counts.

After you have completed your list, sit back and bathe in the good feeling of how very blessed you have been this past year.

If you find it’s difficult to remember all the things you were grateful for, accomplished and overcame, in the coming year you may find it helpful to use your journal to bring things to remembrance. In my journal I have 12 pages set aside–one for each month. This is where I write down all the accomplishments of the month, big and small, as well as all the things that I am thankful for that month, and the major challenges I overcame or am still working on overcoming. This makes doing the end of the year review a breeze.