

**GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION: WANT WHAT YOU HAVE AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE!
(REWIRE YOUR BRAIN TO FEEL ABUNDANT, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENED)**

Appreciation | ə , prē sh ē ' ā sh ən | noun

1. the recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities
2. a full understanding of a situation
3. increase in monetary value

Gratitude | 'gratə,t(y)oōd | noun

1. the quality of being thankful
2. readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness

ORIGIN from Latin *gratitudo* and *grātus*: pleasing, acceptable, agreeable, welcome, dear, beloved, grateful, thankful.

Dr. Rick Hanson, PHD, author and affiliate with the University of California at Berkeley, says that, “At first glance, you may be tempted to underestimate the power of these seemingly simple practices. But they will gradually change your brain through what’s called *experience-dependent neuroplasticity*” (literally and physically).

Dr. Hanson goes on to quote studies, including one that showed (Dusek et al. 2008) “specific gene expression changes” in “people who routinely relax.” We now know that the brain is malleable and that “neurons that fire together, wire together (psychologist Donald Hebb); simply meaning that just like our muscles, the thoughts that we concentrate on will ‘rewire’ our brains.

PART 1 – SO WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

The practice of Appreciation & Gratitude is *very* simple; but the complex challenge is that in order for it to work we must practice it repeatedly. It simply requires that at the end of the day, or the end of the week, we practice Appreciating (building up, counting) what went well in our life.

It’s simple: 5 days a week, write 5 things a night (or morning), for 5 weeks, that you Appreciated or were Grateful for that happened to you that day (me? I came up with ‘hot running water’). The trick is to ask yourself, “What would my life be like if this thing were non-existent?”

Pollyanna | pālēanə | a noun: an excessively cheerful or optimistic person.

What’s the difference between being Grateful or an Appreciator and a Pollyanna? When we appreciate we don’t discount the difficult things that happened throughout the day, *and* we don’t focus on them.

A Pollyanna, on the other hand, is someone who sweetly and excessively attempts to erase the difficult parts of life with a candy sweet unrealistic optimistic viewpoint; that thinks that will make us feel better.

COACH KENJI CPCC, PCC

RIGHT NOW THINK OF 3 THINGS YOU APPRECIATE

... about your work or personal life. Think about it this way: what would your life be like *without* these three things?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

PART 2 – THE DAILY HABIT

Now make this into a daily habit. Do it once a day, 5 days a week, for 5 minutes, for 5 weeks. My challenge to you is see what happens. Just like any “building exercise” (physical or mental) it actually *changes your brain ...*

PART 3 – THE ADVANCED ABC PRACTICE

Write the alphabet A-Z on the left hand column of a page. Now, with X,Y,Q,Z being ‘wildcards’ find 26 things that you Appreciate about that day. Here’s a real life example of some of mine:

Appreciation Technique: has *changed* my life

Bed: my bed is *very* comfortable; if I sleep elsewhere I recall that I have an awesome bed!

Car: I love my car and my life would be pretty limited without it!

Dad: my dad might be 86 and stubborn, but I still have him in my life.

Entertainment: I just love that I have Netflix and books at my fingertips at night.

Fred: was an awesome boss who got me started on a great job)

Gerry: is a great friend who supports me and listens to me when I need to gripe.

Hot running water: this is one of my favorites, can you imagine the end of the day without it?

PART 4 – THE SUPER-POWERFUL TURN-AROUND APPRECIATION/GRATITUDE PRACTICE

What would it be like to take all of the negatives in life and turn them around? (I honestly and seriously don't recommend this practice until you're at the Advanced Appreciation stage). What this means is to remove being a victim from an *entire* day and turning around so that we're 100% responsible for our lives. It, at first, may seem odd, but it's actually an empowering technique that Brian Tracy teaches in his Ultimate Goals Program ("having everything you want").

This means finding a positive Appreciation for all that happens in our daily lives. Here are a few examples:

Parking Tickets: I Appreciate that I pay for paved streets that are cleaned weekly. I'm lucky to live in a developed country that has such luxury. How much it would stink to drive on unpaved roads all day?

Car Accident: I once rear ended a truck with my little Honda, my fault, but I now Appreciate that no one was hurt because of my actions; what a load it would be to carry had I hurt or killed someone. This is called: 'Want what you have' – while seemingly going against our expectations that all things 'bad' 'should' feel negative it's actually possible to re-wire your thoughts to stay focused on the positive.

Illness: Many an illness has taught me that my body needed a rest; and a legitimate one too. It also makes me *really* appreciate it when I'm in good health and has shown me what's important to me in my life: friends, family, and love.

PART 5 – READING HOMEWORK: A GRATITUDE SHIFT – OR HOW TO BE HAPPY WITHOUT PROZAC

Drawn from an article by John Tierney from The New York Times – a reiteration of what's above, kinda

Start with "gratitude lite," the term used by a researcher at the University of California, for the technique used in these pioneering experiments they instructed people to keep a journal listing 5 things for which they felt grateful, like a friend's generosity, something they'd learned, or a sunset they'd enjoyed.

The gratitude journal was brief — just one sentence for each of the five things — and only done once a week, but after 2 months there were significant effects: compared with a control group, the people keeping the gratitude journal were more optimistic and felt happier. They reported fewer physical problems and spent more time working out.

Further benefits were observed in a study of polio survivors and other people with neuromuscular problems. The ones who kept a gratitude journal reported feeling happier and more optimistic than those in a control group, and these reports were corroborated by observations from their spouses. These grateful people also fell asleep more quickly at night, slept longer and woke up feeling more refreshed.

Share the feeling. Why does gratitude do so much good? "More than other emotion, gratitude is the emotion of friendship." "It is part of a psychological system that causes people to raise their estimates of how much value they hold in the eyes of another person. Gratitude is what happens when someone does

COACH KENJI CPCC, PCC

something that causes you to realize that you matter more to that person than you thought you did.” (or value of a thing: our bed, hot running water, our car ... simple things we take for granted).

Try a gratitude visit. This exercise, recommended by Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, begins with writing a 300-word letter to someone who changed your life for the better. Be specific about what the person did and how it affected you. Deliver it in person, preferably without telling the person in advance what the visit is about. When you get there, read the whole thing slowly to your benefactor. “You will be happier and less depressed one month from now,” Dr. Seligman guarantees in his book “Flourish.”

Or try the Gratitude Visit Lite version: write at least 1-5 emails a week to someone you’re grateful for. The trick to doing more of them, then less, is it will stretch you to start appreciating those you take for granted.