

Gratitude

The Heart-beat of Love

A little gratitude goes a long way when it comes to happy marriages

New research validates age-old wisdom: the simple habit of gratitude can transform a jaded marriage into a joyous encounter.

By Marilyn Rodrigues



February 2011

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Gratitude: The Heart-beat of Love

A University of North Carolina study released last month highlighted the association of gratitude with a happy marriage.

Cameron Gordon, the study's lead author, said that the goodwill generated by grateful spouses creates a "reciprocal feedback loop" of marital harmony, helping spouses to view their interactions even on bad days in a positive light.

The participants, 50 couples married for an average of 21 years, reported high relationship satisfaction after feeling gratitude towards their spouse,

whether they had expressed it or not. Gordon said that this showed that gratitude can go hand in hand with marital satisfaction, and that "the more appreciative you are, the happier you'll be".

Another similar study in which couples recorded their daily interactions and feelings about their relationship over a two week period found that gratitude, "may help to turn ordinary moments into opportunities for relationship growth, even in the context of already close, communal relations".



A Story

Developing a positive approach to life generally enhances relationships with our family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues as well. It is often linked to a longer, happier life.

Alice Hertz-Sommer, the oldest Holocaust survivor, lost her entire family except for her son, all of her friends and her family's friends to the Nazi regime in Czechoslovakia. "This (her optimism) is the reason I am so old, even now, I am sure," told the UK's Sunday Express last year after turning 107.

"I know about the bad things, but I look only for the good things. The world is wonderful, it's full of beauty and miracles, art and music."

St Valentine's Day

Reflection for St Valentine's Day

This St Valentine's Day consider these reflection questions for fostering an attitude of gratitude towards your spouse each day:

1. What chores does he (or she) do on a routine basis that I am happy not to have to do myself?

2. What was the nicest thing he (or she) has said or done recently?

3. When do I feel valued by him (or her)?

4. What are two of his (or her) qualities for which I am most grateful?



Tips for an attitude of gratitude

1: Pray for a grateful heart | Our every breath, every heartbeat is sustained by God as a pure and gracious gift. Ask God to point out for you the blessings in your life, to open your eyes to the gifts given to you each day that you might not have noticed before or have taken for granted.

2: Read | Try reading one of the Psalms of thanksgiving, such as Psalm 104, or the autobiographies of people who have thrived despite experiencing great tragedy.

3: Keep a gratitude journal | In the evening jot down three things you were grateful for that day. "Today I was grateful for..." or "The good things which happened today were...". Think about why that event happened, or how it came about. If there is something you can do to help make it happen again, make a plan to do so.

4: Consider those who are less fortunate than yourself | Find out about initiatives in your area which assist people in situations of disadvantage. Is there some way you could involve yourself in supporting them (volunteering, writing a letter to the local MP or media outlet, praying) that you might not have thought of doing before?



Did you know?

...that St Valentine's Day is specifically for married couples?

Australia's bishops have reclaimed the day's original meaning, which was to celebrate the sacredness of marriage. St Valentine was executed in the arena on February 14, 269AD. The Italian bishop's crime was celebrating weddings after the Roman ruler Claudius decreed they be suspended so as to gain more unattached men for his armies.



gratitude

Sources

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'Life is beautiful for holocaust survivor who turns 107' published at Aol News (<http://www.aolnews.com/2010/11/25/life-is-beautiful-for-holocaust-survivor-who-turns-107/>)

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