

Q: Okay, I understand your last article about the law of attraction and how it works. I am interested in learning more and attracting more good things into my life. What do you suggest to take it to the next level?

A: The Law of Attraction can be really fun when you start to play with it. As a quick reminder, the Law of Attraction states that whatever we focus on is what we receive (for more, see my article in Applaud's Spring, 2008 issue). The second element of the Law of Attraction is gratitude. Be thankful. Let the Universe know that we appreciate what we have and we want more. You may not be wealthy, but you are rich in many ways.

Ready to play with this? Here are my top four tips:

1. Make being thankful a habit, create a ritual. Every day, write 3 things for which you are thankful. Consider this research from the Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness (Dimensions and Perspectives of Gratitude: Co-Investigators: Robert A. Emmons, University of California, Davis and Michael E. McCullough, University of Miami):

In an experimental comparison, those who kept gratitude journals on a weekly basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events.

Participants who kept gratitude lists were more likely to have made progress toward important personal goals (academic, interpersonal and health-based) over a two-month period compared to subjects in the other experimental conditions.

Sometimes looking at the bigger picture not only reminds you of how blessed you truly are, but also quiets down the daily 'noise'. Are you healthy? Do you live in a safe environment? If you can say 'yes' to those bigger questions your frustrations may get smaller.

2. It's got to be something you can 'reach' right now. No cheating! If there is a 'but' anywhere in your thank-you then try again. For example, if I write "I'm thankful that my husband emptied the dishwasher" but a voice inside of me says, "Finally! It's about time!" then try again. Perhaps "I'm thankful that my husband heard me ask for help" fits better. If you're struggling with a job you hate, find an element you can appreciate. For example, have you made a good friend or two? Perhaps the job is boring; can you be thankful for having the energy and mind space to research a new career? Shifting your mind chatter from "I hate my job I hate my job..." to "I'm so thankful I have time and energy to look into a new career" is like lifting a black cloud from overhead.
3. Make your gratitude big; I call it the 'Yahoo!' game. Does the parking spot you drive into have time already on the meter? Shout, "Yahoo!" Do you feel a coin in your pocket, notice the ridges on the side? "Yahoo! It's a quarter!" My kids cry, "Mom" when I sing my thankfulness but I know deep down they love it by the smiles on their faces, especially when it's about something they've done. Be silly and have fun!
4. When you are truly thankful for what you have, you take good care of it. Look in your pocketbook or wallet; is your money organized or are you likely to find it bunched up, coins spread throughout? Show the Universe how grateful you are by taking good care of it; put the bills where they belong and sort them by amount.

Each of us is rich in many ways when we stop to appreciate. Give thanks. To each of you, let me say: Merci. Toda. Gracias. Arigato. Thank you.