

Gratitude's Healing Power



By Julia Chiappetta
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Are you feeling stressed by work, family, and gift-shopping as we head into Christmas?

What if you could alleviate stress with one simple solution?

Well, that simple solution is called gratitude.

Please consider taking a short break and writing down all the things you are grateful for today. Surely, for most of us that list would be substantial, and might highlight for us the things we take for granted or don't appreciate enough.

Studies have shown that people who regularly practice feeling thankful have a leg up when it comes to their health says Robert Emmons, a psychology professor at the University of California at Davis. He has been a leading researcher in the growing field, termed "positive psychology." His research has found that those who adopt an "attitude of gratitude" as a

permanent state of mind experience many health benefits and people who are grateful are more likely to:

- Take better care of their bodies
- Exercise on a regular basis
- Make healthy diet choices
- Have a positive, optimistic outlook for the future
- Schedule regular check-ups with their doctor
- Cope better with daily stress
- Have stronger immune systems

So, why not start today and give thanks for all that you have? I usually do this during my morning prayer time, thanking God for my body, my mind, my health, my eyes, physical strength, legs to run and walk with, a home that offers a roof over my head, the clothes I wear, the car I drive, the food I eat, the money to purchase all of these items, my family, my mom, brother, sister, nieces and nephews, my boyfriend and his son, my friends, work colleagues, the business opportunities that bless me, this column, and the gift of each day that affords opportunities to encourage and help others.

I find that my attitude changes when my focus is outside of myself and on others. For me this brings a sense of joy and happiness that takes away any pain or sadness I may be feeling. Writing in a journal helps as well because it allows one to look back a day, a month or a year and realize the impact and or healing power that may take place by acknowledging

gratefulness. That said, I believe that gratitude should be a part of any health or wellness protocol, up there with a shot of wheat grass, smoothie, green drink, coconut oil, alkaline water, chia seeds, etc. It provides fuel to our soul like superfoods do to our body. So try starting your day with a daily shot of gratitude and experience the peace that it will bring.

At this time of the year, I sit in wonder at the amazing gift of God's son born in a manger on a starry night some 2,000 years ago. This was the ultimate gift from God for mankind and it makes me grateful for God's love in my life. Let's give gift of gratitude along with a dash of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control to ourselves and to others. Merry Christmas, everyone!

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