

Giving thanks is perhaps the most important key to finding success and happiness. Expressing gratitude puts us in a positive frame of mind. When we give thanks, we are connected to the presence of Spirit within us and in the world around us.

Research demonstrates that focusing on what we are grateful for is associated with greater happiness, increased optimism, positive emotions, new and lasting relationships, improved physical health, more progress toward personal goals, fewer aches and pains, more alertness and determination, increased generosity, better sleep, and improved self-esteem.

Here are some ways that you can use gratitude to experience happiness:

1. Give Thanks in Advance

When we give thanks in advance of receiving our good, it is like making a deposit into a spiritual bank account. Giving thanks in advance opens us up to receiving.

2. Be Willing to Receive

Often we are reluctant to receive. We might think that we are unworthy or do not need anything. The cycle of giving and receiving requires participation in both. If we refuse to receive, we do not allow the other person the pleasure of giving and our pleasure of receiving.

3. Be Thankful for what You Already Have

Giving thanks sends a message to the universe that we appreciate what we have. In return, the universe sends us more. Oprah Winfrey wrote, *Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.* Eckhart Tolle wrote, *Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance.*

4. Experience Gratitude Now

Let yourself experience gratitude today. Rick Hanson gives this advice, *To reap the rewards of gratitude, rest your attention on a good fact, noticing details about it, staying with it for at least a few seconds in a row. Then allow a natural emotional response of gratitude to arise. Continue to pay attention to this feeling of gratitude for another few seconds – or even longer: it's delicious! Taking these few extra seconds will help you weave gratitude into the fabric of your brain and your Self. And you can practice gratitude both on the fly, as you move through your day, and at specific occasions, such as at meals or just before bed.* Thich Nhat Hanh said, *Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet.*

5. Give with Gratitude to Those Who Feed You

Give to people and organizations that spiritually feed you. When we give of our time, talent and treasure to those who spiritually feed us, we contribute to their continued existence and prosperity. We also proclaim to ourselves and the universe that we value our spiritual development. The universe responds by saying, *Yes! Here is more of what you love.*

Affirmation: *Thank you, God, for all the prosperity in my life. I know that more good is coming to me right now.*