

The Pathway of Gratefulness

When I step on to the Pathway of Gratefulness, I open to receive the flow of blessing AND I am connected up with the source of that flow. Gratefulness opens up the possibility of a profound and transforming relationship with the gift of Creation and Incarnation.

Meister Eckhart said that “If the only prayer you ever say is ‘Thank You’ that would be enough.” Yet I still need to say or sing that prayer. It’s not enough just to feel gratefulness.

On the Pathway of Gratefulness, I let the words of prayer send me, and then I let all those words go. (Imagine a multi-stage rocket launching into outer space, leaving behind its launch-pad, dropping each of its now empty burned out boosters, continuing on to meet the unknown with a lighter precious payload into the mysterious darkness of space.)

The experience of gratefulness opens a door and leads me towards greater aliveness. That state of full, abundant, overflowing aliveness is radiant with mystery and paradox. So many of the Psalms are about gratefulness because, if I find that quality, I will have access to the energy that I need to for my spiritual practice. Gratefulness is the foundation of my practice, because it wakes me up and gives me the strength and clarity to face my challenges, resistances and obstacles. The Pathway of Gratefulness sends me to meet those challenges.

If my obstacle to gratefulness is cynicism or fear or a sense of entitlement or attachment to preferences or preoccupation with details, I might look for practices that blow my mind with wonder and rapture, and open me to the Great Mystery.

If my obstacle to gratefulness is bitterness, anger, sadness, a lack of trust or self-pity, I might look for practices of heart-healing that will help me to address old patterns and wounds, to clear the harmful and poisonous residue from the past.

As I begin clearing the obstacles to gratefulness, the flow is restored; the pathway is cleared.

The flow of Gratefulness begins with a sense of surprise. You might be stopped in your tracks by a rainbow or a sunrise or the most ordinary sight of a child playing or your partner deep in thought. Unexpectedly, the beauty, poignancy, sweetness and depth of a moment touches you and you are suddenly **ALIVE**; the world around you takes on a shimmer and a mystery.

Gratefulness, beginning in surprise, gradually expands into a sense of wonder. When you are in a state of wonder, you remember what a miracle this life is. You are able to actually enjoy the absurdities; you let yourself be astounded by the enormity of Creation; your mind is blown by synchronicities, coincidences and a glimpse of the infinite. Then your heart opens. From a state of wonder it's impossible to judge another or commit a crime against this amazing Creation.

Gratefulness, beginning in surprise, expanding into wonder, gradually grows into generosity as we look for ways to respond to this gift of life that we are given. Our eyes are opened to the suffering around us, and we realize that "we" are not separate from "them;" we are all a part of this gorgeous tapestry...and as even one thread unravels, the whole pattern is diminished. We stop judging one another and start serving each other. We look for ways to give, in response to how much we have received. The Pathway of Gratefulness sends us to discover our innate generosity. This is how the world is healed.

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