

A change in attitude can change the course of the day

By Mandy Kendall

I don't know about you, but I was struck by a number of emotions when the snow finally started falling. I was excited as I thought of all the wonderful days of skiing ahead, I had that feeling of joy, that snow has always inspired in me ever since I was a child. And I felt relief for all those people who rely on the snow for their livelihood. However, my overriding feeling was one of gratitude, for all the beauty that surrounds us and all that I have to be thankful for.

This, often overlooked, emotion is a very powerful mental state that releases Dopamine in our brains, giving us that "warm fuzzy" feeling and generally affecting our health and wellbeing in a positive way.



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According to the Happy U Life website, research shows that practicing gratitude may be the fastest single pathway to happiness, health, long life, and prosperity. People exercised more, drank less alcohol and were nicer to be around.

We all have something to be thankful for, even during the darkest of moments. But, like anything we do, if it's not practiced in our daily lives, it is often neglected or even forgotten.

Here are a few *Qwik-e tips* to help make sure that there is a little gratitude in your life every day:

- Write 5-10 things that you are grateful for. Don't stop at 10 if you can think of more. Have them by your bed and read through them last thing at night and/or first thing in the morning. Maybe start a journal and add to your list on a daily or weekly basis. Doing this is scientifically proven to make you feel better.
- Try having a "Today, I'm grateful for..." conversation with family or friends, at dinner perhaps, and talk about the things you are thankful for. It can be incredibly uplifting to tell someone that you are grateful for them being in your life.
- Overwhelmed by things? Take a few moments to refocus on something that you are grateful for; a loved one, those new shoes, your wonderful surroundings. It will help lift your thoughts away from where they might be sinking to.
- Thank someone – with a hug, a smile, a nod. If it's done at the right time and in the right way, they will get the message without you having to say a word. In today's world of emails and texts, a hand written note or a small thoughtful gift (homemade cookies perhaps) is a great way of showing someone how grateful you are.
- Say thank you. Whether you believe in a higher power or not, you might be quite surprised how good it makes you feel to say thank you, even if it's just to yourself. A thank you for that parking space that opened up just at the right time, for that unexpected call from an old friend, or the accident that was averted just in time. There are usually many times during the day when a heartfelt thank you (to yourself or out loud) is just the thing to help you remember there is a lot to be thankful for.

Until next time!

Mandy Kendall operates Health Connective in South Lake Tahoe. If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at healthconnective@gmail.com, visit us on Facebook, or keep an eye out on Lake Tahoe News for regular Qwik-e tips on how to make healthy changes one Quick and Easy step at a time.