

The Blog

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TIPS FOR TRANSFORMATION

5 Takes on Gratitude to Lift Your Attitude By Reena De Asis [Follow @givingcore](#)

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How do you experience the ups of life when you are down? Shift your focus on the healing power of gratitude. Certain life experiences, like losing your job or ending a relationship, can jolt us out of our comfort zone. I experienced both this year and I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. Florence + the Machine's Shake It Out song says it best, "It's always darkest before the dawn." Life challenges can be like a rebirth. Life transitions are opportunities to conduct a personal life inventory. It's a chance for us to slow down and ask ourselves: what's working, what's not working, what can we do to change things and what are we thankful for. In life, accept that you have no control of certain circumstances or outcomes. However, what you do have control of is to live in gratitude. It will require discipline to count your blessings versus wallowing in what you don't have. The self-training is worth it. "Your life may be hard, but there's people worse off than you. Always. Be patient. Your life will improve." ~Anonymous

Try these tips below for a refreshing perspective:

Be Grateful for Documentaries : Documentaries that are thought-provoking, heart-tugging and enlightening can help you put your life into perspective. I'm a huge fan of Participant Media and their selection of films and social action campaigns. In particular, I was moved by Angels in the Dust, a story about hope and healing in the face of a staggering crisis: children infected with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Imagine how it feels to be an orphan infected with HIV/AIDS. These children struggle to get their physiological and safety needs met, as they yearn for unconditional love. If you are able to accept that suffering and hope are universal truths, you can adapt to life's challenges with more ease. Be inspired by peoples' spirited life journey and choose not to be defeated by hardships.

Appreciate the Joys of Volunteering : One of my fondest volunteer activities is leading an art empowerment workshop for the Downtown Women's Center in Skid Row. It enlivens me to create vision boards or gratitude journals with women who have depth and resilience. As Up With Women USA reports, the majority of homeless people are simply ordinary singles or families who have fallen on difficult times, whether through poverty, domestic violence and lack of affordable housing. Consider combining your passion, skills and talents as a volunteer. It is fulfilling to actively demonstrate your commitment to a cause. You will lift yourself and others up. Try these three sites to find volunteer opportunities near you: VolunteerMatch, HandsOn Network and Idealist.

Thank Goodness for Children : It is true when Giacomo Leopardi, Zibaldone Scelto said, "Children find everything in nothing; men find nothing in everything." Children's curiosity in action fascinates me. They remind us that life doesn't have to be so complicated. They encourage us to live in the moment. Let yourself be creative and discover a simpler perspective in life. Share funny stories with friends of what you've said as a child or perhaps what your own children have said. WebMD suggests: smile out loud...it's good for your health. Life is like a playground; make time to be a big kid. Take a daily recess to be thankful that you've come so far. Life wasn't fair as a child nor is it now; yet today, you have more wisdom and resources!

Give Tribute to Knowledge : Keep up to date on social issues and grounding facts. According to Stop Hunger Now, almost half the world – over 3 billion people - lives on less than \$2.50. Ask yourself if you could live on less than \$2.50 a day? Let's say you get paid an hourly job in the U.S., your state's minimum wage is at least three times more than what billions of other people make in a day! If you are unhappy with work or are unemployed, pick yourself up and create an action plan. Remind yourself that everything in life is temporary. You're already living a more advantageous life than so many. It's healthy to think of realities beyond the parameters of our day-to-day life. It allows us to open our hearts and minds. Subscribe to non-profit newsletters, alternative news outlets and stay up to date on current events.

Acknowledge Positive Confidants : I enrich my life by choosing to have quality people in my circle. I find that connecting with positive people inspires me to let my light shine. They too have their struggles, yet are beacons of strength and courage. Select core family members or friends to lift you to your higher ground. Most important, believe in and be friends with yourself. Nurture your relationships and build a strong support system. When I think of former Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford's journey to recovery, it's beautiful to witness the support she is receiving. After a near-fatal gunshot wound in the head, she was hospital bound for 5 months. Her husband, loved ones and speech-language pathologists played a critical role in encouraging her to regain her ability to communicate. Her determination and sense of humor is admirable.

Appreciate and work with what you have. You're never given anything you can't handle. "If you don't get what you want, you suffer; if you get what you don't want, you suffer; even when you get exactly what you want, you still suffer because you can't hold on to it forever." ~Dan Millman, Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A Book That Changes Lives.

Life is short, live in gratitude.