

NUTRITION AND LIFESTYLE



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TAKE A MOMENT FOR GRATITUDE

By Lizzie Johnson, Health Coach

SUMMARY: Expressions of gratitude have positive psychological and physiologic benefits. In this article Lizzie explores the expression of gratitude for the entire ecosystem involved in food, water and air. She offers practical methods to express gratitude at each meal.

Introduction

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. It turns problems into gifts, failures into successes, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. It can turn an existence into a real life, and disconnected situations into important and beneficial lessons. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for

today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.” —Melody Beattie, *The Language of Letting Go*¹

Gratitude benefits our health and the wellbeing of the world, especially when it is expressed regarding our food. Reflection on our interconnectedness with the world cultivates gratitude. When we reflect on the essential elements that the earth and its inhabitants provide for life, we step into a greater appreciation of interdependency and meaningful connection amongst all beings.

Two fundamental elements needed for human life are water and air. In our busy, task-driven world, we seldom pause to think about these two fundamental elements. That is only the beginning of the essential elements of life and production of food. Food requires sunlight, water, soil, farmers, and a chain of workers (often from other countries) to deliver it to our local markets. Nourishment requires effort from people around us to bring it to our table. We are dependent on each other and on the environment for life. Recognizing this connection requires a level of psychological insight and openness to connect with others in a web of life. It allows us to see clearly the impact that the earth and the people around us have on our health and our ability to thrive. The true abundance and beauty of the earth may be beyond our conception.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF GRATITUDE

Gratitude is not just an abstract psychological state. There are specific [neural networks within the brain](#) that are activated during the act of gratitude.² Gratitude can have a positive impact on health as measured by [reduced inflammation](#) (interleukin-6).³ Optimism and gratitude are correlated with improved well-being, even in the face of [severe disease](#),⁴ and a lower incidence of [depression](#).⁵

The process of being grateful is simple to grasp, but requires [genuine feelings](#) to be effective.⁶ gratitude. Begin with the simple practice of noticing. Enlist all the senses to uncover the abundant and beautiful resources around you. Notice, what you see, smell, taste, hear, feel and with an expression of gratitude

put language to it. What we notice creates the framework for the reality we experience: *"What we appreciate, appreciates."*

5 DAILY EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE YOU CAN BEGIN TODAY

Before eating, express out loud gratitude for all 5 of the categories below:

1. The air you breath
2. The water you drink
3. Soil and the organisms enhancing it
4. People and animals that have contributed to the food on your plate in any way
5. The energy and beauty it offers you

Be as specific as you can about your gratitude. For example, "I am grateful for the oxygen that fuels my cells and allows me to extract energy from nutrients" is a greater expression of gratitude than "I'm grateful for oxygen." Try to express how the abundance makes you feel, or what you appreciate as an outcome of the particular abundance in your life.

Conclusions

Endobiogeny recognizes the importance of gratitude as part of regulating a health digestive system (c.f. [The Theory of Endobiogeny, Vol.2](#), p.92).⁷ This simple lifestyle recommendation is cross-cultural and universally applicable as a simple, health-giving act of positive psychology. ✱

About the Author

"Lizzie Johnson is a mother of 4 children, a professional Health and Life Coach, a Fitness Trainer, and a Social Worker (BS). She lives in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA with her husband Adam. She is passionate about listening, rhythmic living, and holistic eating. Her coaching practice is devoted to helping clients create personalized systems that move them towards healthier ways of living."

CONFLICTS

No conflicts of interest.

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