

MAYB ABELSON

WOODS OF  
GRATITUDE

There is a danger in the word "someday" when what it means is "not this day". The clarity of delaying is that we may discover that we have run out of time. "Someday I will" can be a thief of the opportunities of time and the blessings of eternity. It is a lie that our anger justifies our impulse to hurt or ignore our antagonists. Time is never for sale; time is a commodity that cannot, try as you may, be bought at any store for any price. Yet when time is unwisely used, its value is immeasurable.

On any given day, we are all allocated, without cost, the same number of minutes and hours to use, and we soon learn that time flies on wings of lightening and we cannot call it back. The poor use of time is a close cousin to idleness. We must be sure that being busy also equates to being productive. We feel encompassed by the disappointment of shattered dreams and the despair of vanished hopes. We feel abandoned, heartbroken and alone. We are inclined to view our own personal misfortunes through the distorted prism of pessimism.

Often our grief is caused by what seems to it as an ending. We become impatient for a solution to our problems forgetting that frequently virtue: Patience. The difficulties which come to us present us with the real test of our ability to endure. A fundamental question remains to be unanswered by each of us. Shall I falter, or shall I finish? Some do falter as they find themselves unable to rise above their challenges. To finish involves enduring to the very end of life itself.



Sometimes our sorrows seem to reach the very depths of our soul. Sooner or later, maybe most of us may experience times when the very fabric of our world tears at the seams, leaving us feeling alone, frustrated, and adrift. It can happen to anyone. No one is immune. Everyone's situation is different, and the details of each life are unique. Nevertheless, there is something that would take away the bitterness that may come into our lives. There is one thing we can do to make life sweeter, more joyful, and even glorious.

That is; we can be Grateful! Those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude: in that, we can find purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding, But some might say “ What do I have to be grateful for when my world is falling apart?” Perhaps we focus on what we are grateful for in the wrong approach. It is difficult to develop a spirit of gratitude if our thankfulness is only proportional to the number of blessings we can count.

True, it is important to frequently “count our blessings”-and anyone who has tried this knows there are many. It is easy to be grateful for things when life seems to be going your way. But, what then of those times when what we wish for seems to be far out of reach? Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I’m suggesting that instead of being thankful for things, we should focus on being thankful for our circumstances-whatever they may be.

The choice is ours. We choose to limit our gratitude, based on the blessings we feel we lack. Or we can choose to be the one whose grateful heart never faltered. We can choose to be like the one who had everything but then lost it all. Truly, life is beautiful. Do you take time to discover each day how beautiful your life can be? How long has it been since you watched the sunset? The departing rays kissing the clouds, tree, hills, and lowlands good night, sometimes tranquilly, sometimes with exuberant bursts of color and form.



What a wonder of cloudless night, the twinkling stars, the moonlight rays- to ignite our imagination. How captivating to watch a seed planted in fertile soil germinate, gather strength, and send forth a tiny, seemingly insignificant sprout. Patiently, it begins to grow and develop its own character led by the genetic code which has been provided to guide its development. With care it surely becomes what it is destined to be: a lily, crowned with grace and beauty; a fragrant spearmint plant; a peach; an avocado; a beautiful blossom with unique delicacy, hue and fragrance.

When last did you observe a tiny rosebud form?

Each day, it develops new and impressive character, more promise of beauty until it becomes majestic rose.

Sadness, disappointment and severe challenge are events in life, not life itself. I do not minimize how hard some of these events are.

They can extend over a long period of time, but they should not be allowed to become the confining center of everything we do. A pebble held close to the eye appears to be a gigantic obstacle.

Cast on the ground, it is seen in perspective. Otherwise they can easily overtake our vision, absorb our energy and deprive us of the joy and beauty designed for us. Some people are like rocks thrown into the sea of problems. They are drowned by them. Be a cork. When submerged in a problem, fight to be free to bob up to serve again with happiness. You are here on earth for a divine purpose. It is not to be endlessly entertained or to be constantly in full pursuit of pleasure. Children teach us how to find joy even under the most challenging circumstances. Children haven't yet learned to be depressed by concentrating on the things they don't have.

They find joy in what is available to them:  
The simple and rejuvenating experiences  
surrounding them. They can be safety valves  
to keep the tension down and the spirit up.  
Don't concentrate on what you don't have or  
have lost. Select something like music,  
dance, sculpture, weaving, or poetry. Being  
creative will help you enjoy life. It  
engenders a spirit of gratitude. It develops  
latent talents, sharpens your capacity to  
reason, to act, and to find a purpose to  
live. It dispels loneliness and heartache  
and It gives a renewal, a spark of  
enthusiasm and zest for life.



No matter how difficult something you or a loved one faces, it should not take over your life and be the center of all your interest. Challenges are growth experiences, temporary scenes to be played out on the background of a pleasant life. Don't become so absorbed in a single event that you can't think of anything else or care for yourself or for those who depend on you. Remember, much like the mending of the body, the healing of some spiritual and emotional challenges takes time.

We always talk about counting our blessings-let's do it!

Write a list of 50 things you are thankful for.

Some might think that is too many. If that is the case, try this;

Write 20 living people you are grateful for

Write 10 physical abilities you are grateful for

Write 10 things about nature you are grateful for

Write 10 places on earth you are grateful for.

when we make a list like this, we discover that a list of 100 doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of all the things we have. How do we resolve the imbalance of the mind by understanding the nature of reality?

Too much negativity can restrict the mind. Also, by not understanding the nature of reality can cause a person to feel so miserable and meaningless that he takes his own life, To prevent ourselves from experiencing more suffering, we must practice Self-evaluation. When it is used and understood, it has dramatically far-reaching effects which can transform an individual's life from maudlin, common everyday activities to a symphony of joy and happiness and it has the capacity to discover hidden character-building which is not a product of logic.

We become what we want to be by consistently being what we want to become each day. Someone has called this the "me" generation—a selfish time when everyone seems to be asking, what's in it for me? The worldly aspiration of our day is to get something for nothing. "It's all about me". That corrupting attitude produces no change and no growth.



This is not to say that we should abandon hope or temper our goals. Never stop striving for the best that is within you. Never stop hoping for all of the righteous desires of your heart. But don't close your eyes and hearts to the simple and elegant beauties of each day's ordinary moments that make up a rich, well lived life. The happiest people may not be those who find their golden ticket: they are those who, while in pursuit of worthy goals, discover and treasure the beauty and sweetness of the everyday moments.

They are the ones who, thread by daily thread and weave a tapestry of gratitude. The great question of the twenty-first century is, how can I acquire wealth? No question occupies a larger place in the minds and...hearts..of..people today than this.

This is true of men in every station and in every walk of life. "Money in and itself is not evil. Money is a necessity" There are some of the wealthy who deal with their prosperity very well using their resources to bless others.

For many, however, wealth presents major difficulties. As we deal with the materialism that threatens us, here are some suggestions for each of us to consider: First, we should not confuse wants with needs.

Secondly, we should avoid spoiling children by giving them too much. In our day, many children grow up with distorted value because we as parents overindulge them.

Whether you are well-to-do or of modest means, we as parents often attempt to provide children with almost everything they want thus taken away from them the blessing of anticipation and longing for something they don't have. One of the most important things we can teach our children is to deny themselves. Instant gratification is generally not made for weak people. How many truly great individuals do you know who never had to struggle? A few of our wonderful youth and adults are unstretched.



They have almost a free pass. Perks are provided, including cars complete with fuel and insurance all paid for by parents who sometimes listen in vain for a few courteous and appreciative words. What is thus taken for granted...tends to undermine selfishness and a sense of entitlement. A wise young mother said "I choose not to give my children what I can afford to give them. I hold back for their sake." Children who always get what they want will want as long as they live.

And somewhere along the line, it is important for the character development of our children to learn that "the earth still revolves around the sun and not around them. Rather we should train our children to ask themselves the question, how is the world a better place because they are in it? We live in a world of entertainment in full color with lot of fast action, a world in which many children grow up thinking that if it isn't fun, it is boring and not worthwhile. Even in family activities, we need to strike a balance between play and work. As a consequence of overindulgence, many children leave homes ill-prepared to meet the real world.

Of course, we need to earn a living. It is important that we qualify ourselves to be self-reliant. In many cases, we are rearing children who are slaves to expensive fads and fashions. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". How do we determine where our treasure is? To do so, we need to evaluate the amount of time, money and thought we devote to something. Might it not be well to evaluate how much focus we place on shopping and spending? This is not to mean that our children should not dress in some of the appropriate clothing that is in fashion because that can be very important to them. But they don't need a closet full.

We have a responsibility to present ourselves in a well groomed, attractive, and modest manner. With good planning, this can be done without driven to spend extravagantly on our clothing. Secondly, we have to live modest and avoid debt as if it were a plague. If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within your means, and if there is any one thing that is grinding, and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet. "Do not accustom yourself to consider debt as a convenience, you will find it (to be) a calamity".



How much house do we really need to accommodate our family comfortably? We should not endanger ourselves either spiritually or economically by acquiring homes which are ostentatious, feed our vanity, and go far beyond our needs. If we are to be self-reliant and in a position to share, obviously, we must acquire some resources. If we live within our means and avoid debt, resources can be accumulated. There are those with average income who, over a lifetime, do amass some means, and there are those who receive large salaries who do not.



What is the difference? It is simply spending less than they receive, saving along the way, and taking advantage of the power of compound interest. Financial consultants indicate that "most people have it all wrong about wealth..Wealth is not the same as income. If you make a good income each year and spend it all, you are not getting wealthier. You are just living high. Wealth is what you accumulate, not what you spend"

THE END