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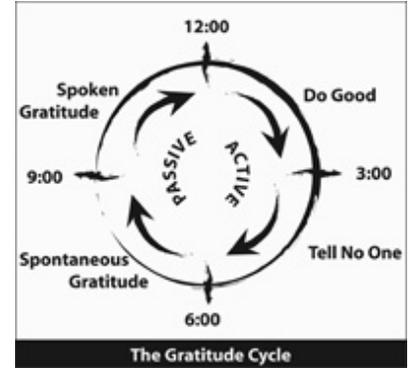
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The Gratitude Cycle

by Rebbie Straubing



We usually think of gratitude as an acknowledgement of our joyful receiving.

We say, "Thank you," and it's over. That is about as active as it gets.

Once the receiving has been fulfilled and the thanks spoken, you can increase your resonance with your own gratitude by acting on it. The action of gratitude is the act of giving.

Giving keeps the receiving-giving cycle flowing. Like a wheel, it gathers speed and becomes a blur. In the same way that you cannot distinguish each spoke on the wheels of your child's bicycle as she zooms by, when you get the gratitude wheel spinning nicely, you lose track of whether you are giving or receiving and simply spin in a hum of gratitude. It is a magnificent ride and it will get you anywhere you want to go.

The Cycle

It can begin anywhere, but let's start with your receiving. You receive a gift or you notice the beauty and bounty of your world or you feel the love of your friends and family and you spontaneously feel gratitude. Gratitude rises in you like the bottom of a wheel lifting off the ground as the wheel starts rolling forward. It goes from the 6:00 point to the 9:00 point on its journey with no effort at all.

With your conscious cultivation of gratitude and your spoken thanks, it rises to the 12:00 position. This is where most people leave it. It appears to be complete and it eventually rolls back down. That round of gratitude, wonderful though it was, is over.

Active Gratitude

The second half of the cycle is rarely spoken. It is the active half. People don't pay attention to it. Most don't even know it exists.

It does exist and when applied with energy and awareness, it keeps the wheel going. It transforms the wheel into a vehicle and it converts gratitude into a way of life.

Here's how it works: At the top of the cycle, at 12:00, the passive aspect of gratitude turns into its active counterpart, which is service. Fueled by the energy of your

gratitude, you take action in a way that helps someone else. Instead of letting the sweet energy of your sincere gratitude dissipate, you are converting it into its kinetic form and using it for good. You are churning your gratitude into service. This takes you to the 3:00 position.

The final quarter of the cycle is the key. It is the most important part because when the wheel hits its starting position once again at the 6:00 point, if there is not enough momentum, it will stop.

The momentum gathered in the final quarter can actually turn the wheel again. It can hoist you into another spontaneous rising of gratitude that sets the wheel in motion one more time. And this round will have a little more oomph and a little more speed.

The secret of the fourth quarter of the cycle is that you tell no one. You "do good in secret." This is the pump that keeps the wheel going. Instead of dissipating the energy of your action by talking about it, you channel it back into the cycle. The strange thing about this is that by keeping your beneficial actions a secret, you become grateful for the opportunity to serve and the wheel rises again as gratitude. Your wheel gains momentum with each turn it takes.

The more times it cycles, the faster it goes and the happier you get. It becomes effortless, like gliding.

This spin perpetuates itself in a flow of giving and receiving that energizes you. It brightens your life. If you get this spin to a state where you cannot distinguish when you are giving and when you are receiving, you become like a gyroscope. You become unshakably balanced and a lot of fun to be with. Happy cycling.

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