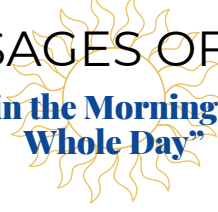




SEVEN MESSAGES OF GRATITUDE

“Just 5-Minutes in the Morning Can Impact Your Whole Day”



DAY 1: “THE STRUGGLE ENDS WHEN GRATITUDE BEGINS”

At different points in life, we will all experience struggles. I think that the life cycle is like a roller coaster with various ups and downs. It's like someone once told me about selling, don't get too high on the good days, and don't get too low on the bad days. One of the ways to really combat the struggle, the low days if you will, is to use gratitude to blunt its impact. **By being grateful and focusing on all you have, the negativity seems to be rendered less painful.** A gratitude journal is such a great way to fight off the negative gamma rays of life. It's never going to be perfect, or 100%, so use that journal to remind you every day of your blessings and abundance. If you write in your gratitude journal consistently, you will notice that the struggle will end when gratitude begins.



DAY 2: "I'M THE PRIZE"

I overheard two people talking the other day about how one of their children had no self-esteem and they thought it was so sad. That triggered the thought of how it seems in our society you just can't win the self-esteem game. On the one hand, it is so sad that the child has no self-esteem, in yet in the next breath you have a person say “Well he sure thinks highly of himself, or he is so conceited, confident, cocky, or just plain arrogant.” So, I guess there must be some middle ground that we are all striving for. **When we embrace gratitude, we focus entirely on what we have in our life.** When you pair that with getting and maintaining a great relationship with yourself, you may just be able to find that middle ground. Maybe like so many things, there is a happy medium. In fact, the next time you look in the mirror, quietly say to yourself....I'm the Prize. You might be surprised to notice how much that positively impacts your self-esteem.



DAY 3: “GOOD DAYS, BAD DAYS, & GOING HALF MAD DAYS”

A number of years ago, Jimmy Buffett wrote a song that included the lyrics.... I've Had Good Days, Bad Days, and Going Half Mad Days. The more people that I connect with when I talk about gratitude, I continue to be struck by how many people seem to struggle. **When we get to talk one on one, we usually come to the conclusion that life does indeed include good days, bad days, and going half mad days.** The key is to get through the bad days and going half mad days. In fact, that may be one of the better ways to gauge the measure of a person, and that is how they handle adversity. It's so easy to be happy when everything is working. So, during those tough times, use gratitude to frame your life and to keep you focused on everything that you have in your life.



DAY 4: “MANAGING YOUR CHALLENGES”

As you spend enough time on this earth, you get to a point when you realize that challenges and problems are a part of life and they will always be there. I think one of the goals is to have better quality problems...Some people have a problem of whether to pay the electric bill or the gas bill. Other people have a problem deciding to go to Hawaii or Bermuda. Challenges and problems may shift, but I think if you look back at your life, they never completely go away. One great strategy would be to recognize that they will always be there in some form, and to learn how to manage them. Managing your problems, managing your challenges, or for that matter, managing your state, is made much easier by embracing an attitude of gratitude. When you frame everything from a standpoint of what you have, it is much easier to persevere and get things behind you. I met a gentleman the other day who mentioned that he smiles, and it just seems to make a difference. Anything that can alter your state from a negative one to a positive one is a good thing. IF you continue to look at how to manage things, especially with an emphasis on gratitude, it might just make things easier to handle.



DAY 5: “IF YOU RETIRE, YOU EXPIRE”

About once a week, when I am giving a presentation, speech, keynote, or whatever on gratitude I get the comment.... This is great...How long have you been retired? I start to say, “I'm not retired, but then I think what difference does it make? I wanted to be a speaker my entire life, it just took me a little longer than other people to realize my dream. Because we all have our own journey, I have learned to not judge people for the journey that they chose for themselves. I do however feel that there are certain circumstances where retiring can lead to a life of unfulfilled expectations and loss of purpose. If you retire, you expire, speaks to the people that have lost their purpose, and maybe their passion. Many people have succeeded and been more fulfilled with their 2nd or 3rd career. Focus on what you are grateful for, and maybe that will guide you to what you're ultimate purpose was meant to be. If you focus on what you're passionate about, like I have in spreading the word of gratitude.... you too may avoid the pitfall of...If you retire, you expire.



DAY 6: “CUT ‘EM LOOSE”

I remember back in college having a few beers with a friend, and having him say, “Why did you let me have that last beer?” My mind immediately went to wondering why it was my responsibility to monitor the beer intake of my friend. Later in life, it has occurred to me that most people ultimately do what they want to do. Ultimately, you can't want something for someone more than they want it for themselves. I have twisted so many arms on the value and impact of embracing gratitude as a way to cope with the stresses of life, and yet those people still find a long list of things to complain about. Finally, I've realized that people will accept gratitude as a fantastic coping mechanism, when they are good and ready. That may be tomorrow or never..... It's up to them...If you find someone that constantly discounts your thoughts, ideas, or ways to cope in a healthy way, it may be time to “Cut ‘em Loose.”



DAY 7: IT'S NOT LISTENING, IT'S WAITING TO TALK”

As I have gotten older, I have noticed that it is getting harder and harder to find someone that is just willing to listen to you without interrupting, commenting, interjecting, or just plain making an attempt to turn the conversation into a story or something about them. It's Not Listening, It's Waiting to Talk, seems to describe the way people listen these days. Larry King said when he retired that the biggest lesson he learned was that: You can't learn anything when you are talking. I have noticed that when I listen extremely carefully and use statements like “Tell Me More” people will think you are the nicest person they've met. When we embrace gratitude in our lives and focus on all that we are grateful for, one of the aspects that pop up the most is our gratitude for our friends. The best way to maintain friendships is to show a genuine concern for your friend, and realize that if you want to help yourself, help others...like your friends. Many times, the best way to help your friends is to just listen...NOTHING else.....just listen. Try it...You'll be amazed and grateful.