

Ep #19: Practicing Gratitude



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Lori A. Harris

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You're listening to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. I'm your host Lori A. Harris, and this is episode number 19. Let's get it going.

Welcome to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast, a podcast for highly successful visionary women who want more out of life. If you feel that ache of unfulfillment in your soul, you're in the right place sis. Join life mastery consultant Lori A. Harris as she teaches you how to stop living for others and finally put yourself first. Let's dive into today's show.

Welcome back friends. Today at the time of this recording I'm having a very interesting reaction to kind of a difficult day. I fell earlier this morning and broke a bone in my hand. After the initial shock and once I got a little assistance from my family to get to the emergency room, I had a very strange reaction. I was filled with love and gratitude. I don't really know what came over me, but I was just so moved.

I watched the radiologist do my x-rays, and I was intrigued with seeing the interior of my body in a way that I don't generally get to see it. I was reminded of the miracle that is the human body and how we come into being from mere specs in this very highly sophisticated system comes together. All I was observing was a little bit of a photograph, an x-ray, of my hand. I was nearly moved to tears.

It's such a great and beautiful life. I was just so grateful to be able to be at a wonderful health facility being treated with such care and kindness and efficiency. Life was just really, really good. Although I was in tremendous pain, I could simultaneously be in awe of the wonder that is my body. Even in the pain, I knew that my body was working hard to address the mishap, the pain that I was experiencing. Trying to figure it out and saying, "Well, what can we do to bring everything back into stasis?" So I was grateful.

I think it's that time of year. We're supposed to be grateful. It is the fall. It is officially November. It is one of my favorite times of year. Though that time

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in North America can be conflicted because of our relationship with our First Nation brothers and sisters, I choose to focus on the fact that all over North America for a period of three to four days people stop and pause and think about what they're grateful for. That is a good thing. I choose to take the good and learn from the rest.

So today and for much of this month we're going to talk about gratitude and its impact on our lives. Being grateful can have such a powerful impact on your life. Author and lawyer Julie Lythcott-Haims says in her book *How to Raise an Adult* that kindness and gratitude suffer from seeming simple. So simple that some of us are tempted to discard them as fluffy, unimportant nonsense, but they are not to be discarded. They are essential to our wellbeing.

Why is it that gratitude and kindness is essential to our wellbeing? Well, gratitude versus ingratitude or indifference helps us to maintain a stronger physical wellbeing. We build a stronger immune system. Our bodies are generally less impeded by regular aches and pains. We have lower blood pressure because of a regular and repeated practice of celebrating gratitude.

If we exercise gratitude, we're more likely to exercise and take care of ourselves. People generally will sleep longer and have better quality of sleep and therefore wake up feeling more refreshed in the morning.

When you practice gratitude, it helps you have a higher level of good positive emotions. It generates good, positive hormonal response within your body. We tend to be more alert, more awake, and more alive. We just experience a greater sense of joy and pleasure. It helps us maintain a sense of optimism and happiness.

People who practice gratitude are generally more social. They tend to be helpful and generous people who are able to practice compassion with

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ease. They're more forgiving, more outgoing, and generally will feel a greater sense of connectedness rather than loneliness and isolation. The social benefits are great for practicing gratitude.

So gratitude can be done in a high qualitative way. One of the things that I love to do is to really reflect on what it took for me to be here in this moment. I really stop and reflect on the people that went before me and the life that I have now. I contrast it with the life that I know of from my altars and my ancestors. I know how they lived and how their life was significantly more difficult than the life that I live right now.

In so doing, it allows me to really stop, pause, and reflect on what it took for me to sitting here at this particular moment, at this moment in time. What people had to go through in order for me to be here.

So regardless of your cultural background, when you stop and you think about it, people went through some stuff for you to be sitting where you are at this particular moment. They chose to keep going and to survive. There's value in appreciating that and respecting that and remembering that.

I love to just stop and affirm this moment is a good moment and I stop and recognize this moment is good and reflect on how I came to be here. Then I like to go to step two and say, "Well what is the source of that good? What is the source of this really good life that I'm living? It's remarkable."

So if you believe in God or a higher power or a source, you can go to that. You can think about infinite presence. Life, nature, love, whatever it is that allows you to reflect on something that is bigger than yourself. That's a good thing to reflect on. What is the source of your good? Where does this goodness come from? It allows us to experience a bit of humility and gratitude for the moment we find ourselves in?

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So it's good to stop and reflect. Then I love to generate gratitude in this present moment. Regardless of what circumstances may be, there's always something good that we can choose to look at, recognize, and celebrate so we can marvel at how well our bodies operate. That we don't have to tell our body heartbeat. Lungs process air. Liver, kidneys, do your cleanup work. We don't have to do that. We don't have to send signals consciously ourselves. Our bodies do that on their own.

I remember when my daughter had her first apartment and how excited she was. That hodgepodge of getting different goodies from different people. Pots and pans from this auntie. A chair from that uncle. A sofa from that cousin. Putting together a first household. As she did that, I was so happy for her. I marveled at how she put together her first home.

It also reminded me of when I was a young woman putting together my first home and the hodgepodge of furniture and furnishings that I put together. Then I remembered the people that helped me get to where I was. There was Regina. Regina Cassio that helped me get my first apartment on the west side of Los Angeles. Wanda West who helped me move my furniture because she worked for a moving company. My aunt and my mentors and my friends. You can look for and discover a moment to be grateful for.

So I remember when I was having this moment of reflection. I shared it with one of my colleagues and she said, "Oh, I do everything on my own. No one's ever helped me." I was struck by that because that's just not my experience. If that is your feeling, I invite you to pause and reflect and really interrogate that. Is it true? Is it true that everything you have you got it on your own without assistance from anyone else? Because that's not the norm.

Most people if you give it some time, you can come up with someone who gave you a little extra push even when you have those moments when you feel really, really alone. Allow yourself to stop and ponder and reflect on

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someone had to do something out of their way to get you where you are right now. Maybe it was a teacher. Maybe it was a professor. Maybe it was a friend who just did a little something that gave you a leg up. Allow yourself to ponder in this moment, what is there good to be grateful for?

When you take the time to be grateful, it can help you to block toxic and negative emotions. It's really hard to process envy or resentment or anger when you are actually intentionally practicing gratitude. They just don't go together. So allow yourself to really dive deep and seek into feeling gratitude and gratefulness. When people experience gratitude, it helps them to reduce stress and become stress resistant. It will help you to build a positive self-worth.

Now if you go to the show notes for this episode at loriaharris.com/19 in the show notes, I'm sponsoring a gratitude challenge this month. It's a seven day challenge that will provide you with a prompt to give yourself another way to look at gratitude and a way to appreciate your life. So what is appreciated appreciates. You know the benefit and the magic of compounding. So I invite you to really dive in deep and see what you can benefit from from practicing greater gratitude.

Well, that's it. That's the end of episode number 19 of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you want to learn more about me and how I help people and serve, you can go to my website loriaharris.com.

If you want to participate in the seven day gratitude challenge, go to loriaharris.com/19 and get all the information you need to dive into the seven day challenge. Make this holiday a really good one. Go into the fall and the holidays without feeling greater stress but feel enlivened and alive by practicing gratitude. Thanks and have a great day. It's your life. Make it a great one.

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Thanks for listening to this episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you want more information on how you can transform your life and do it quickly, visit loriaharris.com. See it on the next episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast.