

Happy Thanksgiving

When I was new in recovery and someone at a 12-Step meeting brought up the topic of “gratitude” I would always inwardly moan. “I don’t want to talk about gratitude,” I would think to myself, “I want to tell you what’s wrong—with me, with you, and with the world.”

I grew up in a household that found fault in everything. Gratitude was not in our lexicon. I never learned how to see the world with a grateful heart. I could only see what was wrong. It’s no wonder I drank and took so many drugs. I needed the help to feel better.

I knew I should be grateful...I had countless reasons to feel grateful. I could list them off, and I did in many of those “gratitude” meetings. I listed all the reasons I should be grateful, but that’s the thing. I wasn’t grateful. I didn’t feel it. All I could feel was my emotional pain.

My default setting in life is to find fault and reasons to complain. It comes naturally because I was raised on it. Our whole culture is raised on it. Don’t believe me? Just watch the news or read social media. We are soaked in complaints and fault finding. Gratitude does not come naturally—it is a spirituality that comes with practice. I have to work at being grateful to counteract the overwhelming presence of self pity, entitlement, blame and fault-finding.

It was a few years into recovery, attending countless meetings, when it occurred to me one day while sitting in another meeting on “gratitude” that I was actually starting to feel grateful. It took a long time, but it came. My gratitude has grown over the years so much that I can honestly say I’m even grateful that I’m an addict. I’m grateful because my disease forces me to live in a spiritual way that I would never have found without my disease. My disease is a gift that keeps me close to God.

When I remember to practice gratitude, sometimes even forcing myself there, I do really feel grateful—even for the problems in my life. It’s all a gift.

Besides, did you know gratitude is God’s will for you today? First Thessalonians 5:16–18 says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you.”

I hope you are feeling it today...I am. I am certainly grateful for you.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Pastor Ed Treat

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