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Email Address:

Every Season Counts – The Power of Gratitude

Every Mother Counts Staff

November 19, 2012

Now that the holidays are officially upon us, it's time to shift gears. Our theme for the rest of November and December is Every Season Counts and we're excited because each season and every holiday gives us unique opportunities to reach out, look within, take stock, re-inspire, get motivated and enjoy new beginnings. This week, with Thanksgiving just a few days away, we're focusing on the power of gratitude. It all starts with this: Thank you for all you do to help us help mothers around the world. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

For us and we suspect for most of our supporters, being grateful isn't just this week's warm and fuzzy feeling. Gratitude is an attitude we try to cop all year. We're also fond of gratitude's twin sister, *appreciation*, because it's through these two that we recognize how good life is in spite of challenges, how rich it is even if we're not rolling in abundance and how lucky we are to be mothers, fathers and children in America.

Gratitude comes from the word "gratia" or "grace" and the word "gratis" or "free." In essence, gratitude is *grace freely given*. It's what happens when you show good manners to the Universe. Being grateful takes almost no effort and costs nothing, but returns priceless dividends.

Gratitude works miracles. As [Dr. Robert Holden](http://www.robertholden.org/) (http://www.robertholden.org/), Ph.D author and founder of [The Happiness Project](http://www.happiness.co.uk/) (http://www.happiness.co.uk/) said, "The miracle of gratitude is that it shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world you see."

Not convinced it's an actual miracle? Whatever/whoever your god is, how many times have you said, "Thank God," as in:

- Thank God I found a diaper.
- Thank God she fell asleep.
- Thank God that tantrum's over.
- Thank God he's finally home.
- Thank God it was only a virus.

The relief and appreciation you felt in each of these situations miraculously turned something challenging into something good.

Gratitude makes you happy. Spiritual, psychological and motivational experts tell us that focusing on gratitude is essential to cultivating happiness. [Robert Emmons](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/Emmons/) (http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/faculty/Emmons/), Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis and author of the book *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, defines gratitude as having two parts:

- First, gratitude is an affirmation of goodness and good things in the world and of gifts and benefits received. Emmons writes, "This doesn't mean that life is perfect; it doesn't ignore complaints, burdens and hassles. But when we look at life as a whole, gratitude encourages us to identify some amount of goodness in our life.
- Second, gratitude involves recognizing the sources of this goodness as being outside

of our selves. It acknowledges that other people or even higher powers, gave us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives.”

Simply put, gratitude lets you see that you’ve been given gifts and gifts make everybody happy.

Gratitude is magic. Motivational speaker and author [Jack Canfield](http://www.jackcanfield.com/) (<http://www.jackcanfield.com/>) who wrote [The Success Principles](http://www.thesuccessprinciples.com/) (<http://www.thesuccessprinciples.com/>) said, “Gratitude is the single most important ingredient to living a successful and fulfilled life.” Canfield writes that shifting your perspective on all that’s good in your life, automatically brings more good into your life.” Whether that’s because of the power of attraction or because gratitude helps you see what’s been right in front of you the whole time is unclear, but it’s magic nonetheless. Give it a try, work your own magic. It’s easy enough to say, “Thank you.” and you never know what riches might rain down on you.

For those who know about the magic of gratitude, being grateful is a way of life, an attitude, an emotion and a moral imperative to “count your blessings.” As a spiritual practice it provides a framework that helps us make sense of things that are confusing and difficult. Gratitude puts things in perspective and tells God, the Universe, a higher power or just our inner selves, “Thank you for this life and all the opportunities it provides.” When practiced regularly, gratitude serves to reduce negativity and boost satisfaction in life. It opens our perspective to accept value in all things, even in situations where that value is hard to see.

Everyone on the EMC team agrees that most of all this season, we’re grateful to you, our supporters for all you’ve done to help raise awareness and reduce maternal mortality. Your help has been critical to our ability to award our first grants, reach new audiences, expand our website content, plan new goals, grow our staff and make our dream of insuring that Every Mother Counts come true. As we enter the holiday season, we wish you happiness, the miracle of gratitude and all our thanks for helping us change the world, one mother at a time.

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