

'Thank You God' by Oprah Winfrey

I live in the space of thankfulness - and I have been rewarded a million times over for it. I started outgiving thanks for small things, and the more thankful I became, the more my bounty increased.

That's because what you focus on.... expands. When you focus on the goodness in your life, you create more of that goodness. Sadly, the opposite is also true. Opportunities, relationships, even money flowed my way when I learned to be grateful no matter what happened in my life."

Say thank you!" Those words from my friend and mentor Maya Angelou who helped me turn my life around. One day about ten years ago, I was sitting in my bathroom with the door closed and the toilet lid down, booing and a hooing on the phone so uncontrollably that I was incoherent."Stop it! Stop it right now and say thank you!" Maya chided. "But - you don't understand," I sobbed.

To this day, I can't remember what it was that had me so far gone, which only proves the point Maya was trying to make. "I do understand," she told me. "I want to hear you say it now. Out loud""Thank you" Tentatively, I repeated it: "Thank you - but what am I saying thank you for?"

"You're saying thank you," Maya said, "because your faith is so strong that you don't doubt that whatever the problem, you'll get through it. You're saying thank you because you know that even in the eye of the storm, God has put a rainbow in the clouds.You're saying thank you because you know there's no problem created that can compare to the Creator of all things. "Say thank you!"

So I did - and still do. Only now I do it every day. I kept a gratitude journal , as Sarah Ban Breathnach suggests in her book Simple Abundance; list at least five things that I'm grateful for.My list includes small pleasures: the feel of Kentucky bluegrass under my feet (like damp silk); a walk in the woods with all nine of my dogs and my cocker spaniel Sophie trying to keep up; cooking fried green tomatoes with Stedman and eating them while they're hot; reading a good book and knowing another awaits.

My thank-you list also includes things too important to take for granted: an "okay" mammogram, friends who love me, 25 years at the same job (and loving it more than the first day I started), a chance to share my vision for a better life, staying centered, having financial security.I won't kid you, having money for all the things I want is a blessing.

But as I look back over my journals, which I've kept since I was 15 years old, 99 per cent of what brought me real joy had nothing to do with money.(It had a lot to do with food, however.) It's not easy being grateful all the time. But it's when you feel least thankful that you are most in need of what gratitude can give ou:PERSPECTIVE: Just knowing you have that daily list to complete allows you to look at your day differently, with an awareness of every sweet gesture and kind thought passed your way. When you learn to say thank you, you see the world anew.

And as Meister Eckhart so eloquently stated: "If the only prayer you ever say in your whole life is ' Thank you God ', that would suffice."Have a safe and blessed day!

"There's so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us,that it doesn't behoove any of us, to talk about the rest of us."

- Lilly Mae Outlaw

GOD BLESS!