

The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life

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Everyday Miracles

The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life



Dr. Noelle C. Nelson



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Dedication

This book I dedicate to my clients, readers, workshop participants, and all those I have had the blessing to work with over the years, for it is you who have inspired and motivated me to continue my ardent pursuit of appreciation.

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Special thanks to Mike O'Connor, my publisher, for seeing the value of this book, and to my editor, Dan Varrette, who tugged, poked, and prodded it into such fine shape. My heartfelt gratitude to Diane Rumbaugh and Michelle Masamitsu, who support all my work in splendid fashion, with patience and unflagging good humor. I offer my profound thanks as always to my family and friends, whose love fills my life with joy.

Thank you!

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Preface

I wrote *The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life* as a sequel to *The Power of Appreciation* because I received so many requests for specific ways to apply appreciation to the concerns of our everyday lives.

The Power of Appreciation explains the scientific foundation and principles of appreciation. In a nutshell, appreciation is a scientifically proven energy, much like electricity, that can be harnessed to bring about astonishing benefits to your life in every arena: self, home, love, and work. Appreciation is not a synonym for gratitude; it is actually composed primarily of valuing. Valuing is recognizing and acknowledging that someone or something matters to you, what their worth is to you, what they mean to you—in short, what their value is to you. Gratitude is the emotional secondary (and virtually automatic) component of valuing.

The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life gives powerful insights, skills, and tools to help you work with principles of appreciation in your day-to-day life. It shows you, through practical examples and vignettes, specifically how to use appreciation successfully, thereby making your life easier, more

rewarding, and more satisfying. Because appreciation takes many forms, some of the chapters use the words “appreciation” or “valuing” and some of them do not. The message, however, is always the same: it is through valuing ourselves, others, and our world that we improve our lives.

Each of the topics in *The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life* addresses a specific challenge within our family, our work, in all types of relationships, and in our self-growth and empowerment. The book provides positive and gratifying solutions to those challenges, helping you deal with the ups and downs of ordinary life, with the frustrations, disappointments, aggravations, missed opportunities, betrayals, and stress of it all.

Best of all, *The Power of Appreciation in Everyday Life* shows you how to appreciate in every aspect of your life so that your life can become the joyous journey it was always meant to be.

Thank you for the opportunity to share once again the wonder of appreciation with you!

Dr. Noelle Nelson



The Power of Appreciation
within Yourself

Engage Your Life Force

Things are going along pretty well at work and at home—no immediate crises or problems, you're just cruising along through your ordinary day-to-day. You think you should be satisfied—after all, isn't this the contented life you've always longed for? And yet, you're antsy, restless. So you shop 'til you drop, adding zeros to your credit-card balance so fast that you make yourself dizzy, or you party your brains out for a couple of days, or you flirt outrageously with that cute young thing who occupies the cubicle next to yours.

The next thing you know, you're struggling to pay off a mass of debt on stuff you don't really want but you're too embarrassed to return, you said some really stupid things to people when you were wasted and now no one will return your calls, and you're up on sexual harassment charges from that cute young thing.

You're in crisis! Suddenly life is incredibly busy,

you're scrambling to get yourself back on an even keel, but when you finally do, guess what? You're antsy, restless. And the whole cycle starts all over again. What's going on? You're beginning to think you're a crisis junkie, yet you're not happy when you're at the bottom trying to find the pieces so you can pick them up. So what gives?

It's simple: you don't know how to engage and channel your life energy. That's all. You are blessed with a wonderful energy, your life force, a basic desire to be and do and have—and you don't know how to capture this energy and use it constructively.

Being antsy or restless is your Inner Self's or your Soul's way of saying to you, "Hey, you're not using your life force appropriately. You're operating at about 10% of what you're capable of, and that's not what life's about." It's as though you owned a Ferrari which you only use as a golf cart—it wouldn't make sense. A sports car is meant to race. A human being is meant to live fully.

Unfortunately, what happens too often is that you grab on to whatever will engage your energy right away, whatever will give you a feeling of being alive at the moment. Shopping, partying, or flirting are all ways—among others—of getting your adrenaline going, ways of engaging your life force. And certainly, they work! For a time, you're neither restless nor antsy. Too often, however, you shop, party, or flirt without thinking, "Is this constructive or destructive?" Since you're not thinking ahead, well, the "ahead" part runs its own course, which more often than not ends up being destructive.

What to do?

1) Recognize your feelings of being antsy or restless for what they really are: an indication that you are operating way below your own level of being alive.

2) Take responsibility for those feelings.

Don't mindlessly shop, party, flirt, or do whatever you ordinarily do to quell the antsy feelings. Say to yourself, "Hey, I'm operating at half power here. I'm unfulfilled because I'm not filling myself up with the 'right' stuff for me."

3) Deliberately choose ways to engage your life force that are constructive as well as satisfying.

For example, get involved in a new hobby; participate in a new sport; challenge yourself at work; read a book you'd never ordinarily read; change your habits; drive a new way to work; make new friends; volunteer your services; write a screenplay. In other words, reach, stretch, and grow yourself! That is the true solution to the "antsy restlessness." Reach, stretch, and grow.

When you're a child, your parents and teachers are there to make sure you do reach, stretch, and grow, but once you're an adult, you become your own parent. It's up to you to challenge yourself—no one else can do it

for you. Use your antsy-restless feelings positively, as a reminder that you're settling to be less than who you truly are, and have the fun of becoming the full and vibrant human being you were always meant to be.

Next week there can't be any crisis. My schedule is already full.

—Henry Kissinger



Procrastinating... Again?!

Why are there some things you just can't seem to get around to? Why does the thought of cleaning out the garage or organizing your paperwork for the accountant send you into full-blown, heel-dug-in procrastination? You're not an idiot, you know these things have to be done. With the garage, for example, you put it off and put it off—always in the name of something else that must get done immediately, such as mowing the lawn (although the grass hasn't grown half an inch since the last time you went over it), pulling the weeds (okay, the one brazen weed bold enough to sprout in your driveway), or spending an hour on the phone with your brother-in-law discussing sports scores.

But your spouse has finally had it, pointing out that garages are for storing cars, not "things." Finally, you're up against the wall. You grit your teeth and push yourself in the direction of the garage, only to get the job barely started, and badly at that. "What

is wrong with me?” you groan. This is getting downright embarrassing. How can you not tackle something as mundane as cleaning out a garage?

There’s nothing “wrong” with you, so relax. If you examine your life, you’ll notice you only procrastinate with certain things. You resist doing what you don’t like to do, which is a huge clue in itself. All you have to do to overcome procrastinating is transform what you don’t like into what you do like.

“Impossible!” you say. “I’ll never like cleaning out the garage. And I’ll certainly never go ‘whoopee!’ at the thought of dealing with paperwork.” Perhaps not, but you can make tasks you don’t like more enjoyable.

Here’s how:

1) Lighten up.

Quit thinking of the garage cleaning as this huge task requiring Herculean effort, which only makes it seem bigger and more onerous than it really is. Every time you think of it, say to yourself: “Oh yeah, the garage—piece of cake!”

2) Break your task down into bite-size pieces.

Work on one piece at a time, accomplishing your task over the period of one week, spending just a couple of hours on it each time. For example, on the first day, move all the boxes and items out onto one side of the garage so you can actually see

everything you need to deal with. On the other side of the garage, designate three areas for separate things: one for “keep,” one for “toss,” and the other for “charity.” On day two, take about a quarter of the pile and sort it into the appropriate categories. Your rule of thumb: if it’s not a true family heirloom, and you haven’t used it for a year, it gets tossed in the “charity” pile. Make sure you are tossing a lot more than you are keeping.

Continue the same process, handling a quarter of your total pile on each of days three, four, and five. By day six, you should be done sorting. Take the “toss” pile to a dumpster and the “charity” pile to your favorite charity. By day seven, you’ll be putting the “keep” pile away and feeling pretty good about yourself!

3) Make the task pleasant.

Take your CD player and a couple of your favorite CDs into the garage the entire time you’re working there. Music lightens up just about any task, or listen to a good audio book. Have a big pitcher of your favorite lemonade or soda handy. The happier you make yourself while you’re doing something you’re not wild about, the easier it becomes.

4) Plan a reward for yourself for when you’re done.

Give yourself a treat for having accom-

plished this unpleasant task. Pat yourself on the back. Ask for congratulation from friends or family.

Whenever you have an unpleasant task that mires you in procrastination, lighten it up. Boogie while you vacuum, watch favorite old movies as you do paperwork, chat with friends on your cordless as you fold the laundry. Life is meant to be an enjoyable experience. Any time you can bring pleasure to a task, you are fulfilling one of life's most important purposes.

The beginning is the most important part of the work.

—Plato

