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Appreciation Reduces Stress

Research has found a connection between positive thoughts and feelings verses negative ones:

- As the result of a study of 1,623 heart attack survivors, medical scientists at the Harvard Medical School confirmed that when individuals became angry amidst emotionally stressful conflicts, the risk of future heart attacks doubled (as compared with subjects that stayed calm).
- In a Mayo Clinic study of people with heart disease, psychological stress was the strongest predictor of future cardiac death, cardiac arrest and heart attacks. And more than half of heart disease cases cannot be attributed to the standard risk factors (high cholesterol, smoking or sedentary lifestyle).

These dramatic changes in heart activity because of emotional stress have lead scientist to observe that our heart undergoes heart-rate variability – momentary changes in beat-to-beat frequency due to the emotions we go through. When we are calm and in balance, our system is experiencing cardiac coherence, a state where our heart's rhythmic and electrical output is operating in harmony and efficiency. And when we are going through stressful emotions, our heartbeat experiences fluctuations in heart rate and electrical output.

Appreciation as a Healing Activity

There is a wise old saying: "I was crying because I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet," which illustrates the healing power we receive when we feel appreciation for life. It changes our reality and releases stress.

Remember the question "Is the glass half-full or half empty?" Feeling appreciation is seeing the positive half. How you see and feel this reality greatly affects the stress levels on your body.

Another saying of wisdom goes: "Happiness isn't getting what you want, but your ability to enjoy what you've got." Feeling appreciation means to acknowledge and feel grateful for the quality, the worth of every blessing that life has given you. It's vital to recognize that no matter how difficult your situation may be, there is no treasure more precious than life itself. When you feel appreciation and gratitude to the universe, those feelings release physical stress, lift your energy level and help to improve performance.

Suggestions:

- When stressful problems arise. Whenever we react to difficulties with the attitude, "Well, it's not the end of the world," it immediately puts things in proper perspective. Yes, this problem is annoying, but let's remember the bottom line - and remain grateful.
- When you need to be re-grouping from competitive work activity, etc. Feeling appreciation is emotionally grounding because it reconnects you with the things that really matter.
- When you are feeling low, you are seeing the glass as half-empty. Acknowledging the portion that is full forces the ego to move from self-indulgent sorrow to regaining a healthy perspective. First, think about the truly unfortunate, suffering people in this world. Then verbally express your gratitude for all the ways life has blessed you. By saying the words, the healing emotions come to life.
- How to do it: Look at something comforting, or remember something that you are grateful for. Feel in your heart, how much you appreciate it. Stay with that feeling for 20 seconds. On the physical level, Feeling appreciation is a most effective way of bringing your heart rhythm into cardiac coherence – helping your heart to work more in harmony with the rest of the body.