

A decorative graphic at the top of the page features a dashed orange line that curves from the left towards the right. Several stylized orange leaves of various sizes are scattered along this line, with some appearing to be attached to small stems. The leaves have a simple, flat design with visible veins.

INTRODUCTION

If you look to others for fulfillment, you will never truly be fulfilled. If your happiness depends on money, you will never be happy with yourself. Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.

—LAO TZU

Do you know that happiness, the sheer joy in being alive, is within your reach? All you need is an attitude of gratitude. Gratitude creates happiness because it makes us feel full, complete; it's the recognition that we have all we need, at least in this moment.

Recent scientific research has begun to indicate that positive emotions, such as gratitude and love, strengthen and enhance the immune system, enabling the body to resist disease and recover more quickly from illness, through the release of endorphins into the bloodstream. Endorphins are the body's natural painkillers. Among other effects, they stimulate dilation of the blood vessels, which leads to a relaxed heart.

What this means is that the more we experience a sense of gratitude, we literally bathe ourselves in good hormones and feel happier and more content with our lives. Like most great spiritual truths, gratitude is stunningly simple. This is not to say it's necessarily easy to practice. All kinds of distractions, obfuscation, and negative attitudes from our upbringings may get in the way. But all you really have to do to receive gratitude's gifts is make a commitment to be thankful on a daily basis, and the world will be suddenly transformed into a beautiful wonderland in which you are invited to play.

