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Gratitude For Aptitudes

By Stephanie West Allen

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BE KIND TO PIGS

Many of you have probably heard the wise admonition: "Never try to teach a pig to sing. It's a waste of your time and it really annoys the pig."

The pig just doesn't have that aptitude.

A human example: Don't try to teach some people to have short-term goals. You are wasting your time and really annoying them, or worse yet, making them feel inadequate about their own style of goal-reaching. More about that later.

One size does not fit all. A few years ago I was fortunate enough to take the Johnson O'Connor aptitude test. The testing was in one of several non-profit Human Engineering Laboratories around the United States. I learned of aptitudes I did and did NOT have. Aptitudes of which I had never known before.

Over the years, I have watched many people go to the Laboratory for testing. I was delighted as I saw what happened when people learn new things about themselves.

NOW I SEE: THIS IS ME

The people returned from the testing very happy to know more about their strengths and challenges. They learned why one career might be easier and more fulfilling than another. They were able to make better choices and see why it had hurt when they were trying to force themselves into professions that did not fit.

It is painful to be a square peg in a round hole.

Gratitude For Aptitudes

Discovering our aptitudes through any method supports our mental health. Knowing our aptitudes is our right and our responsibility. If a person has a strong aptitude, they will often feel a restlessness or anxiety when not using it. We are given our gifts to use!

MAKE MUSIC YOUR OWN WAY

More about goal–setting: A person with a strong aptitude for foresight (as Johnson O'Connor calls this gift) usually does not achieve their goals by following those goal–setting plans we read about in so many books and articles.

A person with a very low aptitude for observation (again, the Johnson O'Connor term) is not bothered by lots of clutter. They don't notice it.

We each have our own gifts.

By understanding that we are all gifted in different areas, we can stop judging people who do things in a different way. In an orchestra, the trumpet player does not judge the piano player for not playing the trumpet. To do so would be silly.

Make sure you are not forcing any square pegs into round holes. To do so is teaching a pig to sing. Annoying or even hurtful. And don't let people annoy or hurt you. Let's each and every one of us find our gifts and present them to the world.

Isn't it grand that one size does not fit all?

AND TODAY . . .

Today value your own gifts. Do you have an aptitude that is crying to be used and that you are keeping dormant? Clues are always being given to you about your gifts. If you are quiet and listen, the gift's call will whisper (maybe shout) to you somewhere in your mind or heart.

Heed the call and see what goodness that gift will bring to you and others. It will be an extraordinary release.

Today celebrate the gifts of which you are already wholly aware, too. Make sure they get your full attention and gratitude.

And please celebrate the gifts of others. Don't judge if they have chosen a different instrument — or if they can't sing. Each one of us has our own aptitudes. Rejoice for all who have claimed theirs.

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Stephanie West Allen, JD, brings humor and motivation to associations and organizations. <http://www.allen-nichols.com> Monday through Friday, start your day with a free Upsy Daisy Push–up to get you going gloriously, gratefully, and gleefully. Subscribe by sending a blank e–mail to

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Be Grateful for Gratitude

By Angie Dixon

In Twelve Step meetings, it's traditional to groan when someone says, "Let's have a gratitude meeting." People don't like to talk or think about what they're grateful for. It's not in our nature. We're more tuned to what's going wrong than what's going right. We can't help it. The cave men who sat around and admired how white the teeth on the saber toothed tiger were, didn't last long enough to reproduce. The ones who realized those teeth were a bad thing are our ancestors, so to speak.

But gratitude is important. Sometimes I just sit in my office, which I painted and decorated myself after moving into a wonderful new house, and I look at all the hangings on the wall and the things on my desk and the books on my shelves and I remember growing up in a house where I couldn't sleep in my bedroom in the winter because the north wind blew through the window and the room was uninhabitable. And I feel grateful.

Gratitude gets a bad rap as being some sort of "feel-good" thing, but it's not. Real, true, deep gratitude comes from the soul. It's not some pop-culture thing. It's not something you say to make yourself look good or to make someone else feel good.

Real gratitude is truly appreciating what you have, and feeling it's enough. Sure, there are other things you'd like to have. There always will be. But in gratitude, you realize that if you don't get the new car or the new house, it's enough.

We should be "grateful for gratitude" because it's one of the fastest ways to appreciate our lives and feel happier. This simple technique, practiced every day, can change your life.

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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