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Walking with Gratitude

By Joyce Moseley Pierce

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During this season of gratitude and thanksgiving, I wanted to write about something we do every day with very little thought. Something we've been doing since we were very small. Most of us did it before we even talked. I'm talking about walking.

The way I see it, there are basically four reasons we walk

1.Travel - To get from one place to another. We don't even think about getting up each morning and walking from our bed to the bathroom, but I watched my elderly grandmother as an invalid for many years and gained an appreciation for my ability to get up and go wherever I wanted without help from anyone else.

2.Pleasure - I remember taking walks with my grandfather and my dad as a child, and that tradition has continued with my own grandkids. When the grandkids come to visit, they love to walk down to the lake in our neighborhood to feed the ducks. Part of the enjoyment, I believe, is just being away from everyone else. We walk, we talk, and we just enjoy one another's

company. When I was in Las Vegas for the birth of a new granddaughter, I walked the other two kids to school one day. My granddaughter, Olivia, who was 5 at the time, stopped other kids along the way to say, "My grandma is walking me to school." She was so proud, and I am so thankful to have the health to be able to walk with her.

3.Exercise - Walking is one of the best ways to exercise. You can walk at the pace you need to reach the desired heart rate. All you need is a pair of good walking shoes. No clubs to join.

No classes to attend. You can walk during the day or at night. Inside or out. In the mall or on a treadmill. If you need more of a challenge, you can carry a backpack with additional weight, or you can swing your arms to raise your heartrate. You will find that your legs have to move as fast as your arms. Even if you're uncoordinated, it is impossible for your legs not to follow your arms. Try it.

4.Peace of mind - You've heard of the "fight or flight" response? When I am upset or when I have things to work out in my mind, I go for a walk. I may start out stomping as I try to release anger, but by the time I get back home, I have worked through it and my mind has been cleared so that I can think rationally. Instead of sitting in a chair stewing about a problem, or getting into a fight with someone, walking can be great therapy, and you may be able to find a rational way to resolve the problem.

I suppose walking is one of those things I'm especially grateful for because when I was a year old my mother realized I wasn't walking properly. It looked like one leg was longer than the other, but the actual problem was that the leg hadn't joined the hip properly. After tearfully pleading with other family members who wanted to deny there was anything wrong with their little girl, she made an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon and I was put in a body cast that went from under my arms to my knees. I spent the next year in that

cast. I probably weighed as much as my mother did with that plaster cast. As an adult, my aunts and uncles told me about how horrified they had been when they saw "the horrible cast" and feared it would keep me from doing things other one year-olds did. They told of their joy when they saw that I not only learned to walk, but run and climb in spite of the challenges I had.

Probably the most valuable lesson from that experience was that I learned that with encouragement, I could not only walk, but I was given the confidence to believe that I could do anything.

On Thanksgiving when you stuff yourself with turkey, instead of curling up on the couch and taking a nap, think about taking a walk instead. It will help revive you and give you the time you need to think

about the things you're grateful for.

Joyce is a freelance writer and owner of Emerson Publications. She is the creator of "All They'll Need to Know," a workbook to help families record personal and financial information. <http://www.emersonpublications.com/pages/843554/index.htm> She is also the editor of The Family First Newsletter, an ezine for families with young children. To subscribe: <http://www.emersonpublications.com/pages/848640/index.htm>

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

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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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to discover how coaching can change your life, contact Angie at

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Be Grateful for Gratitude

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