

## **Preparation for T380 – What does it mean to be a people of Appreciation?**

### **Gratitude and Appreciation – What’s the Difference?** by Deborah Price (*adapted*)

During a recent conversation, the question arose as whether there is a difference between gratitude and appreciation and, if so, what would it be? In the thick of the discussion, one of my colleagues pulled out his computer and searched the internet for what others may have shared about this question. We found answers that pretty much mirrored our own unique perspectives.

One distinction that we found that was commonly shared is that gratitude is the base from which appreciation grows and flourishes...if we're paying attention. That is, we can be grateful for something in our lives without really appreciating it.

The subtle shift from gratitude to appreciation involves being more present – more thoughtfully aware and active in reflecting on the reasons we feel grateful about something or someone. Through present moment awareness, we begin to generate feelings of appreciation.

For example, we can be grateful for having food on our table. However, we can go further and appreciate its beauty, fragrance, taste, nutrition, and preparation. We move beyond thankfulness as we consciously recognize the value that food adds to our lives. In fact, one definition of the word “appreciation” is “recognition of the quality, value, significance, or magnitude of people and things.”

When we truly have appreciation, we bring to mind what about someone, or something makes us feel brighter, lighter, happier, more inspired, energized, and loved. And that’s a good thing, regardless of what’s going on [in the world] that is beyond our control and can test our gratefulness.

<http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/yourdailyspiritualstimulus/2009/04/gratitude-and-appreciation-whats-the-difference.html>

Choose one exercise and spend some time with it this month. Reflect on how the exercise changes the attitude of yourself and that of the people around you. Have fun with it. How is it a religious practice? How does it make you feel? Any unexpected results?

1. Make a “Life Appreciation” list. Everyone has a bucket list – a list of things that you hope to do in your life. This list is the opposite. Make a list of all the things that you have done and seen and experienced in your life – items big and small. For instance: tasted salt water, moved to a new state/country, learned words of a new language, climbed a mountain, mentored a child, seen a bear in the wild ... See how long you can make it. Describe how you feel about the list. What surprises you?
2. Find something to appreciate about each person you interact with during the course of a day or a week. When possible validate them for what they did for you. Consider thanking them.
3. Write a letter of appreciation to someone living or dead. Describe specifically what you appreciate about them in detail.
4. Send notes of appreciation for no special reason. For instance, “Your smile lights up my day”. Choose one day a week that is your note writing day.
5. Step out of your comfort zone, out of your cultural norm and learn to appreciate that experience. *Art, music, food, religion, cultural norms.*
6. Small joys are the foundation of a happy life. Notice the small joys in your life. How can you increase the joy?
7. Before sleeping, go to bed with a smile, thinking about all you appreciate in your life. Breathe deeply and relax as you do so. Breathe in Breath out when I breathe in I breath in peace, when I breathe out I breathe out love
8. Try substituting “thank you” for “sorry” in as many situations as possible. Instead of “sorry” I’m late, try “thank you for waiting” ...
9. Use your senses to appreciate the world as you pass through it. Spend time noticing the smells, sounds, tastes, touch, and sights.
10. What do you appreciate most about yourself? Do you treat yourself like someone who matters? Find ways to make yourself feel appreciated.