

Future Earth

The Science and Soul That Will Save Our Planet

Earth Day Gratitude Project

with contributions by...

The Prince of Wales
Earth Day Network
Deepak Chopra
Green Our Planet
Life Is Good
Ocean Robbins
Mark Robert Waldman
Ron Finley
Lynne Twist
Leon Krier
Downtown Project
Master Sha
Rickie Byars Beckwith
Living Homes
Brianna Brown
L.A. Yoga

Edited by Christopher Van Buren & Natalie Pace

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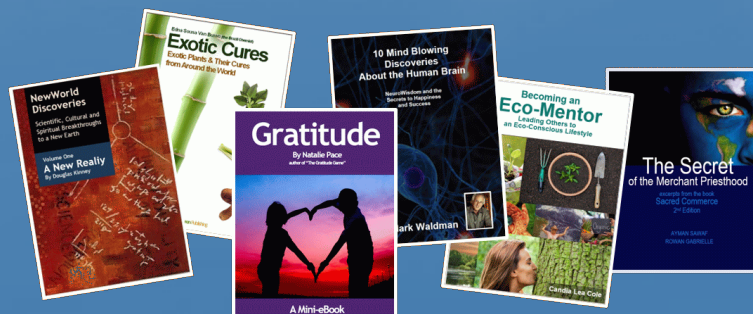
Acknowledgments

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Five beautiful emails over five days that will inspire you and move you into a place of beauty and gratitude.

3



Join

5 Prayers for Planet Earth

Five Earth-loving emails over five days with meditations and prayers that will connect you to Earth in powerful ways.

It's all at
www.EarthDayGratitude.com

Visit Us



Why Share This Ebook

Sharing this ebook is in and of itself an act of gratitude and commitment to creating a healthier, happier world. You are more important than you can possibly imagine. Every human being on this planet has a purpose. Every human being on this planet is interconnected energetically with every other human being, with every living creature and with every inanimate object on the planet as well. This is scientific fact, not just spiritual belief.

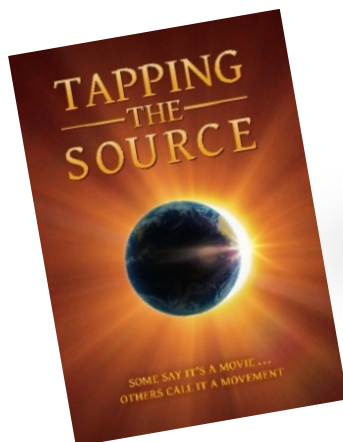
These insights and this level of awareness are essential if humanity is to move to the level of being true stewards of planet earth.

Sharing this ebook can make a huge difference in determining the future outcome. There is no "they" who can correct the problems we face. The they is us. You matter. Your actions matter.

When the anthropologist Margaret Mead was asked if a small group of individuals could actually change the earth, she replied, "Why of course. In fact that is the only way change has been made at all."

It is up to each and every one of us to take action and to demonstrate our higher awareness on a daily basis. This ebook gives some of the simple steps that you can take. Share it. Use it. The results may be even greater than we can imagine. Thank you.

William Gladstone
Author and Filmmaker



The Power of Gratitude and Sustainability

There is enormous power and possibility in gratitude. Earth Day is the perfect occasion to honor our common home for the bounty, beauty, sustenance and shelter Mother Nature gives us for free.

That is why Earth Day Gratitude is all about powering up on gratitude and powering down electricity and fossil fuels for one hour, between 7:30-8:30 p.m. in your own time zone. April 22, 2016, will be a full moon (almost), so it should be easy and fun to illuminate our celebrations by moonlight and candlelight.

Please take videos and photos of your Earth Day Gratitude celebration and post them everywhere using the hashtags #EarthDay, #EarthDayGratitude and @EarthDayThanks (which is our Twitter name). Share the Earth Day Gratitude ebook freely. There is no opt-in requirement or cost involved. Simply visit EarthDayGratitude.com.

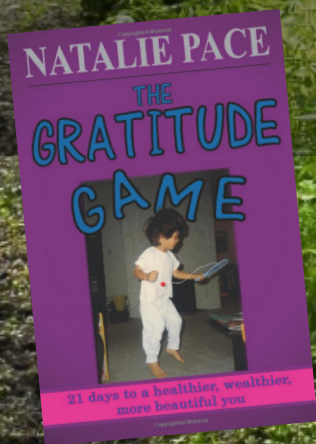
I can't wait to see our global expressions of thanks, and feel the shift that occurs as a result of our collective energy and awakening.

Getting smart about sustainability and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and toxic energy is the next great social evolution. When we flood our creative problem-solving mind with the endorphins of gratitude we are open to receiving the spectacular solutions that are needed now to ensure that generations to come will enjoy this beautiful blue ball that we call home.

There is no end to the problems that can be solved when we move trillions out of the old industries of oil, gas and cigarettes and invest it in clean energy, goods and services that contribute to a healthy, sustainable world.

Natalie Pace

Author of *The Gratitude Game*



We Know Exactly What Needs to Be Done

On an increasingly crowded planet, humanity faces many threats – but none is greater than climate change. It magnifies every hazard and tension of our existence. It threatens our ability to feed ourselves; to remain healthy and safe from extreme weather; to manage the natural resources that support our economies, and to avert the humanitarian disaster of mass migration and increasing conflict.



In damaging our climate we become the architects of our own destruction. While the planet can survive the scorching of the earth and the rising of the waters, the human race cannot. The absurd thing is that we know exactly what needs to be done; we know we cannot adapt sufficiently to go on as we are, nor can we build ourselves a new atmosphere. To avoid catastrophe we must restrict climate change to less than two degrees, which requires a dramatic reduction in carbon emissions.

This can be done. We have the knowledge, the tools and the money – only 1.7 percent of global annual consumption would be required to put us on the right low carbon path for 2030. Governments collectively spend more than a trillion dollars every year on subsidies to energy, agriculture and fisheries. Just imagine what could be done if those vast sums supported sustainable energy, farming and fishing, rather than fossil fuels, deforestation and over-exploitation of the seas...

...The whole of Nature cries out at our mistreatment of Her. If the planet were a patient, we would have treated her long ago.

The moment has arrived to take those long-awaited steps towards rescuing our planet and our fellow man from impending catastrophe. Let us pursue that vital goal in a spirit of enlightened and humane collaboration.

The Prince of Wales
From his speech to the 2015
Paris Climate Conference – COP21

Earth Day Gratitude

By Deepak Chopra, MD, FACP,
founder of [The Chopra Foundation](#)

On this sacred day I honor Mother Earth not only for giving me life but sustaining it. Her dust recycles as the atoms of my body, her oceans and rivers have become my circulation, and her fragrant breezes are my breath. Her verdant greenery and lush forests that bare fruit and vegetables capture the light of the sun and give my body energy to move, breathe, think and feel.

Earth is not only our Mother from whose womb we emerged, but she sustains us every moment of our life with her own substance as she spins every twenty-four hours and hurtles around the sun through space. She cradles our biological rhythms and makes them one with the universe. We call her “the environment” but she is our extended body that nourishes our existence in every moment of our life.

The greatest gratitude is gratitude for existence, the greatest reverence is reverence for life and Mother Earth makes it all possible. With gratitude, reverence, and humility in our hearts we honor her today. Let us work to keep her sustainable so we may in turn be nourished and sustained.



Three Billion Acts of Green

Earth Day Network's A Billion Acts of Green® – the largest environmental service campaign in the world – is steadily building commitments by individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments to protect the planet. Together we've reached over 2 billion acts of green.

You can register the actions you're taking to protect the environment at...

<http://www.earthday.org/take-action/>

Here are a few suggestions on what you can do to make a difference.



Cars are currently accounting for one-fifth of the United States' global warming pollution. By replacing car trips with walking or biking trips, we can reduce our carbon footprint, increase our physical health, lower obesity and decrease traffic congestion, air pollution, and noise pollution.



300 million tons of plastic are produced each year to make bags, bottles, packages and other commodities. The North Pacific Trash Gyre is the largest landfill in the world, composed of 90% plastic. Pledge to stop using plastic.



Buying from a local farmer's market is one of the most effective ways to eat nutrient-rich food and reduce the carbon emissions of transportation.



50 million tons of electronic waste (e-waste) is generated every year in the U.S. alone, releasing hazardous chemicals like lead, mercury and cadmium into our air and water and contaminating our communities. Pledge to recycle your e-waste in a responsible manner.



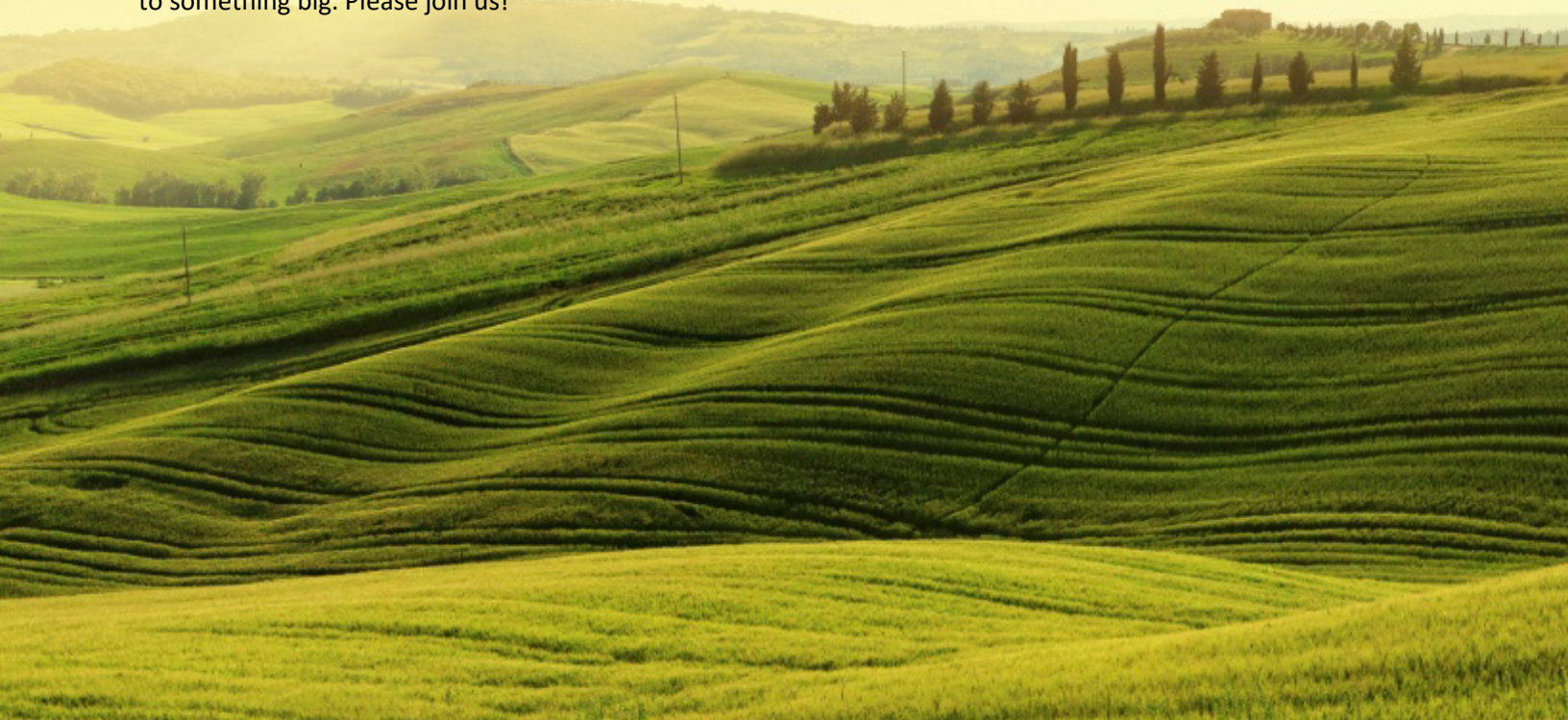
The meat industry generates nearly one-fifth of man-made greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. Consuming less meat is part of the solution.

Alone these acts may not seem like much, but taken together, these actions add up to something big. Please join us!



By Earth Day Network
President Kathleen Rogers

ACT NOW



Planting Seeds

The small seemingly insignificant act of planting a seed is an act of revolution. Moms and Dads, teachers and office workers, old people and children plant seeds to grow spinach, lettuce, broccoli to feed themselves healthy food because the alternative is the food industrial complex.

When we plant a garden at a school we are showing our children that we care about their health, we care about their education.

The school garden movement that is sweeping across the United States is a quiet revolution in pursuit of health and happiness for all. Green Our Planet has raised money for and built over 80 school gardens in the past two and a half years in Las Vegas. Our goal is to use the garden as a powerful learning tool that will empower children, improve the health of the community and educate everyone about creating a sustainable planet.

This Earth Day we will celebrate the work of 14 of our schools to expand their gardens by getting rid of grass and replacing it with vegetable beds. In the process we will save over three million gallons of water this year, next year and every year into the future.

Join us in the revolution!

www.greenourplanet.org



Does Gratitude Really Cause Good Fortune?

When I heard this, I was skeptical. What if people who are fortunate, or who are particularly healthy, just feel more grateful? Does gratitude really cause good fortune, or is it just a byproduct?

The answer surprised me, and it may surprise you, too.

In a study conducted by Robert A. Emmons, PhD, at the University of California at Davis and his colleague Mike McCullough at the University of Miami, randomly assigned participants were given one of three tasks. Each week, participants kept a short journal. One group briefly described five things they were grateful for that had occurred in the past week, another five recorded daily hassles from the previous week that displeased them, and the neutral group was asked to list five events or circumstances that affected them, but they were not told whether to focus on the positive or on the negative.

Keep in mind that these groups were randomly assigned and that nothing about their lives was inherently different, other than the journaling they were doing.

The types of things people listed in the grateful group included “sunset through the clouds,” “the chance to be alive,” and “the generosity of friends.”

And in the hassles group, people listed familiar things like “taxes,” “hard to find parking,” and “burned my dinner.”

After ten weeks, participants in the gratitude group reported feeling better about their lives as a whole and were a full 25 percent happier than the hassled group. They reported fewer health complaints, and they were now exercising an average of 1.5 hours more per week.

In a later study by Emmons, people were asked to write every day about things for which they were grateful. Not surprisingly, this daily practice led to greater increases in gratitude than did the weekly journaling in the first study. But the results showed another benefit: Participants in the gratitude group also reported offering others more emotional support or help with a personal problem, indicating that the gratitude exercise increased their goodwill towards others, or more technically, their “pro-social” motivation.

Excerpted from [“Why Thanksgiving Is More Important Than You Think”](#)
By Ocean Robbins and [The Food Revolution Network](#)



with John and Ocean Robbins

Ocean Health

If the current rate of ocean pollution continues, in less than 9 years there will be one ton of plastic for every three tons of ocean fish, according to a report by the 5 Gyres Institute.

Currently, up to 95% of plastic packaging (valued at \$120 billion) is lost after one use. The irony is, recycling plastic can take 90 percent less energy than making plastics from raw materials and, if managed correctly, plastic is virtually infinitely recyclable.

In 2015, in partnership with The 5 Gyres Institute, Whole Foods Markets and other conscious brands, we launched a #BantheBead campaign to raise consumer awareness around plastic microbeads present in many conventional toothpastes and exfoliating products. Microbeads are a major contributor to ocean smog.

On December 28th, 2015 President Obama signed the Microbead Free Waters Act of 2015, banning the sale of microbeads in the United States forever.

Jose Minski
CEO of Wellnext
(the parent company of Rainbow Light)



Rainbow Light is the #1 natural multivitamin for every life stage and caring for people means caring for our communities and our planet.

25 years ago, Rainbow Light learned that by converting to recycled plastic containers, we could reduce our carbon footprint seven-fold over any other alternative. The technology wasn't available at the time, so we worked with leaders in sustainable packaging to refine Rainbow Light's EcoGuard® 100 percent recycled bottles.

EcoGuard packaging now helps our company keep approximately 10 million plastic bottles from polluting waterways and natural habitats every year, reducing our carbon footprint by a healthy 92%.

Earth Day 2016, Rainbow Light launched a microsite to provide free sourcing and operational information to help other conscious companies evaluate sustainable packaging options.

Be the solution: www.rainbowlight.com/ecoguard/



Brianna Brown
Actress, Founder & CEO of
The New Hollywood

(photo: Jason Ensler)

How Eagles Fly

An attitude of GRATITUDE has been transformative within my life. Over the years I have had multiple occasions, personally and professionally, where I've been rejected and devastated. As an actress who has made a living for over a decade, I often joke that I have my PhD in rejection! What I have learned when things don't go my way is that it is best to breathe, journal my heartache out on the page, and not project my hurt and sadness. To allow myself the space to grieve, let go and focus on my blessings.

Over time, I've realized that this practice of allowing my highest good to unfold, when things are seemingly falling apart, actually allows things to fall into place.

While that pain and disappointment has definitely had moments of being unbearable, I've learned to allow with love and grace. This attitude of gratitude has been an incredible tool to help soothe the terrifying pain of the unknown.

I try to remember a story I heard about how eagles teach their babies how to fly. That they start by gently rocking the branch of the nest to help their babies' wings to strengthen. Then, when the parents feel that it's time for their babies to leave the nest, they shake the branch so violently that their children have no other choice but to soar. I believe life often provides the same sort of uncomfortable and jarring lessons, especially when we are being stubborn to change.

Life Is Good

We were still failing by most standards at 30 years old.

The thing many people don't see is that life isn't good because of what you *have* or because of *where you are*. It's good based on your *disposition*.

When we were sleeping in the van, life was good for us. Even though things were tight and it didn't look like we were going to be successful, we were travelling around visiting schools that we couldn't get into. We were throwing the football and the Frisbee by day. When we had a great night and sold a lot of t-shirts, we'd celebrate by buying a sandwich at a food truck. We would sit behind the truck and high-five and say, "What an awesome night!" And we weren't joking or trying to be humble. It *was* an awesome night.

Everybody should maintain that level of gratitude, if you have your health, and you have two legs to walk around on, and you live in a country that gives you a chance. Once we started Life is Good, we learned that lesson over and over. It was reinforced by people who face extremely difficult challenges – much more difficult than sleeping in a van. Things like going through chemotherapy. Things like getting hit by a car, or losing a limb, or losing a young child.

What you focus on grows. If you choose to focus on what's wrong with your life or the world, that will fester. The people who focus on what's right in their life, they get momentum.

Bert and John Jacobs
Co-founders, Life is Good, which is a hundred-million dollar lifestyle brand, and co-authors of *Life is Good*, the book.



The Architecture of Community

Human Scale

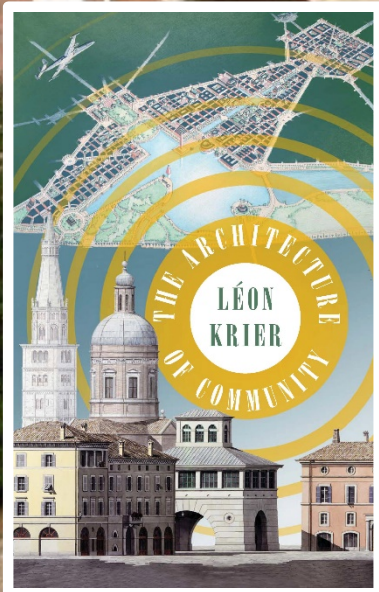
My philosophy is simple: However much we enjoy our fossil fuel dependence, it is toxic to our physical and mental health, to our buildings and cities; even if we had fossil fuel forever, we should develop again authentic traditional forms of settlement, of construction, of agriculture, of industry, of production. Human scale, we now discover when too many of our built environs have lost it, is an unrenounceable attribute of civilization, not an obsolete luxury.

We are beginning to grasp our fatal dependency on Fossil and Nuclear Fuel and their inevitable depletion. It has allowed developments out of sync with human scale and intelligence, creating problems that surpass human imagination and control, mega size buildings and sprawling suburbs of cloned appearance and structure, always occurring in excessively large zones of uniform use. Functional zoning is responsible for the global wastage of time, land and energy of modern societies, mobilizing the entire population in the performance of everyday tasks.

The only way forward is to design integrated settlement policies of national and continental scope that will promote the “walkable city,” both as regards to walkable distances (horizontally) and to walkable building heights (vertically).

The real ecological challenge resides in the territorial reorganization of daily human activities within society.

Leon Krier
*Master planner of
Poundbury, England.*



Leon Krier is an eminent architect, urban planner and theorist pioneer in promoting the perennial rationality and modernity of traditional urbanism and architecture.



LivingHomes Use Less (of everything)

The US is only 4% of the world's population, yet we're responsible for 16% of global carbon emissions. This is true because on nearly every metric that relates to the production and consumption of materials that result in carbon, we're number one or near the top on a per capita basis. We have more cars. We drive more miles. We fly more. We eat more meat. We buy more clothes. We have more junk mail. We use more packaging. We buy more gifts. We use more paper.

So, in the near term, the only way we'll be able to have a meaningful impact on negative climate change is if we consume less. Of everything. Less oil. Less coal. Fewer hamburgers. Less paper. Fewer new clothes. Fewer new cars. Fewer short trips in our car, when we could walk.

I launched LivingHomes to offer a pre-fab, sustainable housing solution for homeowners. To reduce my LivingHomes ecological footprint, I use LED lights, Energy Star appliances and super high insulation and performance windows. I also installed low flow water fixtures, a grey water system, a cistern, solar panels and no-VOC paints and stains. As a result, my electric bill is only \$30/month on average.

You can purchase a pre-fab LivingHome directly from us, or incorporate some of these energy-saving, cost-saving solutions into your own home. Check out how we installed the first platinum LEED-rated home in the U.S. in just 8 hours in 2006 at LivingHomes.net. Many of our homes can now be installed in half that time.

<http://www.livinghomes.net/tour.html>

Steve Glenn, CEO, LivingHomes
<http://www.livinghomes.net>



We Become What We Chant: Sing for Love, Peace and Harmony

A song can heal Mother Earth.

*I love my heart and soul
I love all humanity
Join hearts and souls together
Love, peace and harmony
Love, peace and harmony*

When many people join hearts and souls together to chant and meditate, this automatically creates a powerful field. As the founder of the nonprofit *Love Peace Harmony Movement*, I strongly believe that we become what we chant. As we chant to create world love, peace and harmony, we transform the message we carry within.

"Love, Peace and Harmony," the Divine Soul Song I received from the Divine in 2005, carries the high frequency and vibration of Divine love, forgiveness, compassion and light. This high frequency can transform your health, emotions, relationships, finances and more. It can transform your family, community and the world.

Chanting balances your energy, restoring your natural harmony and well-being. Your loving vibration can change the world when you volunteer and provide unconditional service to friends, loved ones, humanity and our beloved Mother Earth.

By 2020, we hope to inspire 1.5 billion people to chant "Love, Peace and Harmony" for 15 minutes daily. Download music and lyrics for free at

LovePeaceHarmony.org

Dr. and Master Zhi Gang Sha is a world-renowned spiritual healer, a grandmaster of Tao and ancient Chinese arts, and a bestselling author of 21 books on alternative medicine. Visit www.DrSha.com



Gratitude and Gorillas

by Rickie Byars Beckwith

Stuck in the muck of worldly disappointments, I once wondered why God made stuff so complex, and why God made humans, and why didn't God just stop at the gorillas. Now, of course, God could not have stopped at the evolution of Gorillas because Humans would be necessary to reveal the healing music of the spheres. Healing music, and the love it takes to create it, is what holds the galaxies together. Furthermore, as great as gorillas are, they cannot sing like humans.

But if the world were to get better, then I would have to get better, *first*. We Humans are like seven billion mini-Gods populating the planet, each with super sparks that could ignite the gifts that we came to discover and share with the world. Yet so many of us invest our breaths in perplexing ways, in shallow lifestyles that deplete our precious Earth.

With just a few conscious breaths I remembered the power in honoring what is already given. Putting a pen (that had ink, thank you!) to a very beautiful journal that my friend Peggy gifted to me (thank you!) allowed me to write out my truth.

I began to give thanks for things that go unnoticed. And then I began to sing from what I caught. I felt the wonder of being alive. In these days, we get to live and become more of the pure Source that made the Gorillas, but couldn't stop there (thank you!). I am restored in the truth that there is nothing missing, nor depleted in me. Just like the Earth, I am divinely designed, and my acceptance that I am divinely designed will carry me forward on this magnificent journey.

Today I allow gratitude to write a story that is strong and elegant. Gratefully, I step into this day to bring forth my very best.

I'm grateful I can sing a song of freedom and answer the call

I'm grateful to create a world of kindness that honors one and all



Excerpt from "**Grateful for the Day**" Lyrics by Rickie Byars Beckwith.

www.weletitbe.com



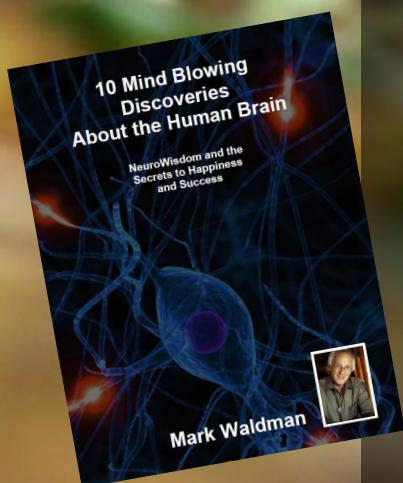
A person wearing a bright red jacket, dark pants, and blue rubber boots is walking through a forest. The ground is covered with fallen leaves, and the background is a dense forest with green and brown foliage.

NeuroScience

Moody? Walk In Nature (Not the City)

A 2012 study led by John Jonides found that walking in nature can be your best therapist. Participants suffering from depression were asked to think about an unresolved negative event in their lives, and then were asked to take a 50-minute walk in either a natural or urban setting. After the walk in nature, their mood was greatly improved, and their short-term memory span was also improved. No improvements for walking on busy city streets!

NeuroTip: Set aside some time to take a brief walk in nature. Prior to the walk, write down a problem (psychological, relational, or work-related) and then, as you walk, count your steps or your breath (a mindfulness technique) and let yourself "daydream" about the problem. Just observe those thoughts, and then, once every five minutes, sprint as fast as you can for 10 seconds. Pause and pay attention to your physical sensations. Keep repeating this for the rest of your walk. You should notice that your mood has changed. Now look at the problem you wrote down and ask your intuition to provide a solution.



by Mark Waldman
[Download Mark's mini-ebook](#)

Gratitude: Take it Downtown

The Downtown Project, Las Vegas

Happiness is something that is very important to me. In fact I recently defined the ultimate performance measure of my life to be the number of happy minutes I experience, added to the number of happy minutes I helped others to have.

Gratitude has an important link to happiness. Being grateful to others and to myself is important; however, I have recently added being grateful to the planet to my daily routine. It is amazing the impact that simply saying, "thank you," offering recognition or just being grateful can have to my wellbeing. I can literally turn a negative moment into a positive one very quickly, which has an enormous impact on my personal happiness.

Here are my daily gratitude routines:

- **To myself:** be thankful for being me, for being a gloriously fallible human being who makes mistakes, who has successes, who dreams, who lives.
- **To my family:** be thankful for having an amazing wife, Danielle, and for my incredible children, Jack and Emily, as well as my broader family who are always there for me.
- **To my colleagues:** be thankful for the people I work with. Say, "well done" and "thank you." Give constructive feedback, and let the team know I am glad they are there.
- **To my community:** be thankful for the people I come into contact with in downtown Las Vegas, who help to make DTLV a vibrant place full of entrepreneurial energy.
- **To the planet:** be grateful for everything the planet offers us, the atmosphere, the flora, the fauna, the view of the universe at night.

I have found that the simple act of gratitude for a few minutes every day adds hours of happiness, positivity and optimism to my day. This is then contagious to others who also infect others. So there is an amazing cascading effect.

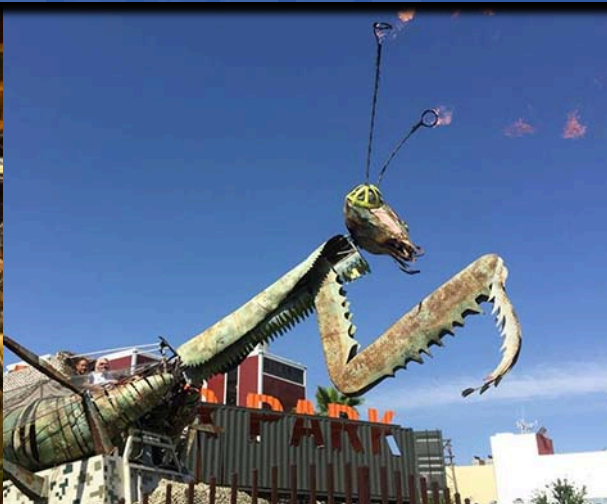
I am very lucky to be working with a bunch of amazing people in an amazing community of entrepreneurs as part of The Downtown Project. It is a very special project, which is helping to make downtown Las Vegas a place of inspiration, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial energy. We are bringing the vision of Tony Hsieh to reality, which is to deliver happiness to a community.



DOWNTOWNPROJECT



Mark Rowland
CEO, The Downtown Project



DOWNTOWNPROJECT

Gangsta Gardeners

Just like 26.5 million Americans, I live in a food desert. Los Angeles leads the United States in vacant lots. The city owns 26 square miles of vacant lots. That's 20 Central Parks. That's enough space to plant 725 million tomato plants.

Be a gangsta with your shovel, and let that be your weapon of choice. Gardening is the most therapeutic and defiant act you can do, especially in the inner city. We're getting kids off the street and letting them know the joy, the pride and the honor in growing their own food. People are gardening together. You have a garden on one street where you are growing carrots. Someone else might be growing tomatoes. You can trade food. Now you know your neighbors. Now you know your neighbors' kids. Now you are more able to look out for your community.

I want to have an international #PlantSomeShitDay, where everybody everywhere plants something, in a cup, in a tennis shoe, in a can, in a field or on a farm. This is my gospel. Grow your own food. Growing your own food is like printing your own money. We can create a utopia in our own environment. I can replicate Eden with the plants. I feel like I'm in paradise.

Known as the Gangsta Gardener, **Ron Finley** is one of LA's most widely known artists. Founder of the Ron Finley Project, his mission is to transform the culture in urban communities throughout the world.



After We Make the Change...

Why It Begins With Us

The snow and glaciers of the Andes—the water source of the Amazon—are melting. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, there are 200,000 environmental refugees *a day* who are leaving where they have lived for centuries because they cannot live there anymore. Syria, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are experiencing horrendous water shortages and drought. In Japan, the effects of climate change—tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions—have shaken the very fiber of that culture. We are in a serious drought here in California. We may run out of water by 2050, or even as early as 2030.

I invite all of us to dwell in and express love in a way that nullifies the hatred and fear of millions and turns the tide at this special point in history—toward our love for the Earth, our love for one another, our love for future generations and our gratitude for the lives that we've been given.

In my Dream of the Modern World, flat roofs would be painted white or silver to reflect the sun. People would be throwing away less garbage. No one would ever use a plastic bottle. Plastic would be banned. We would ride bicycles, walk and ride-share. People would grow their own food. We would not buy *new stuff*. We would shop in the house for gifts. Social justice would be the natural way of being.

It's up to *us*. Governments and leaders of the world are not going to make this happen. Governments will legislate these things *after* we make the changes. When we invite others to dream and act together in partnership, it starts to move like wildfire.

Stand for the possibility. Inspire people with discoveries that you have made and listen to discoveries they have made.

When we dwell in gratitude, we don't need more of anything. Let's be grateful for what we already have—the Earth, the natural world, the capacity to breathe clean air and drink fresh water. When we are grateful for something, we don't hoard it. We share it. That is the key to turning around the sustainability crisis that we are in.

Every human being has a divine spark. When we are in touch with our own divinity, love and wholeness, we go from ordinary to extraordinary.

Lynne Twist, author of *[The Soul of Money](#)* and Co-Founder of the [Pachamama Alliance](#).



Surrender is a Practice of Strength

The state of the world today can sometimes place us in a state of overwhelm. We may feel frozen, unable to engage in the activities that we feel will make a positive difference.

This is where the practice of yoga comes in as a powerful tool for allowing us to find the courage and focus to stay true to our souls, while being a bright light and part of the solution of a challenging world.

Embracing an attitude of surrender helps us stand with strength. The process of becoming silent and still, of closing our eyes, and even dropping to our knees, facilitates our ability to look inward. In yoga, there is a practice called *pratyahara*. This is a Sanskrit word that means *to draw the senses inward*. When we direct our attention away from the constant noise of everyday life, we have the opportunity to see our own true nature, to access our inner strength, and to remember the gratitude that fuels our daily life.

While we can also get caught up in feeling overwhelmed by the perfection of the practice, there is a great power in simplicity. All we need to do is pause. Whether our practice is simply watching the breath, feeling grateful for the present moment, creating gratitude lists through thought or on paper, or something more complex, they all serve the same goal—to center us in strength and steadiness.

This then provides us the fortitude for forward momentum. We can open our eyes and walk into the world with confidence, with compassion, and with the ability to contribute our greatest gifts.

by Felicia Tomasko RN, the President of Bliss Network and the editor in chief of *LA YOGA*, *Ayurveda* and *Health and Find Bliss* Magazines. She is a yoga teacher and yoga therapist with 20 years of teaching experience. Felicia teaches on yogaglo.com and at Loyola Marymount University, among other places.



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