

Shoyo Sensei's Dharma Message

The Power of Gratitude - 2

In last December's Golden Chain, I wrote about a new field of research, the "Science of Gratitude." Some neuroscientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists are sharing the most wonderful studies of being grateful and thankful with us. I was fortunate enough to listen to them at the University of California, Berkeley, several weeks ago. I will continue to share with you what they are talking about.

Dr. Robert A. Emmons, the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude, reveals why gratitude is good for our bodies, our minds, and our relationships. According to him, Gratitude journals and other gratitude practices often seem so simple and basic; in our studies, we often have people keep gratitude journals for just three weeks. And yet the results have been overwhelming. We've studied more than one thousand people, from ages eight to 80, and found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits:

Physical:

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

Psychological:

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

Social:

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated.

(http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/why_gratitude_is_good/)

They also say that gratitude and happiness go hand-in-hand. They are inseparable and indistinguishable from one another. When we feel grateful, we feel positive with loving-kindness and compassion to ourselves and others. With gratitude, we feel humility to others. We also become more confident to others.

One Olympic Gold Medalist spent three hours to write down on her sled names of those who helped her to get there. She had listed five hundred names.

**Na Man Da Bu,
Shaku Shoyo**