



Huntingdon Health & Wellness Association

THE NATURAL CONNECTION NEWS

The Power of Gratitude by Dana Jefferson

Looking for a simple and easy way to improve your life. Look no further. The practice of gratitude can be life-changing and can be immediately implemented with little to no expense. Two recommended ways to start are:

1. Begin the day (whether with your first cup of coffee or tea, with your breakfast, or when putting the toothpaste on your toothbrush) by saying out loud: "THANK YOU FOR MY LIFE." This is a totally free option.
2. The low cost option is to begin a gratitude journal. This can be a beautifully decorated or leather journal or it can be a simple notebook. I stock up on the 19 cent notebooks available locally at the beginning of the school year. I keep my journal by my nightstand and jot down at least one thing I am grateful for each day even if it has not been the best of days.

My personal experience with a gratitude journal began in the late 90s. I was inspired by Sarah Ban Breathnach's book "Simple Abundance". Luckily, I began with putting a date by each entry so now I can go back and look through old gratitude journals and match them with what was going on with my life at the time. It is fun at times to go back and reminisce.

While gratitude was not the only spiritual practice I have implemented over the years, I truly believe it has changed my life. By beginning and ending each day with being thankful, I start and end

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HHWA is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization promoting alternative, complementary, and integrative health care and wellness initiatives focusing on the mind, body, and spirit connection.

my day with positive rather than negative energy. Yes, some days my evening journal entry may have been “Thankful for surviving a horrible day at work.” While this may seem negative, it shifted my focus from all is horrible to “I am a survivor”. Just that tiny bit of positivity gave me a better night’s sleep.

So how did my life change within two years of starting a gratitude journal?

1. My career skyrocketed. I worked for the state of Delaware at the time and ended up getting major promotions and ultimately rising from an entry level salary to one of the highest paid state employees.
2. I met and ended up marrying my soulmate after a series of failed relationships. A counselor once told me that when I changed, the men appearing in my life would change. My gratitude practices helped with that change.

I always thought it ironic that my parents gave me the middle name of “Joy” since I have suffered serious depression in my life. The gratitude journal helped me increase my focus on the good things in my life, and for me that helps to keep my mind from going to unproductive places. I now “own” my middle name and celebrate it.

Once you have the basics down, you can experiment with making gratitude integral to the rest of the day. Like anything at first, you have to focus on it to make it a habit. After about a month, it will become routine. Here are some examples for incorporating gratitude in the rest of your life by just saying “Thank you” in your mind when:

- You find a great parking space.
- You get into a check-out line at the store that moves quickly.
- You get a great check-up at the dentist.
- You find everything you need on your shopping list.
- You child gives you an unexpected hug.

You can see that there are numerous moments every day where we can take the time to be thankful. The strange thing I’ve discovered is that, for example, the more you routinely give thanks for finding the good parking spaces, the more frequently you tend to find those spaces. Yes, it could be a coincidence, but why question success.

Give gratitude a try. I am grateful for you for taking the time to read this entire article. Thank you, gracias, danke, merci, tack, spasibo, toda, shukran, etc.



Consider the spice, Turmeric, to potentially increase your body’s antioxidant capacity and to decrease inflammation. Add Turmeric to side dishes or sprinkle on fish or chicken.

Don’t forget to check out our website, www.hhwa.org, for upcoming events. Also, check out the article link. There you will find an archive of many fascinating articles on wellness related issues originally published in the *Huntingdon Daily News*.

Future issues will highlight many of the interesting HHWA members. If you would like to be interviewed for the summer edition please contact Dana Jefferson at wintersjoy74@gmail.com.

DO YOU HAVE A HEALTHY RECIPE TO SHARE? DURING THE SPRING, FRESH ASPARAGUS IS AVAILABLE. THE THIN STALKS ROASTED WITH A BIT OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL AND SEA SALT ARE GREAT. YOU CAN ALSO ADD PEPPER, GARLIC, AND/OR FRESH PARMESAN CHEESE. ASPARAGUS ARE LOADED WITH NUTRIENTS AND ARE A NATURAL DIURETIC. IT MAY POSSIBLY FIGHT CANCER AS WELL.

Book Review: Christiane Northup M.D.'s Making Life Easy: A Simple Guide to a Divinely Inspired Life by Dana Jefferson

I have long been a fan of Dr. Northup ever since her ground-breaking book of "Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom" that clearly defined the mind, body, and spirit connection of the female body. For those like me of a "certain age", I can also recommend her book, "Goddesses Never Age." This current book is more of a mixed bag. The chapter titles provide insight into the book's contents. The twelve chapters are:

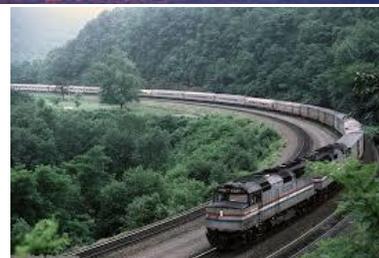
- *You are a Divine Being Temporarily Living in a Human Body*
- *You are an Eternal Being Whose Soul Never Dies*
- *Communicating with the Divine*
- *Understanding the Universe's Messages*
- *Thoughts and Feelings: The Basic Building Blocks of Your Reality*
- *The Power of Giving and Receiving*
- *Keeping the Faith*
- *Blame, Guilt, and Vulnerability*
- *Your Body, Your Temple*
- *Eat Well and Tend Your Inner Garden*
- *Tending Your Vital Life Force*
- *The Power of Community*

As you can see, the book is an overview of basic metaphysical messages reinforcing her usual theme of the mind, body, and spirit connection. For those new to these concepts, this book is an excellent starting place to learn about principles such as the Law of Attraction and tools such as Tapping. The problem is that for those already families with these topics, the lack of depth is a significant issue. Bottom line is that the value of this book will depend on your own previous exploration of the above topics.

A SIMPLE PRACTICE FOR A HEALTHY AND OPEN MIND

One simple practice for a healthy and open mind is TRAVEL. If you have the money, there is nothing like visiting foreign countries, especially having meals with people from different cultures.

To expand one's world view on a budget, check out local attractions. One example is the Railroad Museum in Altoona where you can learn about the amazing immigrants who built the early trains that powered our nation. All aboard!



On-Going HHWA Events

All Events are Free except for Yoga. All are welcome! Donations to HHWA gratefully accepted.

- **Weekly Yoga: Thursday at 6:00 pm**
- **Weekly “Undoing” Relaxation Session: Sunday at 11:00 pm**
- **Monthly Meeting with Program: First Wednesday at 7:00 pm**
- **Shamanic Drumming Circle: Second Wednesday at 7:00 pm
(Beginner instruction available at 6:30 pm)**
- **Movie Night: Third Monday at 6:00 pm**
- **Reiki Share: Third Wednesday at 6 pm**
- **Talking Stick Tuesdays: A Metaphysical Salon: Fourth Tuesday at 7:00 pm**

For more info: www.hhwa.org or contact Dana Jefferson at wintersjoy74@gmail.com.

I hope you have enjoyed this first edition of “The Natural Connection News”, the quarterly newsletter of the Huntingdon Health and Wellness Association (HHWA). As part of our efforts to provide more benefits to our members and be more relevant to the Huntingdon community, this newsletter is just one of our recent change efforts. Every organization goes through many stages as it matures. I am relatively new to the Huntingdon Community and HHWA. I have learned about the past challenges of this organization as well as the important successes and milestones already achieved. We are now just a year away from paying off the mortgage for our building at 313 4th Street in Huntingdon. That will be a huge accomplishment. We are hopeful this will go a long way in keeping our organization financially solvent as well as providing capital for future improvements.

Your articles on relevant topics supporting the mission of HHWA are welcome for future newsletter editions. We will also offer advertising opportunities at the following introductory rates:

\$20-Full page ad

\$13-Half page ad

\$8-Quarter page ad

There is a discount for prepaying for a year’s worth of ads (\$17, \$11, or \$7) per quarter respectively.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter informative and interesting.

Cordially,

Dana Jefferson, Ph.D.

President and Editor