

A Place Called Gratitude

[A Place Called Gratitude](#)

video & voice by [Patrick Willis](#)

poetry by [Les Visible](#)

originally published December 11, 2005

Malachi 3:10

***“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,
that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now
herewith,
saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows
of heaven,
and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room
enough to receive it.”***

Possibly the emotion I experience most often is gratitude. Sometimes it goes on for a length of time and I discover many other things in the process. It is as if Gratitude is a room, dimly lit. As you stand there your presence begins to emit more and more light and to reveal more and more of the contents of the room. Gratitude has attendants and handmaidens; joy, serenity, a feeling of awesome protection. I don't notice these things initially. If my gratitude goes away too soon I do not see to the further reaches of the room. It takes a while for the dynamo to wind up and bring on the full orchestra of sights and sounds.

I've been in the presence of realized masters and it is evident to me, as it is to most people in the room, that there is something different about them. Probably one of the finest talents a person can acquire is to become a 'trained

observer'. In order to be a trained observer one needs to relinquish pre-conceived assumptions and natural prejudice because they taint the quality of your research. It could be said that when the gravity of our assumptions begins to outweigh our capacity to learn, then we no longer grow. Since growth is an imperative, pain enters the picture to offset that gravity. It's apparent to me that many people have a higher pain threshold than I do. I can't take it. Why should I? Why should I, when there are so many more refined stations of being than that of being whipped along the way?

So in watching masters and in reflecting afterwards; where real learning takes place ...because you can't always remain objective in overwhelming presence. I have come to a conclusion about the way they breathe. The state of our minds and our emotions affect the regularity and depth of our breath. Alternatively, the way we breathe affects the quality of our mind and emotions. So I think about gratitude when I am breathing in and out. I am grateful when I eat and I imagine the food as being divine substance. I have to do this. It is a matter of self defense. If I am not eating and breathing consciously then some other agency may be doing it for me. Thoughts like this appear delusional to some and the example of new age mandarins also work against credibility on the part of those who have seen the naked emperor.

These masters didn't get where they are in an afternoon or at a weekend seminar. Of course these things are advertised; like the Thighmaster and those round cages that do your sit-ups for you. My favorites are the patches with the electrodes that stimulate the muscles and turn you into Adonis while you are watching TV. The slenderizer creams are pretty neat and so are the space suits that eventually return you to needing only one airline seat. I haven't seen Shamoo's magic crystal and wealth amulets but I know they are around even if Shamoo is going by another name now.

It comes down to work and there is where problem #1 gives

birth to a lot of other problems and the discouraging catcalls from the peanut gallery of entropic recidivism. There must be an easier way. And this is where gratitude comes in. Gratitude takes the inertia and resistance out of the ride. Gratitude promotes an eager willingness. Gratitude makes it feel good. We've no problem engaging in the things we love to do. If we don't love it then it becomes work. I work all day long every day, a lot more than eight hours. I don't get paid for my work in the way most people do but I do get paid. I get paid in gratitude; in the increased capacity to feel gratitude.

Gratitude changes you. It changes the cells in your body and makes you flexible and young. It neutralizes anger. Most people aren't aware that depression is the result of turning your anger inward; turning it upon yourself. Most people also don't realize that much of their anger comes from their sense of being denied something they insist upon having; whether that is an object, a world view, someone's attention or their right of way on the way to whatever it is that they want or wherever it is they wish to be. Gratitude makes all of that unnecessary. The more grateful you are the more reasons you are going to have to feel that way. This follows observable laws of physics. As above, so below; what you observe taking place here takes place everywhere, whether you can see it or not. This is one of the scientific truths about faith. We take things that are only mathematical theory as everyday fact. We are probably unaware of this but we do. Many people would be quite surprised to find that they regularly practice things that they firmly attest they do not believe in.

If you would simply practice feeling gratitude, breathing it in and out, you would rather quickly become enlightened; or, if you prefer, more enlightened. As good as it feels, why would you want it all at once? Shouldn't the increase in the increments of bliss take forever? Gratitude is a pair of rose colored glasses and a certain biblical coat. That's what I call haute couture. Why wear sunglasses in a dark room?

Because when you are cool the sun is always shining.

I don't know it beyond a 'shadow' of a doubt but I strongly suspect that this is what masters do when they breathe in and out. Of course it may be Love and it may be Peace or Compassion but the origin of every virtue is in the ineffable, just as the colors, pre-prism, are in the white light. There isn't any spiritual thing that can't be understood in a practical, scientific way ...if you are so inclined.

Gratitude greases the wheels of movement into a better state of being. It is a sort of cosmic three-in-one oil. In this time of spiritual crisis you need all the help you can get. I do anyway. But none of this is relevant to my feelings of gratitude; merely attendant to them. I feel grateful because I am grateful. Of all the things that I could be engaged in, of all the people I could have been; see, even now parts of me are departing and I speak of myself as if I were in the past. Of all the things I could have, to have gratitude, well... that makes me a hundred times more grateful just thinking about it.

I feel held. I feel something inexpressible and the very best part is that I know I am not nearly grateful enough. No, I'm just playing at the margins of gratitude. Further on, the room changes into a world of music; the sounds of planets rubbing together, the liquid radiance of stars pouring into an empty cup and over-spilling beyond boundaries and limits. And this is only what I can imagine from the margins. This is only what I can see in the lens of imagination. Once again, science tells me that it moves beyond that. We know a great many things about the universe that we cannot see. How did we come to know these things? Scientific inquiry and tools adapted to the pursuit made it possible.

Thinking about this has had the result of making me even more grateful than I was and so the room has gotten larger. That's good, because my gratitude makes me want to dance and sing and I need the extra room for that. Every breath of gratitude

alters my cells some infinitesimal amount so that critical mass gets closer. This seems to tell me that, "It's getting better all the time." Will shadows fall? Sure... just as darkness will turn into light when darkness falls. Be grateful.

[Connect with Les Visible](#)

Cover image credit: [jobertjamis23](#)