

## **Gratitude Flow 27: There's so much to see!**

When was the last time you paused to consider what your five senses do for you? If you are anything like me, it's probably been too long. What an amazing gift each of our five senses are. I am fortunate to have all of mine in good working order. Most of us do. If you are someone who has a hard time seeing, or can't hear well, or have lost the sense of smell, I want to tell you how sorry I am that you are without one of these direct links to others and our world. The rest of us need to pay better attention and try not to take these sensory marvels for granted.

For starters, think about our eyes and the wonder of being able to see all that is in front of us and around us. When I go for a run or a walk, I try to notice what nature has to offer that day. It may be the changing daylight as the sun rises or the clouds clear. It may be the hint of fresh green we are starting to see in the new grass. It may be the rabbit or squirrel that scampers playfully away. Or it is the crack in the sidewalk ahead that I need to be careful to avoid, or the car at the intersection that I need to wait for.

When I step into my house, where we have lived for nearly ten years, do I see the many aspects of it that I love and appreciate? On many days, I can walk right past memorable photos, a treasured family heirloom, or my favorite recliner and not think anything of it. Here is a good gratitude practice to try. Pick one room of your house each day for a week. Give yourself a few minutes of uninterrupted quiet. Step into each room with your eyes open, really open. Scan the room and think about everything you appreciate there. Feel in your heart the special memories that are stirred up by what you see. Consider the gratitude in having that room in your house, at simply having a roof over your head. Seeing with a fresh set of eyes is a great way to pause and be thankful.

If you commute to work, or take a usual route many days to the store or to drop your kids off at school, how many things are you missing as you drive along the way? Granted, your focus should be on the road and other drivers, but we can still see the beauty and the changes along that route if we simply remind ourselves to look at what we are passing. I am as guilty as anyone when it comes to getting caught up in thoughts of work or the day's to-do list. I miss the sun coming through the tree branches, or the nice driver who let a turning vehicle go ahead. Yet, part of my brain does see these things. We can train our brains to focus on them and not get so caught up in the thoughts that end up blurring our vision, at least figuratively. It starts with awareness and an intentional pause, a deliberate mind-clearing to make way for fresh views.

Just like we can miss subtle changes and beauty while driving, we can also miss subtle messages from the people who surround us if we don't have our eyes in proper focus. Do we walk right past a family member who was hoping to ask for our help but has decided not to because we look "too busy?" Do we miss the look on our co-worker's face when an idea is brought up? A look that could tell us how to best proceed. Do we miss observing our child and our pet having a fun time because we were too intent on our next task?

We are busy people with busy lives and full days. Our sight helps us through these days, an hour at a time. To miss less of what is in our line of vision doesn't require a major overhaul or much time, it simply requires some moments of looking and really seeing the things for which we can be grateful. They are always present, just sometimes unseen.