

ALIGN WITH GOD MINISTRIES

ReAligning your Gratitude Setting: Creating gratitude as your “default” emotion

Taken from “Resetting the Vagus Nerve” by Jim Wilder, Life Model Works

This exercise was created by Jim Wilder and is based on brain science that actually works to reset our fundamental emotion, or default emotion. It's where the brain goes by default when it is stressed or even in everyday life. At nine months of age, the attachment part of our brain is formed. If a mother or caregiver was not consistently available to give us 'happy to be with you' messages, such as with a highly distracted mother, or one who was grieving a loss, depressed or absent, our brains may not have been set on joy and 'happy to be with you' messages. The good news is that this can be changed by the following exercise:

1. Set an alarm on the phone to go off three times /day. Use a soothing alarm.
2. When the alarm goes off, for five minutes, talk to the Lord in prayer and/or journal, about something you *genuinely* appreciate. (Some examples would be: babies, puppies, kittens, mountains, your salvation, etc). Try to choose things that bring you genuine joy and a smile, not just things you think you “should” appreciate. Talk to Him about all the details of what you appreciate about these things, or share them with a person.
3. Then find a minimum of 6-10 items that you always feel appreciation for, regardless of your circumstances, even if you're having a bad day and cannot think of anything to appreciate. These will be your “always” gratitudes. Label these items with one to two words, like “Kittens” or “Babies.” It may help to find a picture of each, and store them on your desktop.
4. Three times a day, for 28 days, be grateful for 5 minutes each time. It helps to notice where you feel the appreciation in your body. It is also helpful to time your 5” sharing times.
5. You can return to one of these 10 labeled appreciation items, if you can't think of something new to appreciate during each appreciation time. If you can think of new things, give them a one-word label as well. If you cannot, scroll through your “always” list of appreciated items and thank God out loud, or share your gratitude with someone nearby.
6. Write down the names of what you appreciated each day in a journal for each of your times, even if you don't record the details, so you can go back to these times and remember or revisit them. Your journal may look something like this: Day One: 1) Babies 2) Kittens 3) Mountains. Day Two: 1) Sunsets, 2) My job, 3) My friend who called me. If you get stuck, ask the Lord to bring to mind something you really appreciate. He knows you better than anyone and is always quick to answer this prayer! Or simply return and repeat your first 6-10 items.
7. If you persist at this (and it can be difficult on some days), you will find yourself enjoying His presence more, just “being” and not “doing” so much. The entire rest/activity part of your nervous system in your attachment center will actually reset after 28 days.
8. If you miss one or two times, just keep going and don't allow it to side track you, but consider adding a day to your 28 day cycle. If you miss an entire day, start completely over.
9. Setting the alarm is key. It doesn't have to be at the same time every day, as long as you do it three times per day. If you cannot do it when your alarm goes off, reset it.
10. Practicing gratitude increases your peace and joy. You may want to rate your peace with a number every day and see if it goes up. Take time to notice the greater joy and peace you have and share it with a friend.

Adapted from Jim Wilder , Life Model Works, "Resetting the Vagus Nerve"