



TOOTHFULLY SPEAKING!

DR. PREETY DESAI

Gratitude, the Immune System and Keeping Your Teeth Longer

There is certainly no lack of justification for having a cynical or negative attitude regarding the happenings of the world: the Filipino hurricane, Rob Ford's antics, the senate circus, war in central Africa..... the list goes on.

In addition, coming to the end of the year, there are so many expectations, self imposed limitations and stresses in one's life. It is a time to reflect on things in life that have not turned out the way you had envisioned. But it is simple during these times that it is VITAL to give yourself the greatest GIFT! Which in turn is shared with all around you automatically and for free!

Drs. Blaire and Rita Justice (University of Texas Health Science Center) have that an "attitude of gratitude has truly amazing measurable and concrete physical and psychosocial benefits." People who truly felt grateful for at least 5 things in their lives, live longer, have less depression, stronger lasting marriages, less immune diseases, less cancer and less heart disease..... and oh yes kept their teeth longer!

Another study compared patients who were born with diseases such as polio, multiple sclerosis, parkinson's and compared their journalling habits. Patients who wrote of things they were grateful for vs negative things, resulted in a patient who slept better, exercised more and had fewer symptoms of muscle weakening compared to patients who wrote and thought negative things!

Clinical psychologists at Eastern Washington University, found that clinically depressed individuals showed significantly lower gratitude (nearly 50 percent less) than non-depressed controls. Several studies have shown depression to be inversely correlated to gratitude. It seems that the more grateful a person is, the less depressed they are.

So whether work pressures, co-workers or family all take things away from you and you feel there is very little space for yourself - humans are still social beings. We have to be a part of this world and others' lives, even if they are strangers in a grocery store line up! So the kindest and most loving thing you can do for yourself is to be grateful that you are in a line up buying groceries and not in the Phillipines or central Africa or even in Toronto!

An ancient proverb: if you've forgotten the language of gratitude, you'll never be on speaking terms with happiness! Look in the mirror when you are brushing your teeth, and think about something you have done well recently or something you like about yourself. Gratitude ... it is about keeping your mind, body, soul and teeth healthier and keeping ALL your pearly whites to reflect in your smile! Happy Holidays Kamloops!



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