



Adding Gratitude To Your Attitude

Arthur Ashe is widely accepted as one of the best tennis players of all time. He was the first African American to win the Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australian Open, and was ranked No. 1 in the world during the late 1960's. Ashe was also posthumously awarded the nation's highest civilian honor,

the 'Presidential Medal of Freedom' by President Bill Clinton in 1993.

Why was Ashe, who was just a sports athlete, awarded this type of honor? It was because there was something more about Ashe than just his tennis legacy. It was his spirited attitude that inspired an entire generation.

In 1983, Ashe contracted HIV from a blood transfusion during a heart bypass surgery. His illness grew from bad to worse. In his tough times, Ashe would receive letters from fans all around the world. Numerous fans conveyed their sorrow and best wishes.

In one such letter, a fan consoled Ashe and questioned: Why does God have to select you for such a bad disease?

While it is easy to agree with the fan, Ashe displayed a perspective which speaks to his character. Ashe replied:

"Across the world — 50 million children start playing tennis, 5 million learn to play tennis, 500,000 learn professional tennis, 50,000 come to the circuit, 5000 reach the grand slam, 50 reach Wimbledon, 4 to semifinals, and only 2 to the finals.

When I was holding the cup, I never asked GOD 'Why me?' And today in pain, I should not be asking GOD 'Why me?'

Even though Ashe was suffering from a terminal disease, he did not choose to complain. Instead, he valued and appreciated the positive experiences in his life. He

did not feel unfortunate to have contracted HIV, but felt fortunate for the God-gifted opportunity to win the tennis Grand Slam three times.

It is easy to complain. It is easy to feel unfortunate or dissatisfied, especially when you compare yourself to other people. But at these moments, let us be grateful and appreciate the things we have been gifted with. Think about all the positive events in your life and be grateful for those experiences. It is a source of peace and satisfaction.

We have so much to be grateful for in our lives. But we should be most grateful to the countless individuals who have played important roles in our lives to help us reach where we are today. It could be our teachers, mentors, and friends. They have taught us, trained us, and helped us at our time of need to help us grow.

We obviously cannot forget about our parents. Without them, we would not exist. Our parents spent sleepless nights and sacrificed their personal lives to raise us. Regardless if we listened to them or not, they still taught us right from wrong and ingrained countless values within us. These values shape us even today.

What we are today is because of all these people who have played the different roles in our lives. So glancing back, which individuals had the most impact in your life? Did you take the time to express your gratitude or at least say 'Thank You' to them?

Cultivating an attitude filled with gratitude involves valuing the efforts of our friends and family. It involves saying thank you, expressing our appreciation, and letting others know how much we value them.

Finally, we have to be ever-grateful to God. He has blessed us with such an incredible and invaluable body. God gives us the strength to walk, talk, think, and live life to the fullest. He has also gifted us with 86,400 seconds each day to enjoy the essence of this very life. So let's take at least one such second to say thank you!



Laugh Out Loud

A curious child asked his mother:

"Mommy, why are some of your hairs turning gray?"

The mother tried to use this occasion to teach her child:

"It is because of you, dear. Every bad action of yours will turn one of my hairs' gray!" The child agreed and innocently replied:

"Now I know why grandmother has only gray hair on her head."



COOL FACT

The best way for experiencing instant happiness is to show gratitude. In one study, subjects were asked to think about the most influential person in their life, and then write down reasons explaining why that person was so important. They then had to call that person and express their gratitude by reading them the list. After doing so, the happiness of both people increased by over 20%! So if are having a tough time, consider calling someone from your contacts list and express your gratitude!

ATMIYA YUVA MAHOTSAV

DEC
30,31
2014



JAN
1,2,3
2015

Swamiji's enthusiasm to celebrate Atmiya Yuva Mahotsav is increasing day by day! Just recently, Swamiji told a senior saint, "Let's arrange a special sabha (gathering) for doctors. During AYM, about 200,000 people will come. We will need a staff of 100 doctors. At any given moment, there must be eight doctors on duty throughout the day." If Swamiji is personally planning the logistics for AYM to this level, have you made your plans to attend and be a part of AYM?

FOUR WAYS TO JUMP START YOUR ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

1. Don't just keep the gratitude in your head. Express it to anyone and everyone.
2. Pause and think about all the daily conveniences you take for granted.
3. Say the words, "Thank You" at least 10 times a day. Say it as if you really mean it.
4. Avoid complaining or passing judgment for an entire day.

Appreciating the Sculptor that Molds Our Character

Equipped with only a chisel and a hammer, a sculptor gently chips away the unwanted parts of a stone. The sculptor invests tremendous effort, patience, and countless hours. As a result, the stone is transformed into a beautiful sculpture.

Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji is like a sculptor, who has sculpted the moral character of thousands of youths to live a positive life. Equipped with only selfless love and compassion, Swamiji has gently removed all traces of negativity from the hearts and minds of countless individuals.

Once, a devotee named Maheshbhai made plans for a family vacation to Goa, India. While driving to Goa, Maheshbhai visited *Haridham* and casually remarked to Swamiji about his vacation plans. After a few moments, Swamiji asked him, "How is the weather in Goa?"

At the time, the weather in Goa was perfect for vacationing, but Maheshbhai did not respond. Then Swamiji asked, "Have you performed a *panchtirth yatra* (touring five holy places)?"

Maheshbhai realized that Swamiji's inner wish may be different. So he asked Swamiji, "What

should we do? Should we cancel our Goa trip? Please tell me what you want us to do."

Seeing Maheshbhai's eagerness, Swamiji responded, "Perhaps you can take a vacation by doing *panchtirth yatra*."

Then Swamiji explained, "You are mature, so I do not mind if you visit Goa. But I am concerned about your son Smitbhai, who is still very young. There is nothing good he can learn from Goa. Instead, the positive cultural experience from the *panchtirth yatra* will teach him moral values which help him become a better person once he grows up."

These days, many people are thinking of ways to 'go green' and reduce environmental pollution. But Swamiji is truly a unique saint because He is thinking of ways to reduce our mental pollution! As per Swamiji's guidance, Smitbhai learned moral values from the rich Hindu culture and avoided any possible negative input from Goa. Swamiji's efforts to guide, protect, and nurture our minds and souls are truly extraordinary!

Once, an extremely troubled youth came to *Haridham*. Constant failure and frustration made him consider suicide. He resolved to speak with Swamiji.

He arrived in *Haridham* on the day of a festival. With thousands of devotees attending the festival, he did not get a chance to meet Swamiji. His frustration was so intense that nothing was going to stop him. That night, He decided to sit down in front of *Anirdesh* (the building of Swamiji's residence) and wait for Swamiji.

The all-knowing Swamiji heard his silent prayer. At 1:45 a.m., while everyone was asleep, Swamiji specially came out to meet the youth. They sat together, and the youth poured out his troubles. Swamiji answered his questions and made arrangements for his needs. The fact that Swamiji came out in the middle of the night just for him moved the youth's heart. The love and care that he experienced proved to be a turning point in his life.

It was Swamiji who sculpted this once depressed youth into a spirited youth. In fact, this youth, at the age of 27, met a young woman of 23 who was heiress to billions. She offered him millions of rupees, a good job, and a car - all in exchange for an affair with her. Although he was in need of a job and money, he was certainly not in need of moral values. Indeed, he was Swamiji's youth!

He resolutely responded, "Ma'am, My character is not for sale. I belong to Hariprasad Swamiji and as His youth, I owe it to Him to live according to His liking. I may lack worldly possessions, but my most precious possession is my spiritual sincerity towards Swamiji, and I cannot compromise this at any cost."

This youth is just one example of countless living sculptures that Swamiji has created! No amount of words can ever do justice to fully express our gratitude to Swamiji! **But let us pause for a few minutes to reflect on His virtuous life, recognize His efforts, and truly thank Him from the bottom of our hearts!**

Finally, Swamiji has declared [Atmiya Yuva Mahotsav](#) as the last major celebration of His life. Let us truly appreciate and honor Swamiji's efforts by attending [AYM](#), wherein we can witness the thousands of living sculptures that Swamiji has created!

Lasting Thought **"Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well."** ~ (Voltaire)

