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Get to Know God through *Gratitude*

By Charlene M. Proctor, Ph.D.

Nobody can achieve their greatest aspirations and sustain them for any length of time without being well-aligned with God's intelligence. But if we directly and consciously align with divine intelligence by first recognizing it within ourselves, we can succeed. We live within a responsive universe whose nature is to keep us evolving, moving, and flowing through all forms of life. It's a living, responding organism heeding our beliefs and requests, so when we are in a conscious relationship with the Divine, our alignment produces faster responses, especially when we express gratitude for all we receive.

Expressing gratitude for coincidences is one way we can align with God's intelligence. Gratitude is a beautiful recognition of the love and support that continuously flows to you, and expressing your gratitude is the beginning of establishing a more conscious relationship with God. Be aware of coincidences; they are moments of grace flying in to lend you a hand. When you have a conscious relationship with the All and ask for help when you need it, you can actually, consciously make coincidences happen. You can invoke a Divine happening or a beautiful event that will serve your purposes. When you are conscious of the Divine Presence all the time, you can learn to invoke it anytime.

In any relationship, isn't it true that you create opportunities to get to know a person better? You learn about that individual by talking to them. And listening to them. When you want to romance another person, you want to create the ideal conditions when you look into his or her eyes. You prepare, maybe buy a little gift, or surprise them with a loving embrace. You build your connection with the Divine the same way. What

also improves your situation. Express gratitude, and the unseen Divine force will become your friend.

If you offer gratitude to the Divine, you soon develop the strong conviction that help is always available. You begin to consciously ask for help. You are no longer be waiting for a stroke of luck and saying wistfully, "I sure hope something comes my way." You feel supported, and pretty soon



little things can you do to develop a relationship, a love interest, with God? The most important aspect of this relationship is gratitude! Begin by recognizing the unexpected assistance you've received during the crises in your life. Be grateful for those coincidences that made your path smoother and for God's energy operating within others that

you're not holding back about asking for more divine assistance. When you say, "I need this new position at the office," or "I can see myself in that beautiful new home," God will lead you into circumstances that will make your wish a reality. Invoke the Presence and always express your thanks. Never think you are talking to thin air. You are surrounded by a



presence, a Divine Spirit, an intelligence that is your friend forever, a friend who will never leave you in your time of need. When you thank God for the help you receive,

you're thanking Divine intelligence and Spirit and reinforcing a strong relationship with the Presence.

Faith Helps Gratitude Grow

Faith is having complete confidence in life's process. It's the evidence of things not seen that gives substance to our hopes and makes us certain of realities we can't see with our physical eyes. Belief is only an initial stage of spiritual progress that is

Belief in God is only the beginning of faith; it's the precursor of conviction. Of course, one has to believe in a thing to learn more about it. But if we are satisfied with mere belief, that belief can quickly become a set of narrow rules, concepts, or expectations. Many religions, for example, offer promises of lovely, carefree afterlives in heaven. Is this heaven a truth or an expectation? If an entire population believes the world is flat or that Elvis is alive and still in the building, does that make it true? The mystics would say that mere belief never makes anything true. Belief is no guarantee of any truth, but only the beginning of the search for wisdom. So what is the purpose of belief? We need it as an incentive to push us into a deeper search leading to an inner truth.

To grow faith in the soil of belief, a person needs direct experience and

believe that it exist, and completely appreciate it. You can imagine its flavor and believe it will satisfy

Your hunger, but that's only an intellectual understanding of the sandwich. If you want to experience the sandwich, you have to eat the sandwich.

When you accept that God's power works through you and is within you, your acceptance strengthens your faith. Faith is a condition of inner harmony, of seeing yourself as God sees you and knowing that the Divine does it all. Without this level of faith, no healing can be brought to fruition, no material items can be manifested, no condition truly changed. People who are successful healers or can manifest ideal conditions in their environment have a level of faith called "knowing." They can take any condition or false belief and identify it as an error-filled thought because they recognize that it was brought forth imperfectly. They know there is only God within, and any true expression is an expression of That. Spiritual masters and faith healers who have realized this truth can declare that a person's faulty condition or illness be set aside. They can bring forth a new condition that reflects the perfect and beautiful state of God. A blessing and offering gratitude brings a desired condition into visible manifestation. Healing is likewise based on reciprocity, especially on the part of the person receiving the healing, who must also have faith that the Divine does it all.

Fear Blocks Faith and Gratitude
The opposite of faith is fear. Fear is an illusion. Like erroneous thinking, fear is a weed, a negative state of mind. How often do we indulge in



necessary for you to receive the concept of God. I The spiritual truth Yogananda taught went far beyond belief. He said belief and faith must be transformed into conviction, into experience. To test a spiritual truth, you must experience it. To experience the Presence, we must realize that God is the only one who is and does everything.

contact with God. It is not enough to say you believe in God; at some point you need to realize God through direct experience! You don't need a religion to translate forgiveness, patience, kindness, humility, or truthfulness—all qualities that we harvest to connect with God—into experience. You can, for example, believe in a roast beef sandwich,

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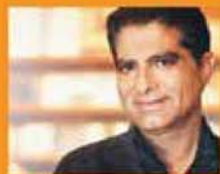
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