

FEATURES

BEYOND HUSTLE: CHOOSING KINDNESS AND GRATITUDE

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In today’s fast paced world, where hustle culture is the norm and daily life is dictated by notifications and deadlines, the importance of being able to pause, appreciate the finer things in life and just being thankful can hardly be overemphasised. World Gratitude Day is celebrated each year on 21-September and it serves as a reminder for people to slow down, find joy in simple things and most importantly be kind and grateful. It is key to note that the virtue of gratitude is something simple yet totally powerful.

“For me, gratitude is really about pausing. Life moves so fast, you forget the small things. I will give you an example – last week, after a really long day of meetings, I came home exhausted. My daughter had cooked me a simple dal and rice, nothing fancy, and we sat together and ate quietly. In that moment, I felt so grateful; not for success or business wins, but for that meal, that silence, and her company. Gratitude, to me, is those little pauses where you realise, “This is enough; this is good” says Dr Malini Saba, psychologist, social rights activist, founder of the Saba Family

Foundation. Small reminders like this make us realize that life is more than just deadlines. “My work is mostly coding, staring at a laptop for hours, and it does get stressful. But then I step away and see my dad waiting with a cup of tea, or my dog runs to me wagging her tail, I realize that, yes, this is what actually matters. Even in my garden, when a plant I thought wouldn’t survive suddenly has a new leaf, or a flower finally blooms after weeks, I feel this quiet sort of happiness. That’s gratitude for me” says Veetu K, software engineer and garden lover.

Gratitude changes the way one views life. It keeps you grounded, helps you strike a balance and broadens your perspective on things and situations around you. “Without gratitude, you are always racing in life. I have been in boardrooms where people are worth billions, but they are miserable, always chasing more. And I have also been in villages where women have nothing but will still share their last *roti* with you. Gratitude changes how you see life. I remember when the tsunami hit; I met a little boy in a relief camp who had lost everything, but he was still laughing while playing with an empty water bottle like it was a toy car. That moment stayed with me. Gratitude doesn’t erase difficulties or challenges but it gives you strength to go through them without losing hope” adds Dr. Saba.

So, how does one practice being grateful? “Honestly, I don’t think there is a set rule. While some keep a journal, for me it is just noticing small things; like the smell of rain, the sunlight hitting a wall in a certain way, birds singing in the morning. And then, you actually let yourself feel it, not just think, ‘Oh, that’s nice’. Saying thanks also helps, even a quick message, or telling someone you appreciated what they did, or just pausing and noticing a kind gesture; it counts. And the more you do it, the more you notice things you hadn’t before. It kind of becomes natural eventually” says Gagandeep Kaur, Communications and Marketing Strategist.

You can start small and not overthink. “Some days, when I am stuck in traffic, instead of complaining, I will look around and notice a tree in bloom or a child holding their mother’s hand and crossing the road. That, for me, is gratitude. I also have a little practice at night; I say thank you for three things before sleeping. Sometimes it’s serious, like being healthy, and sometimes it’s silly, like ‘thank God I found parking today’. It doesn’t have to be deep all the time. Gratitude is a muscle; the more you use it, the stronger it gets” mentions Dr. Saba.

So, at the end of the day, gratitude is really a way of living. It helps you be mindful, conscious, notice people, moments and little gestures. These things matter more than we think; sharing a laugh over tea, helping someone, spending time with family without distractions, or even taking a walk or a deep breath; it all matters. So, on World Gratitude Day, pause, look around, notice the little acts of kindness all around and feel them. It could be the person at the cafe who remembers your order, the security guard who wishes you every morning or anyone who quietly make your life easier. That’s where gratitude lives, in the unnoticed corners. Only once you start practicing being grateful as a way of life, life really becomes simple, more satisfying and definitely more beautiful.