

## 100 Blessings

We use the words *bless* or *blessing* daily in our secular society. Although it has a religious connotation, the word holds meaning for most in the world;

When someone sneezes, we say, "Bless you!"

We often call a challenge that teaches us a lesson a *blessing in disguise*.

Since 9/11 we have joyfully sung Irving Berlin's classic "God Bless America."

Older folks often remind us to *count our blessings*.

We have heard the expression, "It was both a blessing and a curse."

We often end friendly emails with the salutation, "Blessings,"

A blessing is a way of appreciating, noticing or loving a moment. A blessing encompasses unconditional gratitude and love. It is a humble way to be grateful that we have more good than bad in our lives and in the world. It is the flip side of complaint.

Almost every religious and spiritual community participates in the practice of blessings. In my own tradition, the Jewish faith, we are expected to count and cite at least 100 blessings per day. That sounds like an arduous task, and many of us hardly have time to accomplish the tasks our busy days, let alone stopping to say a blessing numerous times an hour. It would present itself as impossible.

Just for the fun of it at, let's look at what it what kinds of things we can bless, what it would do for us, and what it would do for the world.

Sure, we all have issues and problems. Some days it is all we can do to just to get the day over with. Although I bet we would shift that if we knew it was our last day. But in a brief moment, we can shift our attitude by blessing our food, our bodily and mental health, our friendships, our jobs, our children and grandchildren, our pets, our family members, our husbands, wives and partners, our homes, our incomes, the firemen and police men that protect us, the men and women who serve in the armed forces and put their lives on the line for us, our elected officials who serve us, our teachers, guides and mentors, our children's schools, medical science, our doctors, nature, a butterfly, a moth, a dragon fly, the ocean, the existence of roads, our cars, lifesaving medications, the miracle of the functioning of our bodies and on and on. It only takes a few moments to bless something. Blessing something can be the same as stopping to notice and wonder at the stars, or suddenly stopping to enjoy the beauty of a tree you have seen every day, or simply thinking a compassionate thought as you drive by a hospital, convalescent home, or see an ambulance go by. We can bless a birth, a life transition, a marriage, a graduation, a birthday, even a death. We can even bless things that we cannot emotionally understand, like a horrible accident we pass on the freeway or young toddler with a terminal illness. We can bless the waiters and bus-people and checkers and clerks that serve us.

What does it do for us?

I believe it makes our day fuller and richer. It helps us to put our daily problems in perspective. It is a great model for children and everyone else whom we come in contact with. It impacts our perspective. It leaves less time to complain, lament and bemoan. I think can make our lives longer, or at least seem longer. It helps us to smile. It counterbalances stress. It helps us to stop and notice things we may have never noticed. It helps us be in the moment and makes us smile. It encourages all of us to take the focus away from ourselves, and direct it out into the world. Mostly, it helps us replace negativity, pain, loss, sorrow and hurt, with joy.

Try it. Sit down with a pen and a lovely piece of paper and begin listing and counting your blessings. Or, practice pausing during your day to do it as the miracles and blessings unfold. Write your own blessing. I wrote one that I recite every time I find out that I have an illness, a bump, a basil cell, a canker sore, and allergy, a close call accident, a fender bender or a beloved broken vase. "Blessed be that which has brought to me this small, manageable affliction. May the others I face be equally as small and as manageable."

Blessings,  
Rick Concoff, 2012

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