

There is always, always something to be thankful for.

Remembering these experiences will help you recognize that you have intuition, and have used it to serve you well. Play with this! In the next few weeks, practice using your inner guidance system, however you define it. The more aware you are and the more you practice using this amazing instrument, the more you will trust it. Trust your “intuitive signals;” know that “right ideas” are within you and they can help you make powerful decisions.

“Our explorations of the inner worlds often bring us into exciting and unfamiliar experiences and expose us to new ideas and ways of thinking. There may be times when our habitual methods of responding are no longer appropriate. Learning to interpret your intuitive signals will give you an effective means of examining the old and interpreting the new.”

ELAINE ST. JAMES, INNER SIMPLICITY

TOOL #9: Practice Gratitude

Most of us feel good when we are appreciated. But what I’ve discovered over the years is how good it feels not only to receive appreciation but also to *express* appreciation. I do my best to appreciate other people, but I’ve also learned to appreciate and give thanks for everything in my life—my friends and loved ones, my home, my work, the strength, flexibility and health of my mind and body, the beauty and wildlife all around me, the sun shining on my face, the stars reminding me of the everlasting light. My heart is filled every day with gratitude, even for the challenges and obstacles I’ve met along the way. I know they have allowed me to become stronger, more confident, more conscious, and aware. As a result, I am able to deal more easily with anything I encounter as my life continues to unfold and evolve. There is always, always something to be thankful for.

When you practice gratitude, your heart and mind fill up with good thoughts. Good thoughts make you feel good. Feeling good can inspire and motivate you into action. Good thoughts and feelings can help develop peace of mind.

Being grateful draws to you more of what you are grateful for. Remember, what you focus on gets energized. Therefore, what you are grateful for increases.

The amazing thing about gratitude is that, in addition to being grateful for what you already have (another form of *acknowledgement*), you can express gratitude for what you desire.

For example, if you desire greater order and greater peace of mind, you can say, “I am so grateful for my greater order and greater peace of mind.” Once again, the Law of Attraction is at work—as you focus on order and peace (and whatever other qualities you want to experience more of), more of it will come your way.

I love the sign on my kitchen wall that stays up year round. It says, “Thanksgiving was never meant to be limited to one day.” With kids now gone, I have pared down my Halloween decorations to one small pumpkin that sits on the bookcase beside my desk, on which is written, “Be Grateful.” It, too, is there all year long to remind me several times a day to practice gratitude.

What are you grateful for?

Write down some of the things already in your life that you are grateful for:

Write down some of the things you desire that you can be grateful for:

“A grateful mind is a great mind, which eventually attracts to itself great things.”

PLATO

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"Come forth into the light of things, let nature be our teacher."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

To foster an attitude of gratitude, some people keep a journal of all the things they are grateful for. Some write or think about this when they wake in the morning or right before they go to sleep at night. This practice can be very powerful, as it fills you up with good thoughts and good feelings about yourself and your life!

TOOL #10: Learn From Nature

Have you ever noticed the "order" in nature?

From the intricacy of the smallest wildflower, to the vastness of the skies above, there is an order. I invite you to notice the order of things that you see in nature—in the patterns of a leaf, a seashell or a snowflake, the migration of whales and birds, the rising and setting of the sun and moon, the sequence of the seasons, etc. There is a natural order that can serve as a reminder to you of the greater order you are seeking.

Can you find things around you that nurture you?

Pay attention to what's around you in nature. What nurtures you? Flowers, trees, water, wildlife? Sunrises, sunsets, moonlight or stars? I love to watch hummingbirds and dragonflies, and seem to find them wherever I go. What joy they bring! What can you find that nurtures you? Take a deep breath and fill up on the wonders all around you.

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees."

JOHN MUIR

Have you seen things in nature that have become "messages" to you?

Messages can come from the ebb and flow of the waves, the rays of sunshine coming through the trees, or from the light of the moon and stars. I was in Muir Woods (a National Park in Marin County, CA) amidst the tallest of redwood trees, for the Winter Solstice one year when doing some of my deepest work. It was so dark I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. When I looked straight up, beyond the tops of these very tall trees, stars were twinkling in the blue-black sky! The message I got was, "Even in the darkest dark, there

is still light." I was in a very dark place, mentally and physically, and this experience pulled me through, into the light, in a profound way.

What messages have you gotten from nature?

Look around you, whether driving, or walking down a street, along a beach, or on a hiking trail. If you live in a large city, make it a point to visit a park or other outdoor area, or think of the times when you've spent time in nature. Notice, for example, when you see a fallen tree or a fractured limb that has decayed. Notice the sprouts of new growth that are coming forth. The message might be, "From the old, comes the new," or, "There are times when we have to let part of ourselves go to make way for something new."

What are you drawn to in nature?

Are there other messages in nature about letting go?

Walking through a grove of very tall eucalyptus trees became an amazing experience for me when I was working on letting go of "old stuff" that no longer served me. There were very long strips of bark dripping off of the trunks and limbs of these large trees, covering the ground I was walking on. I was astounded at how much of it there was! And then I "got it," and ended up creating a chant about all that I was shedding. I danced through these strips, blessing them, thanking them for their message to me. I was shedding "my old stuff" just as the trees were. I felt lighter and freer than I had in a long time! I think of this experience whenever I'm ready to do some more shedding. I invite you to spend some time outdoors and be open to possible messages, lessons, and learnings.

"Butterflies: nature's way of saying change can be beautiful."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN