

## The Value of Gratitude in Prison

People often question me about my happy disposition. The image they have of inmates is that we are either angry or depressed. My life demonstrates otherwise. Some prisoners have even taken to calling me "smiling Pat". I have found so much to be grateful for that it makes my existence not only bearable but a pleasure.

Gratitude can turn any day into one of substance. Being thankful for what I have in my life and what is missing from it changes my perspective. It allows me to walk through discomfort gracefully and to take positive actions that lead me to joyful emotions. This attitude helps me make the most of my current situation and gives me hope for the future. Everyday I find something to enjoy it adds to my positive outlook for the future.

The beginning of living out a life of gratitude starts with my faith in the Word of God. A scripture I hold close to my heart is Romans 8:28 "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." (Kings James Version). With this verse (and others) I have the encouragement necessary to make use of the opportunities before me and to turn away from self-defeating behaviors.

Gratitude encompasses and cushions me. It surrounds me with a protective barrier that prevents the negativity around me from overtaking my soul. It also softens the blows life throws at me. Being thankful is indispensable in my life as an inmate.

I have positive things to enjoy that are both great and small. Often the small things are what carry me through a day. I will end this blog by listing soem of the things I am grateful for today. I hope in reading them you too will find something to be thankful for.

Today I am grateful for:

- A good Bible
- That I can read and write
- A toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hot water
- Coffee to drink today
- That I have things to occupy my time while being locked in the cell
- A dictionary
- That I will eat three meals today
- That I received paper, pens, envelopes, and postage today
- That I learned to type
- That my cellmate does not mind my using the light
- That I finished my lessons in my correspondence courses for today
- That I will be able to watch the news this evening
- That I can look forward to a couple of hours of being outside tomorrow

Patrick Rath sack T-45624