

# Relationship Rehab Show

FREE DOWNLOAD Show #4

FREE GIFTS to Improve Your Relationships: The Mysterious Alchemy of Gratitude

This excerpt is taken from "How to Stay Married & Love It EVEN MORE!" by Nancy Landrum, with Jim Landrum

## Chapter 5 A World-Wide Famine



**“. . . abundance and lack are parallel realities;  
every day I make the choice of which  
one to inhabit.”**

**Sarah Ban Breathnach<sup>1</sup>**

We don't like to think about the reality of famine. It's one of those unspeakable disasters that happen to other people, not us or those we love; yet we've all seen the photos. It is inconceivable that we could share a world that we know as so abundant with so many who are starving. While watching the appeals for donations on television programs, we feel appalled and helpless. Some give nothing because the little that can be given appears ludicrous in the face of so much need. Others give what they can even though they may never have the satisfaction of seeing with their own eyes the difference they've made.

Famine on the physical level is caused by inadequate nourishment to sustain health or life. There are other ways to starve, however. There is famine on the mental level—a lack of education. Some never have the opportunity to explore the world of knowledge, ideas, and theories. Others have the opportunity, but consume mental “food” at only a subsistence level, barely enough to survive in an increasingly complex world.

<sup>1</sup> Ban Breathnach, Sarah, (1995). Simple Abundance, a Daybook of Comfort and Joy, forward. New York: Warner Books.

Spiritual famine also exists—the hunger for meaning and purpose in life, the desire to deeply *know* that there is order and intelligence beyond our own.

The famine addressed in this chapter is a condition that every one of us has the power to alleviate. The craving I'm writing about cannot be satisfied with a Big Mac, a textbook or faith. It is the hunger to know that someone is *grateful* we are alive and the hunger of character that can only be filled by having a *grateful heart*. It is often buried, but we all hunger to have our accomplishments or our being *recognized*, to be *appreciated* for our efforts or character, and to be *encouraged* to own the magnificence of who we are or can be.

## **GRATITUDE**

Our first grandson, Joey, was born on December 28<sup>th</sup>. A few days later on New Year's Day, when Teri and baby were safely home, the family gathered to celebrate his birth. I treasure a photograph taken of Joey lying on my chest as I was leaning back against the sofa pillows. We were both asleep. I remember our gratitude for his precious life.

We celebrated the early arrival of Jason, who was so tiny that only Karen, his Aunt Teri, and his grandmothers were brave enough to hold him. I had the honor of holding Alyssa just a few minutes after her birth and was privileged to be in the delivery room with Christian, the first to hold him, welcoming him into the world. Other than Pete and Shelley, I was the first family member to hold Katie. Two and one-half years later, I remember the late night call when Peter said, "Mom, I'm holding a little boy in my arms!" sharing with us the safe arrival of Nicholas.

Each of these children has been welcomed with gratitude into the loving arms of this family. Our hearts are *filled* with gratefulness for the unique individuals they are.

When my father was dying, my mother repeatedly told my sisters and me how grateful she was for our help. In her eighties, in spite of the difficulties of diabetes and arthritis, she continued to be a grateful person. She was grateful when I dropped by to see her, grateful to be driven to church, grateful for the nurse who dispensed her medication and the other employees who made her senior living complex such a pleasant, friendly place to live.

Having someone be grateful for my existence or my actions is a form of food that feeds my heart. This is nourishment that every one of us is capable of giving to another. There are dozens of times every day when it would be appropriate to say "Thank you" or "I'm grateful for you."

You may be diligent about saying "Thank you" to your secretary, your sales manager or the box boy at the grocery store. Wonderful, but when's the last time you told your wife or husband that you are grateful they said "yes"? How long has it been since you told your child that you are so grateful that he or she was delivered to you? Is your gratitude for something they've *done* that pleases you or just because they are a treasured part of your life?

Gratitude is a precious gift to loved ones and strangers alike; but the benefit of *being* grateful goes even deeper. *Being* grateful changes a person's life. The author of

Simple Abundance<sup>2</sup> said that we cannot list five things for which we are grateful every night for four months without our lives being changed. Six years ago I took the challenge. We were still struggling to recover from the financial reversals mentioned in Book #1. Every time I prepared a deposit, I thought, "This isn't going to be enough. I'm not sure how we're going to pay this bill." I fretted as though fretting would help. It didn't. I constantly felt squeezed by anxiety and was more aware of what we lacked than what we had.

I began keeping a "gratitude journal" as suggested. Every night I wrote down five things for which I was grateful that day. Sometimes I had to stretch to think of five, one of which was usually that I could finally go to bed! Gradually I began to express gratitude for every bill we successfully paid. The practice grew until I began consciously verbalizing gratitude for every dollar we deposited into our account. I would look out the kitchen window and say "thank you" to the grass for being so green. I expressed gratitude to Jim for his presence in my life, and his sweet kisses!

In October of that year I paid \$1.79 for a package of seeds and a few months later had my breath stolen away by the wonder of 30 feet of fence covered by sweet pea vines more than 7 feet tall! As Jim joined me in the practice of gratitude, we agreed the lavish flowers provided a living, full color demonstration of abundance! Although our financial condition had not significantly changed, I realized one day that I was *feeling rich*. The practice of gratitude changed my awareness from lack to wealth. Soon, we were amazed to see our income beginning to climb. Every financial responsibility was met on time. It is my belief that gratitude opened up a space inside us for more to be given. Worry and our focus on lack closed us down so there was no room for the blessings of more.

Jim feels loved when I express my gratitude for him in my life. He never gets tired of hearing me say how thankful I am for the work he did that helped us save our marriage. I never tire of hearing "Thank you for walking the dog," or "I'm grateful you're mine." Gratitude nourishes the soil in which love grows.

### **Puzzle Piece #6: Feed your relationships with thoughtfulness.**

"I will nourish my partner and others by generously giving words of gratitude, recognition, appreciation, and encouragement."

*"Kind words are like honey—enjoyable and healthful."  
Proverbs 16:24*

*"Gentle words cause life and health;  
gripping brings discouragement."  
Proverbs 15:4*

---

<sup>2</sup> Breathnach, Sarah. (1995). Simple Abundance: A Daybook of Comfort and Joy. New York: Warner Books  
Copyright 2022

## Putting these rehab tools into practice!

The most effective words of encouragement, appreciation, recognition and gratitude are naming something very specific. For instance, "You're a wonderful husband" is not nearly as powerful as, "It was so thoughtful of you to clean up the kitchen last night" or, "I know you always do this chore, but I want you to know how grateful I am that you take care of the

Is there something about which you've been unhappy, and your unhappiness has perhaps cast a critical air over the relationship? Can you choose something about this person or this relationship for which you can begin being grateful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What circumstance in your life would you like to change?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you ready to take the Ultimate Gratitude Challenge and begin a spiritual practice of telling the Universe or God or your Higher Power, "Thank you for this challenge. I believe you mean it for my good. I'm expressing gratitude right now as an expression of my faith. Someday I will look back on this and realize how important this challenge was to my personal growth."

Your thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Changing our emotional focus from the negative to the positive has a wonderfully healing effect on not only the circumstance, but on you. What circumstance in your life needs the transforming alchemy of Gratitude?