

CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment

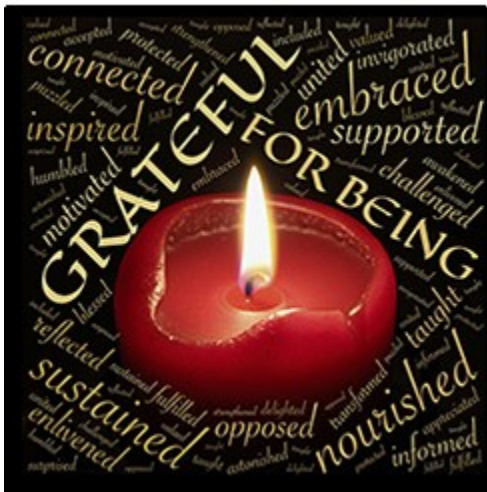


Thanksgiving 2017 Gratitude and Thanksgiving by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." — Robert Frost

America welcomed my immigrant grandparents and millions of others, into "the promised land." They worked hard and thrived. They were grateful to be in the land of opportunity and freedom. They left a legacy of wisdom, stamina, and resilience — something to fill up and nourish the inside, something enduring, though not material.

Today, many people in *America the Beautiful* are reeling from polarizing emotional storms, torn apart by politics, religion, race, class, and greed. Tensions and fears are running high. What's going on?



From a psychological perspective, we develop fear and anxiety of that which is different, unknown, when we lack a solid sense of who we are. Missing out on the crucial inheritances of wisdom, strength, resilience — and love, we are not open to different, other, and it can lead to rigid polarized my way or the highway thinking.

Seeds of fulfillment or fear and emotional hunger are planted early on. Babies are born to bond, thrive when "touched" with love, and feel secure knowing that the world is a safe place. This "felt" knowing, reflected in the eyes of mother and baby, activates the body's mood-enhancing chemicals that make them feel good. Like planting a seed, it continues to live on. As Abraham Maslow stated, our basic needs for physiological survival, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization must be met in order for us to move on.

Without these basic needs met — even though career satisfaction and monetary wealth may have been attained — people remain stuck at a deficiency level: searching for identity, emotionally empty, depressed, unmotivated, addicted, and unimaginably sad. *They feel no gratitude* or satisfaction because their deepest needs remain unmet. Living from a sense of deficiency and self-doubt gives birth to a need for power and control that is driven by an insatiable hunger to satisfy that which is lacking.

Emotionally healthy, stable relationships thrive from a soulful sense of gratitude and confidence in knowing you are "okay" and that you feel comfortable in your own skin. They have little to do with education, wealth, or the achievement of external goals. From this perspective, our days are lived from an enthusiastic mode of gratitude we are inspired to seek meaning and purpose.

Thanksgiving as an Opportunity

Thanksgiving, is about gratitude. This holiday offers an opportunity to pause long enough to give thanks for those inner needs that are getting met. When caught up in the drive for material wealth, and the negative dramas going

on around us, we forget about the soul's *basic* need for love and belonging, family, friends, country. With an attitude of thanksgiving we can look at what binds us, not what divides us.

Gratitude helps us build bridges to cross both our inner and outer divides, calling forth the dormant strength needed to fulfil our highest potential — as individuals, as a nation, and as one global family.

Thanksgiving is an opportunity to gather together and share life time, to pass on personal information or life instructions, perhaps simply on how to do something — even if it's just a recipe! Without this kind of seed-planting, the legacy of love and emotional success simply can't continue to live on.

You can generate more goodness for yourself as you lift the anchor of past traumas and raise awareness of all you have to feel grateful about. Gratitude makes every day one of Thanksgiving.

Tears of joy water our growth. "Thank you for your support!"

*Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D. (PSY22909) is a clinical psychologist who practices in Encino. She leads **Women's Empowerment Groups that help women learn the tools to move beyond self-destructive relationship patterns.** She may be reached at 818.501.4123 or cgelt@earthlink.net. Her website is www.drgelt.com. Her office address is 16055 Ventura Blvd. #1129 Encino, CA 91436.*