Why Gratitude is So Hard

If you find it hard to show or feel gratitude, you certainly aren’t alone! While it may produce a ton of benefits, gratitude isn’t something that comes naturally to most people.

There are several reasons why some people find gratitude harder than others. The good news is, if you do find it difficult, there are things you can try that can help.

Here, we will look at some of the reasons why gratitude is so hard. By gaining a greater understanding of the challenges it presents, you can start to work on combatting them.

The genetic link

There have been a few studies carried out to determine whether gratitude is associated with genetics. While they have established a link, unfortunately the studies have been too small or too restrictive to produce compelling results.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of genes that can potentially link to how we view and approach gratitude. While it is unlikely your trouble with gratitude is directly caused by your genes, it could play a small role.

Is your brain to blame?

Researchers have discovered there may be a difference in brain activity and structure in grateful and non-grateful people. It has been revealed for example, that those who do have a more grateful disposition tend to have more grey matter within the right inferior temporal cortex.

The good news is studies have also shown that brain activity and structure can be altered over time. So, if your struggle with gratitude is linked to your brain, it is possible to change it.

How personality plays a role

Another thing that can make gratitude really difficult for some people, is down to personality differences. We are all unique and we have our own individual personality traits.

Some traits make it more difficult to be thankful than others. These include narcissism, cynicism, and materialism. These types of traits tend to make you focus more on what you don’t have.

Studies have shown that those who don’t focus on material things for example, have a more grateful attitude than those who do. Similarly, those who don’t compare themselves to, or envy others, also have a more grateful attitude.

In terms of narcissism, there is often a sense of entitlement that comes with it. Therefore, people with narcissistic traits do find it more difficult to practice gratitude as they feel they deserve everything they have.

Personality plays a key role in your ability to express gratitude. However, it doesn’t have to control it completely.

Other potential links

Your ability to express gratitude is largely influenced by your genes, personality, and brain structure. However, there are other factors that come into play too.

One of them is how long it typically takes to experience the benefits of gratitude. When you start practicing gratitude, you aren’t going to experience instant results. In fact, it can take a couple of weeks to start seeing the benefits of your daily gratitude practice.

Many people simply give up due to failing to see results early on. So, you are going to need to push through and trust that results are coming.

Another potential obstacle to gratitude is time constraints. You may feel you don’t have the time to dedicate to being more thankful. However, did you know it can take as little as 10-15 minutes each day to build up a more grateful mindset?

These are some of the main reasons why gratitude is so hard for some people. If you are struggling, it could be down to things that aren’t within your control. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t work on building up your gratitude muscle.

There are lots of ways you can become more grateful and incorporate gratitude into your life.