



Practising Gratitude

A fifteen-minute pause in a noisy world — with Paul Cleworth

THE BIG IDEA

We file gratitude under feelings — something that comes over you at a wedding, a bedside, or adrift on a raft — and when it doesn't, we assume we are simply not grateful people. The Stoics thought that was backwards. Gratitude is a practice: done on purpose, whether or not you feel like it, with the feeling arriving afterwards as a consequence. This episode is about doing it on a Tuesday, without the shipwreck.

"Dear God, whose name I do not know — thank you for my life."

— Joe Versus the Volcano, John Patrick Shanley, 1990

Joe Banks, adrift on a raft, starving, finished. A moon comes up — and what comes out of him isn't fear, and isn't a bargain.

"You don't choose a life, Dad. You live one."

— The Way, Emilio Estevez, 2010

Tom Avery walks the Camino his son never got to walk, and a man who wanted no company ends up grateful for it.

EPISODE OVERVIEW

The Hook	A raft, a moon, and the first words out of a dying man.
Please & Thank You	The courtesy rule at Tandem — a rule, not a mood.
Book One	Marcus opens the Meditations with a page of thank-yous — seventeen entries, by name.
The Exercise	Book 7: take the best thing you have and imagine it gone. Then look up.
Karma & the Graces	Not a Stoic idea — but Seneca's circle comes close. Giving, receiving, returning. You are the third.
The Way	Burgos, a returned rucksack, and a changed man walking.
Two Songs	Alanis thanks the hard things; Black sat down to be sarcastic and found he meant it.
The Practice	Write the page. Do the exercise. Close one circle.
Who It's For	Anyone waiting for the moon before they say thank you.

WHY 'PRACTISING'?

In investing — gratitude for what a plan has delivered is the antidote to the comparison that wrecks portfolios.

In family life — the people at your table are on loan. Say the thank-you while it can still be heard.

In business — a courtesy rule costs nothing and compounds. Nobody is asked to feel it — only to say it.

In life — the best thing you have, imagined absent for thirty seconds. Then look up.

"What have I got that I would go to the ends of the earth to get back?"

— and when did I last say so?

STOIC & OTHER WISDOM

"Think not so much of what thou hast not as of what thou hast: but of the things which thou hast select the best, and then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought, if thou hadst them not."

MARCUS AURELIUS • MEDITATIONS, BOOK 7

"To the gods I am indebted for having good grandfathers, good parents, a good sister, good teachers, good associates, good kinsmen and friends, nearly everything good."

MARCUS AURELIUS • MEDITATIONS, BOOK 1

"From my grandfather Verus I learned good morals and the government of my temper."

MARCUS AURELIUS • MEDITATIONS, BOOK 1 — THE FIRST LINE OF THE BOOK

"The course of a benefit is from hand to hand, back to the giver; the beauty of the whole chain is lost if a single link fails."

SENECA • ON BENEFITS, BOOK 1 — THE THREE GRACES

REFERENCES THIS EPISODE

FILM

Joe Versus the Volcano (1990) • The Way (2010)

MUSIC

Alanis Morissette — Thank U (1998) • Black — Wonderful Life (1987)

BOOKS & THINKERS

Meditations — Marcus Aurelius • On Benefits — Seneca • The Book of Joy — Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu • The Antidote — Oliver Burkeman

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THE STEADY PATH PRINCIPLE

Notice it. Say it. Return it.

THIS EPISODE'S REFLECTION QUESTION

"What have I got that I would go to the ends of the earth to get back — and when did I last say so?"

Joe Banks needed a shipwreck and a moon to ask it. You don't. The moon comes up every night, wherever you are. Look up.

COMING UP — EPISODE 12

On a Mission

"What have I been charged with — and who is on the other end of it?"

Why a job to do beats a prize to win — with two brothers, a battered police car and a full tank of gas.

TAKE THIS WITH YOU Gratitude is not a feeling you wait for. It is a thing you do — and the feeling arrives afterwards.

Slow down. Think clearly. Keep walking your steady path.

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