

Gratitude Begets More to be Grateful For

How to use this card:

*Pass this card around. Each person please state your name and read a small section of the content on *Gratitude Begets More to be Grateful For*:*

Concept 17: Gratitude Begets More to Be Grateful For

Living in a state of readiness to feel and express appreciation is a rich and rewarding practice.

The Suppers Programs are grateful to all the individuals, families, programs, researchers, clinicians, and writers whose ideas give life to this program. Credit is given on our website, www.TheSuppersPrograms.org in “About Us,” “Recipes,” “Stories,” and “Resources,” as well as in our member book reviews. We are grateful for experts who devote their careers to helping us and to the programs that save lives and hold answers for many of us. We are grateful for the accumulated wisdom of all who went before us, giving us more choices for our personal pathways.

Mary’s Beginner Story: They Raised Me to Have Faith

I didn’t get off to a very good start. It’s hard for me to talk about my family without feeling disloyal. But at Suppers we’re supposed to be making good matches between our problems and our solutions, so I think I have to give a name to my childhood experience.

It was an alcoholic home. My parents were people of faith and raised me to love God, but we lived on canned vegetables, meat, potatoes, cigarettes, coffee, and alcohol. I thought all families were like this. If there ever was fresh fruit in the house I don’t remember it. Of course, I had no idea which of my problems related to the family relationships or the food or what have you. Alcoholic household was my norm.

So in college I smoked and drank. I ate food I now know was bad for me. Luckily I was determined not to be like my parents, so first went the cigarettes, then the alcohol. But I never ate well. Somehow thirty years slipped by and my health took a nose-dive in a way that got my attention. In my late forties my grueling work schedule and poor diet caught up with me. I think it would be safe to say I wore myself out working all hours and eating most of my meals away from home. The problems included long-standing constipation, brain fog, memory loss, feeling overwhelmed, and a laundry list of physical complaints. I felt 90 years old and I wasn’t even 50 yet! My doctors called it fibromyalgia.

Earlier this year – just before I came to Suppers – I couldn’t function at all. I was in and out of hospitals, shuttled between doctors, tested for swine flu and Lyme Disease. Even after spinal taps the infectious disease specialists never found anything conclusive. So my condition was deemed viral. I lost fifteen pounds in the hospital. The staff nutritionist said I had to make every calorie count: only nourishing real food was allowed.

But I had never eaten what she said was healthy. I didn’t cook, didn’t recognize the vegetables, didn’t know their names – I hated vegetables. When a friend told me about Suppers I realized that this program could save my life. It didn’t matter that I was intimidated by food and cooking. Good nutrition had become a life and death matter for me. But how was I going to make peace with vegetables?

The logical miracles started happening the first day I arrived. The food was delicious! I ate leaves whose names I did not know and enjoyed them. I started having bowel movements every day or two, which is a small miracle for someone who has lived with the misery of constipation her whole life.

I volunteered in a community garden to learn even more. Imagine me, Mary, harvesting chard and preparing it deliciously.

It's been only a few months. My memory is not what it should be. I still have a filing system and contrivances to compensate for my poor memory. As my strength returns, I feel the pull to work ridiculous hours and still care for my aging mother (who still lives on coffee and cigarettes), so I have set my goals for Suppers with self-care at the top of my list: I will work less. I will eat as I'm learning at Suppers. I will take care of my mother. I will learn from my lessons and proceed with a clean heart. And above all, I will be grateful to my parents who, for all their faults, raised me to have faith in God in Heaven, who wants this healthier life for me.

Continue around the table by briefly sharing how you relate to the Suppers concept of Gratitude Begets More to be Grateful For.

How do you express gratitude? With words? Action?

Discussion Prompts (Each person select a prompt that works for you.)

- When do you experience gratitude?
- How have others expressed their gratitude to you?
- Does gratitude come naturally to you or do you need to practice it?

Ideas for Next Steps:

Experiments and Observations

- Just notice when and where you are when you're experiencing gratitude and share it with a trusted other.
- As you start noticing, capture the feeling in a journal or by sharing with another person or however you can mark the experience.
- Jot gratitude notes in a journal, even for just one minute a day.
- Jot down qualities about yourself for which you are grateful.
- Write a note you may or may not actually send expressing gratitude to someone and observe how you feel.

Between Meetings:

- Read how other Suppers members related to this concept.
 - For people who experience pain, read [Vicky's story](#), page 224 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
 - For people concerned about their weight, read [Helen's story](#), page 230 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.
 - For people who experience depression, read [Cindy's story](#), page 231 in the 2nd edition of *Logical Miracles* or on the Suppers website.