



The six pillars of deep gratitude

I believe there are six pillars upon which gratitude rests, and without which we can neither develop it as a virtue or as part of our character, nor really express gratitude so that it has a powerful transformative force in our own lives and society as a whole. These six pillars are:

1. **Relatedness** - To be able to move from the sense of gratitude as an emotion to gratitude as an action – or deep gratitude – requires a commitment to putting priority on the relationships in our lives.
2. **Sincerity** - A common challenge is expressing gratitude in ways that are authentic to us and meaningful to the other person. Otherwise our gratitude risks being transactional, where we are wanting something in return or are being self-serving.
3. **Empathy** - Even if we have found the authentic place within from which we sincerely express gratitude, we need to be able to put ourselves in the shoes of the person we wish to express gratitude to, and understand all of the cultural and social nuances of gratitude in their context.
4. **Self-regard** – Or what we might also call self-love, helps us to establish a clearer position on how we wish to be treated by others. It also helps us to express gratitude for the good points we may be able to still see in those we feel have harmed us.
5. **Integrity** - A common meaning given to integrity is ‘wholeness’, or to be honest and true to who we are. This implies that we are choosing to be grateful and taking responsibility for our state of being in the sense that we are not making it dependent upon another.
6. **Humility** - Without the pillar of humility, deep gratitude would be impossible. Where others have wronged us, it takes great humility to maintain relatedness with them through gratitude.