# The Difference Between Gratitude and Thankfulness

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“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow” *— Melody Beattie*

Thanksgiving is a holiday dedicated to the focus of being thankful. This time of year can give us that warm, fuzzy feeling when we spend time feeling thankful for the things our lives include. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word thankful as “pleased and relieved.” Both of those are great feelings. Everyone wants to be pleased and relieved. But that’s just it; they’re just feelings, and feelings fade.

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word grateful as “showing an appreciation of kindness.” This is where the difference lies; being thankful is a feeling, and being grateful is an action.

It’s easy for us to look around the Thanksgiving dinner table and say that we are thankful. Some are surrounded by family, friends, and food and in that moment in time, we’re currently experiencing that warm, fuzzy feeling that comes with a holiday gathering; we’re thankful. We may feel thankful for their presence in our lives, and happy that everyone is well since the last gathering. However, gratitude goes much deeper than this. It is a state of being, where you feel a sense of appreciation that comes from deep within. You are at peace with the world, and appreciate that state of affairs deep within. The feeling of calm these thoughts and emotions bring to mind we find fulfilling.

Gratitude is more than just the feeling of thankfulness. Being thankful is the first step, and we have to have that initial feeling to build upon. We build upon it by redirecting our focus into making gratefulness an intrinsic part of our lives 365 days a year. Gratitude requires us to stay alert of the role of others in our lives. This is different from the fleeting nature of the act of a mere ‘thank you’ or feeling thankful one day of the year. Through gratitude, we get to make a sense of our lives and learn to credit our loved ones with the appreciation they deserve.

The key is keeping gratitude at the forefront of our lives. It’s not just thinking about how thankful we are to have all that we have. It’s about living out that gratitude through the simple things we do every day. Gratitude is the manifestation of love, devotion and commitment towards those who mean the most to you. It encompasses shared experiences, shared love and an understanding that the universe has conspired to keep us happy, and help us understand how connected we are to others.

As we head into that special time in November, find a Gratitude Journal, and open your mind up to just how helpful this simple practice may be on the path toward embracing your thankfulness. A Gratitude Journal is the practice of jotting down, each day, things that we are grateful for and allow us to become more present and aware. <https://www.psychmc.com/articles/difference-between-gratitude-and-thankfulness>