

Episode 23

Giving Thanks for an Embodied Life

Hi, I'm Rosie Bank and I'll be your host on this episode of Health Matters Podcast. I'm super jazzed about this podcast topic. In present time we are entering the holiday season. You might be listening to this when it is not that time of the year, but you will learn quickly why my message is designed to be useful during any month.

Before I jump into the content, let me thank you for tuning in to Health Matters Podcast. If you resonate with my message today, feel free to subscribe either at www.RosieBank.com/podcasts or on the iTunes page directly. Also, go ahead and give us a like. We really appreciate your vote and your sharing this resource with anyone you know who might need some help and encouragement in the health and body arena.

There are more resources at www.HealthMattersCoaching.com. If you are looking for a Health Coach and you heard about me through this podcast, just send me an email to Rosie@HealthMattersCoaching.com with the subject podcast discount. Include your phone number and I'll get back to you within 48 hours. Also, check out our online community at www.BankOnYourBody.com.

At Health Matters Coaching all roads lead to health and vitality.

It's currently November. Tis the season to be grateful, right?

As we head into the holidays, it's always good to get a jump on giving thanks. Heaven forbid we reduce expressing our gratitude to just one day per year. Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. No presents, no religion, great food with loved ones, and totally about giving thanks.

But let's remember to be grateful for one of our most precious gifts – our bodies. Not just on Thanksgiving. But throughout the year.

Given that we rely on our bodies every single day of our lives, I'd love to focus here on **being grateful to our bodies**. You can start now. Look down and thank your body for getting you to this point in your life. Sure, things might not be perfect, but *still*, **thank you body**.

For what can you be thankful? Here is a partial list. It can get you thinking of the ways being grateful to our bodies makes sense.

1. We eat food, digest it, get nourishment to our cells, and eliminate the waste.
2. Our bodies allow us to sleep and repair during the night.
3. Our bodies can hear music and see beauty in others and nature around us.

4. We can touch others and feel others touching us back.
5. Our bodies let us know when we are hungry, thirsty, have to pee, poop, and yup, feel like making love.
6. Our hearts beat, and sometimes our hearts beat faster, keeping up with the rhythm of our lives when we move and exercise.
7. Our bodies speak to us in the language of emotions, guiding us to feel our way throughout a variety of situations, including joyful ones and challenging ones.
8. Our hearts can also slow down, in rhythm with relaxing, breathing, and meditating.
9. Our bodies enable many of us to jump, hike, swim, stretch, bike, skip, hit a pickleball paddle, do a dog pose, and swing a golf club.

Oh, I could go on, and on, and on, and on. Along my journey I've made many lists of ways I am grateful to my body. I recommend this joyful exercise for you. It helps us tune in and live in a state of gratitude. Funny thing. In fact, starting immediately, you can remind yourself what you are grateful for in your body last thing before you go to sleep and before you get out of bed in the morning.

The more we are grateful, the more ways we find ways to perpetuate that. For example, if you are grateful to your body for enabling you to move freely, you may be inspired to continue to stretch and move your body. Gratitude is a state of body and mind. The saying goes like this: What we appreciate, appreciates.

It is an honor and a privilege to take care of our bodies. This is why I have devoted my practice to inspiring others to love their bodies and to get their bodies to love them back. Are you doing this? During this holiday season (as well as throughout the year) checking in to make sure you are cherishing your body, and, heavens forbid, not neglecting or abusing your body would be a super smart thing. This is the gift that keeps on giving.

Oh, me being me I can't help but give you one more bonus on this topic. It is common for people to feel their bodies and to think about their bodies only when their bodies give them some kind of warning. Pain, discomfort, and stiffness are examples of when you might be listening to your body. If you want to benefit from the super-deluxe version of gratitude, be sure to thank your body for even the tiniest of positive experiences. Thank you body for sitting at my desk long enough to get this project done. Thank you body for have four full days of my back feeling great. Thank you body for the freedom I feel in my neck today. Thank you body for craving steamed broccoli and not a plate of greasy fries.

You get the picture. So will your body.

Speaking of the conversation you have with your body, I'd love to discuss embodiment.

One of the best ways I know to express gratitude to our bodies is to live an embodied life. Embodiment is the experience of living life while feeling a connection to your physical self. This

includes an awareness of the myriad parts of your body, including and not limited to how you move, how you feel (also called your emotions), and how to meet a variety of biological needs.

Living with embodiment entails an on-going sense of how to nourish, nurture, and care for your body in an assortment of wholesome, life-enhancing ways. This includes and is not limited to how you provide your body with rest, nourishment, hydration, movement, relaxation, and loving connection with others. The loving connection stems from your body and mind being extensions of each other, not separate entities.

What a privilege it is to live an embodied life. There is an entire chapter in my book, [Health Matters](#), titled “Take Your Body with You.” You may have heard of leaving your brain on the train? Well, in this case, don’t leave your body on the bus. Living an embodied life looks like going through your day with an ongoing sense of making choices that support you to be well. This can be compared to a hum in the background. A thread of connection so that you include stretching, strengthening, moving, providing your body with rest and whole nutrient-dense food, because this is who you are. Sure, you are *doing* these things. And then one day, it dawns on you. Embodiment has become a state of being. Then you are not just doing embodied activities. You are being an embodied person and the activities come as a natural extension of this.

Another aspect of appreciating our bodies, showing our gratitude and living an embodied life is what we tell ourselves. In every single [client session](#) I find ways that the women and men with whom I work can “upgrade” their thoughts. Recently someone tossed out a declaration that she – in her words – *constantly craves homemade cakes and breads*. I asked her if she was craving those items at that moment. She paused and eventually said, “Well, no, actually, not now.” I pointed out that it does not appear to be true that she *always* craves these foods.

I showed her how to use language to relegate certain behaviors to the past, where they belong. If you, for example, have *in the past* struggled with some undesirable behavior, say, overindulging in sweet food, watch and listen for what you tell yourself about this behavior. You can drive this belief deeper and deeper into your subconscious by repeating, also called affirming, the behavior. When you do this, you reinforce its presence simply through the act of repetition.

In the spirit of giving thanks, let’s be sure that we are telling ourselves what best serves our ability to enjoy health, energy, and vitality. Memes are what we tell ourselves over and over. Think of them like little packets of truth. We have emphasized them to ourselves enough times to the point that now we simply believe what we have convinced ourselves to regard as true.

Like with my client, you can interrupt the memes that reinforce undesirable behavior. You can use language, such as “*In the past...*” And, “*I used to...*” as a way to put distance between you and the behavior. Each moment, each hour, each day that you put time and space between you and that behavior frees you up to look ahead. It is in this open space, that what lies ahead of you helps you develop focus, strength, and courage. This is where you make new, wholesome life-and-health-enhancing choices.

In a state of gratitude, you find “upgraded” thoughts which become your point of focus. And in this state you recognize and choose not to complete those thoughts that do not serve your loving relationship in which you actively cherish and give thanks to your body.

The process of doing this is very simple. Getting really good at this takes time, patience, and practice. Gradually you get to the point where you begin to uncouple yourself from some now erstwhile habits.

Here is what the Siddhartha Gautama Buddha says on this very topic.

“You are what you think.

All that you are arises with your thoughts.

With your thoughts,

You make the world.”

A word about stress.

Currently my team and I are putting together an online course called **Unwind from Stress**. We have not launched yet, but I wanted to give you some previews since we are excited about the content. Eventually you will be able to find this course at www.HealthMattersCoaching.com, so be sure to check back.

Consider this the trailer for the course.

While we are on the subject of language, here’s a tip that has changed my life, and that my clients use by going through the [Health Matters](#) system. Instead of talking about wanting less stress, or to manage stress, or to stop being stressed out... change your point of focus. Use different words. **Peace, harmony, calm, and relaxed** are words that your body understands. In choosing to increase peace, harmony, calmness, and relaxation in your life, you pivot from making it about less stress, and toward creating a new inner landscape in your body-mind.

What can you do to feel peaceful?

How can you create more harmony?

What helps you feel calmer?

What helps you relax?

I recommend that you choose activities designed specifically for increasing and improving these states. Watching television may help you unwind, but be sure to include activities that are specifically mind-and-body based. Going for a walk or a swim, or taking a stretching class are examples of what I mean by body-and-mind based. Your body will thank you back for carving out that time to focus on you, and this is significant. The benefits of changing your point of focus compound over time. Like everything we discuss here at Health Matters, practice is key.

By the way, the sub-title to the course is “How to increase peace, relaxation, harmony, and calmness in your life.”

Also, since I love and use the word **wholesome** so often, I decided to look it up. Here is a definition according to Webster’s:

Conducive to or suggestive of good health and physical well-being.
As in: "The food is plentiful and very wholesome."

No wonder I love this word.

Another topic that we will cover in Unwind from Stress is nutrition. There are three things you can do to enjoy the benefits of providing your body with food that lights up your cells with vitality and lasting energy.

First, when you feel the impulse or urge to eat or drink, ask yourself if you are hungry or thirsty. Eating when you are hungry and drinking when you are thirsty are as natural as going to the bathroom when you have to pee or poop. And I’m talking about water, not the kind of thirst that may lead you to a glass of wine or a craving for an excessively sweet chai tea latté.

If you aren’t hungry or thirsty, ask yourself what you are feeling. Naming your emotions helps you understand what drives you to reach for food. A *partial* list of what you might discover when you name your emotions are: boredom, loneliness, fear, anxiety, overwhelm, anger, or frustration. Sometimes even so-called positive emotions like excitement and joy can trigger an impulse to eat. Note that some people use food to bring themselves down from an emotional high because they are not comfortable with a burst of positive energy. That’s just a heads up in case you need to be aware of this pattern in yourself.

Once you name your emotions, do something that soothes you, that is wholesome, and that is naturally good for your body and your mind. I’ve mentioned already some common and easy-to-do activities that can be go-to responses when you feel like eating but you aren’t hungry.

And last, simply pay attention to the quality of food that you select, if you are indeed hungry. Every pro-health choice that you make positions you to be ahead on your own journey. Living with vitality is the result of a string of little choices, ideally being uninterrupted by any ways you *used to, in the past* sabotage or abuse your body. Whole food over processed food. Fresh food over packaged food. Fruits, veggies, and salads over fast food. A brisk walk instead of slogging away hour after hour at your desk without getting up. This is a reliable way for you to show your body that you love and appreciate your body, and to give your body a chance to love you back.

You create your health. You do this deliberately, with intent. Your choices stem from purposefulness. You understand the value to you, like you do when you save money and make financial decisions. It is the ultimate gift you can give yourself. All the material things in the world add up to nothing if, oops, we didn’t make good choices and allowed our bodies to become ill. Dr. Michael Greger, author of *How Not to Die*, says that he knows that he will die

someday. But his plan is to avoid this happening as a result of self-inflicted causes. I am inspired by Dr. Greger's plan and I am advocating it here.

One of my clients was recently diagnosed with diabetes. She realized that a lifetime of habits and choices collided and resulted in this scary and infuriating diagnosis. But bless her soul... she got her wake-up call. Now she reminds herself throughout the day of all the things I've been encouraging you to consider. She had an enormous boulder to climb over. Going from being furious with herself for allowing this to happen... to forgiving herself... to being grateful for the chance to pivot and move in another direction is her opportunity. She confessed that she is not totally there yet, but she is willing to consider that in the long run, this diagnosis is the best thing that ever happened for her. Why? Because she now gets to make a whole new set of choices.

It is within the realm of possibilities that as a result of this enormously upsetting news, she can become her healthiest self in the future. This, my friends, is the doctorate-level course in gratitude. Imagine the courage it requires to organize this reality into an opportunity for something better to happen. This is why I use words like strength and determination when I describe living in this way.

This is going to require work and effort regardless where you are on the health spectrum. "Tis the season to be grateful. I invite you to consider this season your entire life. Your body is a gift. Living an embodied life is a joy and a privilege. Enjoy the holiday season, and more importantly, enjoy this life, your life, this body, this time around. Health matters... and so do you.

Remember to give us a like and to subscribe at iTunes, or at www.RosieBank.com/podcasts.

I am Rosie Bank, Founder of Health Matters Coaching. I love you and I love that you are open to doing this amazing work to help yourself feel better and thrive. I love that we all care to make the world a better place by making our health a priority. Meet me and join us at www.BankOnYourBody.com where you will find like-minded people and lots of great resources. Help me get to know you and let me know what you would like for me to write and speak about.

In closing, let me remind you that your health matters. Your body matters. Be grateful during the holidays and also throughout the year.