

**MONEY
EVERYDAY
CHEAPSKATE**

Gratitude gives lift to emotions



**MARY
HUNT**

In a recent column, I challenged my readers to dump their negative thoughts, which can lead to negative and destructive behaviors so easily. The assignment was simple: Write down 10 things for which you are grateful. My inbox was sizzling for days as they sent in their lists. The responses were all heartwarming, but perhaps none was as poignant as the one from Ally, a high school student:

"This is such a good column. I am having a really tough time in high school right now. Even though most times I have positive thoughts and attitudes,

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sometimes it gets really hard.

"After reading this, I wanted to send you my 10 good things in life.

"1. I have a caring family.

"2. I have amazing friends.

"3. I have the opportunity to wake up in the morning.

"4. I am able to watch the snow fall.

"5. I am able to go skiing with my friends in the winter.

"6. I was able to be at the beach this summer for a whole week without my parents.

"7. I was blessed to have a special person in my life who is now in a better place.

"8. I have another very special person who is always there and I can always talk to about anything.

"9. I am able to read great books.

"10. This summer I was able to have a dream come true and attend a concert of my favorite singer.

"Every time I find myself getting negative I will try and remember each of these special times and people God has blessed me with. Thank you so much."

— Ally

The same day I received Ally's message, I picked up Deborah Norville's new book, "Thank You Power." In

it, she presents the latest research on the impact of positive emotions in our lives. The influence of gratitude is quantifiable both physically and emotionally. She presents scientific proof that we will be happier, healthier and better able to handle the stresses of daily life simply by saying thank you.

I hope Ally is reading this so she will know that she's not the only one who was impacted by her willingness to be grateful. Reading her message filled my heart to overflowing. Then I passed it around the office. In a kind of ripple effect, the "Ally Letter" touched each of us in a positive way. And now the ripple effect goes on because I know Ally has touched your life in a positive way, too.

Want to dump your horribly destructive negative feelings? Start writing. Just 10 things. And yes, my mailbox is still open for business! And while you're thinking about it, pick up a copy of Deborah's book. It's short, easy to read and carries a powerful message — one that can change your life.

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