

["Workship " with "Grattitude "](#)

Category : [October/November/December 2005](#)

Published by Anonymous on Oct. 01, 2005

IN MY OPINION

"Workship " with "Grattitude "

The rewards of hard work and thankfulness

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I completed high school in India 58 years ago. Eighteen years after that, I received my Ph.D. in the United States. For the 40 years that have transpired since then, I have been working at the same job. Now, in my eighth decade of life, people are beginning to ask me why I continue to work, why I don't just retire and enjoy life. I always reply that I love my job and I enjoy my work. Still, everyone is wondering what keeps me going.

Finally, I announced to the people that I work with--all 150 of them--the secret of my inspiration: gratitude. In his divinely beautiful style, Gurudeva Sivaya Subramuniaswami (founding publisher of Hinduism Today) explains: "Gratitude and appreciation are the key virtues for a better life. They are the spell that is cast to dissolve hatred, hurt and sadness, the medicine which heals subjective states of mind, restoring self-respect, confidence and security."

I am grateful for many things. But most of all, I am grateful for the Hindu heritage I received from my late pious parents. They lived in a village called Kakumanu in Andhra Pradesh, India--halfway around the world from my Illinois home. As I reflect upon my young life with them, I am convinced that it is their influence that has fostered the development in me of what I now consider to be the ultimate attitude for the enjoyment of work. To further express this concept I have been inspired to coin two new words for this article: grattitude and workship.

Gratitude means an attitude of gratitude. In the performance of my job, I feel gratitude for the opportunity I have been given to help facilitate the education of our wonderful youth, through my teaching, writing and administration. I have learned that performing such work with gratitude yields immediate enjoyment, while performing that same work expecting appreciation in return yields the opposite effect.

Workshop means approaching work as worship. This is nothing new. It's an old Hindu concept which I am just now identifying with a catchy new word-name. In his article, "Work Is Worship " (Hinduism Today, July/August/September 2004), Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami lists four ways to cultivate what I would call workshop: "1) integrate spirituality into work; 2) seek ways to serve; 3) dedicate your actions to God; 4) work on yourself." When I read this I realized that I had been following these practices for a long time.

I approach my job every morning with the thought that I am going to the "Temple of Electrical and Computer Engineering, " where I will workshop. The first thing I do when I enter my office is offer salutations to a statue of Lord Ganesha, which I have installed in a small shrine there. Then I go to workshop with my staff, students and faculty colleagues, striving always to carry out my tasks with a willpower born of the conviction that "for every problem, there is not just a solution, but a good solution."

I have found that when one is able to practice workshop with gratitude, rewards come without being sought. Recently, a student walked into my office unexpectedly. She was carrying a beautifully framed painting of Ganesha and a greeting card, which read: "If we measure success by the number of lives we touch and the ways that we reach out to others and truly make a difference, then it's hard to imagine a richer life than yours."

Certainly, at that moment I was filled with immeasurable gratitude--not just for such a wonderful gift and the beautiful thoughts behind it, but for everything. I may now honestly say that I am truly grateful to all for all, because I have learned, in my 70-plus years, that true enjoyment is the result of workshop with gratitude.