

Want happiness? Be grateful.

✖ Early this summer, when life wasn't quite going in the direction I wanted, I read Mitch Albom's "Have a Little Faith." Albom, a well-known Detroit sports columnist and author of "Tuesdays with Morrie," wrote the book after his childhood rabbi, ?Al Lewis - 'The Reb' - asked him to deliver his eulogy.

At the same time Albom began meeting with his rabbi to prepare the eulogy, he encountered Henry Covington. Covington, a former drug dealer, was pastor of the "I Am My Brother's Keeper" ministry in Detroit. The inner-city preacher had turned his life over to God one night when other drug dealers set out to kill him.

"If you save me tonight," Covington said, "you can have me."

The criminal reformed his life. He began a ministry to the homeless, sheltering them in a church that had a gaping hole in the roof.

The two men of faith shared an unshakeable trust in God and a palpable sense of joy. What's more, they viewed everything they had as a gift from God.

One day when Albom was speaking with his rabbi, he asked how a person finds happiness.

"Be satisfied," the Reb said. "Be grateful. For the love you receive. And for what God has given you."

"That's it?" Albom asked.

"That's it."

In a column for The Catholic Review, Father Joseph Breighner once pointed out that none of us can control what happens to us, or around us, in life.

"But we can control what we choose to focus on," he said. "Whatever we focus on will expand. If we focus on what's wrong, we will see more of what's wrong. If we focus on what's right, we'll see more of what's right. Life, fundamentally, is a choice, a decision, to look for the best and to be our best."

This Thanksgiving, I'm focusing on what's right. I'm thankful for family and friends who stand by me, for a job that I love when so many are looking for work and for the gift of life.

Take the Reb's and Father Joe's advice. If you want some joy in your life, be grateful. Focus on what's right.

It works.

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