

THANKSGIVING QUIZ

What Kind of Grateful Are You?

by Rabbi Debra Orenstein

ANSWER KEY

Of course, everyone is a mix of all types, and most people have more gratitude “triggers” than they regularly notice. However,

If you answered with mostly a’s: You experience gratitude by way of contrast. You have a strong awareness of being spared (it might have been worse! lucky we weren’t in that lane!), as well as a strong sense of being blessed. You may be subject to existential Jewish guilt, as you have a lot of compassion for others. Focus on the positives, but don’t lose your empathy or your gratitude for blessings that some others may take for granted. In terms of Thanksgiving, you are like the pilgrims who lost many compatriots and were excruciatingly, exquisitely aware of the blessing of surviving their first winter.

If you answered with mostly b’s: You experience gratitude in the presence of beauty, order, and especially nature. If you want to feel and express more gratitude, pay attention to your environment. Go ahead and send thank you notes, but make sure, for your fulfillment, as well as the recipients’, that you select a beautiful card. If you like to write, pour over the word selection as a poet would. And write your thank you notes in a peaceful natural setting. In terms of Thanksgiving, you are aware of bounty – in food, nature, friendship, and all its forms.

If you answered with mostly c’s: Your gratitude comes to the fore when surrounded by people. People you love and feel closest too are, of course, the strongest and readiest trigger. But you can tap into the holiness in any gathering. Like Buber, you find God in the meeting places. So, never allow yourself to become isolated. Reach out with a loving, helping hand – for your sake as well as for the good of others. In terms of Thanksgiving, you are like the pilgrims who bonded on that first Thanksgiving with one another and with the Native Americans who helped them survive.

If you answered with mostly d’s: Your gratitude is future-oriented. You like to focus on the positive and the possible. Moving on, moving forward, learning about what is new and exciting are all encouraging to you. The ability to start over or to give others a fresh gives you joy. In terms of Thanksgiving, you are like the pilgrims who set out for a new world. Once having arrived and suffered terrible losses, they nevertheless chose to celebrate survival and to look forward, more than back.

Questions to Keep the Conversation Going:

1. For which question were you really hard pressed to choose and why?
2. What other gratitude “types” can you think of?
3. What most reliably “plugs you in” to feeling and acting grateful?
4. How might you seek out, or increase the frequency of, what triggers gratitude in you?
5. How might you expand the range of what triggers gratitude in you?
6. What triggers you to feel disgruntled, entitled, or selfish – and what can you do about that?
7. What are you grateful for this Thanksgiving that is new and specific to this year?