

Though Marcus Cicero, the Roman scholar and orator says (“**Pro Plancio**”), around 50 BC (?), that *gratitude* is “*the....virtue*” that “*is not only the greatest, but is also the parent of all the other virtues*”, he does not do much to persuade us.

The persuasion, that Cicero was right, was left to our times — to scientists who match philosophers in the love of learning, and match poets in the recognition of the ineffable.

Karel Schrijver (Astrophysicist at the Lockheed Martin Advanced Technology Center) and Iris Schrijver (Professor of Pathology and Pediatrics at the Stanford University School of Medicine) write (“**Living with the Stars: How the Human Body is Connected to the Life Cycles of the Earth, the Planets, and the Stars**”):

Appropriately enough, we can call the number of stars in the Galaxy — at least a 100 billion (and likely a few times that many) — astronomically large. There are, however, something like 500 times that many cells in the human body: 50 trillion (and maybe twice that many). Each cell, on average, contains very approximately as many atoms as there are cells in the body....we can but be in awe of our bodies, which, most of the time, manage to successfully run an assembly of individual cells that outnumber the human population of the entire planet by a factor of close to 10,000.

Even more than the matter of scale and the variety of the links to the world around us, it was the utterly transient character of our human bodies that struck a chord. We are not just taking in and burning fuel, like a car would, but instead we use our food to rebuild our bodies, over and over again throughout our lives. Very little of our physical bodies lasts for more than a few years, which is completely at odds with our feelings of continuity over a lifetime.



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Brian Greene (theoretical Physicist and Professor at Columbia University) adds (“**Until the End of Time: Mind, Matter, and Our Search for Meaning in an Evolving Universe**”) that *“our existence”* itself *“is astonishing. Rerun the Big Bang but slightly shift this particle’s position or that field’s value, and for virtually any fiddling the new cosmic unfolding will not include you or me or the human species or planet earth or anything else we value deeply.”*

And we, human beings, Bill Bryson writes (“**A Short History of Nearly Everything**”) are *“a musty archive of adjustments. adaptations, modifications”* of *“a single original plan”*.

“Providential tinkerings” over *“3.8 billion years”*, Bill says, have made us what we are today

We are a miracle — everything is....

Providential tinkerings....!!!

For *Existence* (all of it), we can only respond (by uttering, what the German mystic Meister Eckhart is quoted as saying is, the highest prayer): *Thank you*.

If we truly comprehend this, we will live with love, and reverence for all forms of life — and, for all things.

Peace ☐

We are a miracle — everything is....

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