

THE LIFE-CHANGING BENEFITS OF...

LIVING IN GRATITUDE



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Introduction: Why You Should Practice Gratitude Daily

A quick check in a thesaurus shows that the following words are opposites, or antonyms, for the word gratitude:

- ✘ Callousness
- ✘ Agitation
- ✘ Ungrateful
- ✘ Thanklessness
- ✘ Desecration
- ✘ Condemnation

Think about the emotions attached to those words. What is your emotional state when you feel agitated or when someone says you are callous? The last time you were ungrateful or thankless, how did you feel? When something has been desecrated or condemned, it has been knocked down and destroyed, either physically or emotionally, how does that affect you?

When you are not grateful for what you have, the emotions and feelings you experience are negative, dark, and hurtful.

Wonderfully, the opposite occurs when you express gratitude. The last time you were openly grateful about something, you felt good. You were peaceful and happy, content and calm, and filled with positive feelings in your mind and spirit. You were honoured to be in a position where you could realize you had so much to be thankful for. Therefore, it is so important to express gratitude on a daily basis.

Something marvellous happens, both physiologically and spiritually, when you are truly thankful.



In an instant, the world looks like a much better place. You seem to have a calm clarity of "vision" about who you are. Suddenly, you see solutions instead of problems, opportunities for growth rather than challenges, and you feel connected to something bigger than yourself.

In this special report, you will discover the amazing benefits you enjoy in mind, body and spirit when you are grateful. You will learn how to create a gratitude journal and the powerful link between meditating and becoming more aware of the many things you should be thankful for.

Through daily acts of gratitude, you will find yourself complaining less and seeing fewer negatives, while simultaneously discovering more positive situations in your life. We will also give you a few ideas to help you spot gratitude opportunities, so you can reap the incredible rewards the simple act of saying "Thank You" can deliver.

The Benefits of Practicing Daily Gratitude

Humans are incredibly complex beings. Literally millions of processes are happening inside your body at any given moment. They control how your body and mind work. Then there are your emotions and your spiritual being. Unlike your physical body, your spirituality and the way you feel about things are ethereal, and cannot be seen.

However, your physical, mental and spiritual aspects are all related, and influenced by each other. This complexity means that a positive mind-set can deliver physical rewards. Taking care of your physical body makes your mind and spirit healthier. Keeping your brain sharp allows for spiritual and physical health and well-being.

This is how the powerful emotions that come from a sense of gratefulness can positively impact your life on so many levels.



Incidentally, the benefits from a daily practice of gratitude are nearly limitless. Since all people are different, you may experience a different set of physical, mental and spiritual rewards than someone else. In many cases however, there are common benefits of being grateful which are consistently reported. Some have even been documented scientifically, and are included in the list of impressive gratitude benefits listed below.

(NOTE: A great reference of scientific proof details 26 gratitude studies and their benefits. You can access those studies at <http://happierhuman.com/the-science-of-gratitude/>.)

Expressing Thanks Makes You More Productive

Grateful people are productive people. They get more done because their mind is clear and sharp. When you show appreciation for something, it means you are focusing on the positive things in your life, rather than your worries and troubles. We know that constant worry causes stress in both mind and body. When you are worried and stressed out, you can't focus, since your mind is concentrating on trying to remove whatever is causing the stress in your life.

A lack of focus leads to a drop in productivity. A daily acknowledgment of the blessings in your life delivers mental peace and clarity. This leads to an improved ability to concentrate, which can make you more productive at any task or endeavour.



Gratitude Helps in the Decision-Making Process

Even the smallest of decisions is an involved process. Think about something as simple as driving to the store to pick up a gallon of milk. Should you change, or go in the clothes you're wearing? How much fuel do you have in your vehicle? While you are there, do you need to buy anything else? If you leave now, will you be back in time for the start of your favourite program, or should you wait until after the show is over?

This illustrates how many thought processes go into making a simple decision. Imagine how much more complicated the decision-making process is for doctors. They are tasked with choosing the right treatment or medication for a patient every time. One study showed that after expressing gratitude, doctors were able to make a healthier and more accurate diagnosis than if they did not feel thankful.

One set of doctors was shown a list of symptoms of an imaginary patient. On top of that, they were handed misleading information. They were told the patient had already been diagnosed by another doctor as having contracted lupus. Half of the doctors in this experiment were given a token of appreciation, which they felt grateful for.

The other half of the doctors did not receive any token of appreciation. Those doctors were much more likely to simply go with the incorrect lupus diagnosis than the doctors who were grateful. The doctors who expressed thanks for their

gift spent more time and energy trying to ascertain whether the lupus diagnosis was correct or not. The grateful doctors also considered a much broader range of treatments.

It appears that being grateful strengthens your ability to make good decisions. As in the case just mentioned, it doesn't even matter if the gratitude is for anything related to the choice you have to make. Practice daily gratitude, and you will make better decisions in all aspects of your life.

Being Grateful Leads to a Relaxed State

Positive emotions are related to feelings of calm, peacefulness and tranquillity. Negative emotions and feelings cause a mental and spiritual state of disarray, anxiety, stress and disruption. The next time you are feeling anxious, depressed or stressed, take a couple of deep breaths. Close your eyes and envision something that you are thankful for.

Express real gratitude for that blessing, either out loud, or silently to yourself. You will notice the stress and anxiety slipping away. Some research has shown that this practice of gratitude actually slows down the production of stress hormones in your body, which delivers a relaxed feeling of stress-relief.



Thankfulness Destroys Envy

Have you ever been envious of someone or something else? That is not a good feeling, is it? You focus in on the target of your envy, and you can see or think of nothing else. This can lead to a mental and emotional state categorized by distrust, materialism, inferiority and insecurity, and in severe cases even hatred. You secretly feel you are less than you should be and you begin to resent yourself, since you do not have the thing or person you are envious of.

Practicing gratefulness wipes away any thoughts of envy. You realize that what you already have is very worthy of your gratitude. You cannot think an envious thought when you develop a grateful mind-set. Instead of being envious of something that someone else has, you are happy for them. You are also happy for your own set of blessings, and very grateful for them in your life.

Practicing Thankfulness Boosts Self-Esteem

What if you had nothing to be thankful for? What if there was nothing in your life to express gratitude over? That is a horrible reality no one should face. Certainly, everyone has many things to be grateful for. When you take the time to notice how many wonderful blessings you have in your life, you can't help but feel good about yourself.

This gives your self-esteem and self-love a boost.

This happens because when you display true gratitude, you see yourself as a person who is worthy of the things you are grateful for. You recognize the gifts in your life as rewards for being a good person. Whenever you need to improve the way you look at yourself, and a reminder that you are a valuable, wonderful, good human being, take time to be thankful.

Being Thankful Keeps You from Becoming Self-Centred

Just as gratitude gives your self-esteem a positive jolt, it also keeps you from being selfish. You may think that if gratitude causes a rise in self-esteem, it could lead to an egotistic attitude. The exact opposite is the case. Gratitude leads to a realization that not everyone has as many rewards and blessings as you do.

This keeps you from looking at the world in an egocentric manner.

It is tough to be a narcissistic and self-absorbed individual when you see so many gifts in your life that others do not have. This also leads to a higher sense of appreciation and gratitude for everything positive that happens to you. Gratitude makes you focus on others, on their acts of benevolence and giving that have impacted you, rather than always thinking about yourself.

Gratitude Increases Your Level of Happiness

It's true, you are happier after you feel a sense of gratefulness. We are often grateful for an act of kindness someone has performed on our behalf. We are thankful for a gift, a personal achievement we are proud of, or a beautiful sunset. These are all cases where our happiness is bolstered because of something we are thankful for.

You can use this emotional response to gratitude in your daily life. A few times a

day, give yourself a break. Look around you. What do you have to be thankful for ... your wonderful family, your friends, your home, a nice meal and that smiling neighbour who always stops to have a pleasant chat when they see you. Life's pleasures are all around us, and when we take the time to appreciate them, our happiness grows.



Being Grateful Creates "Social Capital"... It Makes People like You

Incredibly, there is scientific proof that when you express gratitude, people are more inclined to want to be around you. A group of researchers performed 2 different studies, with a total of 243 volunteers. They asked the participants how grateful they were in their lives, how often they expressed gratitude. They then instructed them to consciously be more aware of more situations, occasions and other things to be grateful for.

The students who reported being more grateful than before became more trusting and social, appreciative and nicer. This made them more attractive to others, thus more likable. The researchers noticed that just a 10% increase in how grateful the volunteers were generated roughly 17.5% more social capital. Social capital is a term which describes the things which make you more sociable, and that also make other people want to be around you and get to know you.

The effect is subtle, and is not anything that you consciously do. You simply give off a vibe of likability. Practicing daily gratitude can help you deepen your existing relationships and make new friends. Because people unconsciously desire to be around you due to this gratitude benefit, this can give a boost to your career. In any number of ways, being grateful makes you that person that other people

want to have as a friend.

Gratitude Makes You Healthier in Mind and Body

A study entitled Positive Psychology Progress was released in 2005. It showed that keeping a daily gratitude journal resulted in 30% fewer symptoms of depression, as long as the gratitude journal was updated regularly. Take some time to start and maintain a gratitude journal (we show you exactly how to do this later), and you boost your happiness while lowering your risk of becoming depressed.

That same study asked a group of volunteers to make a gratitude visit. This is when you physically meet someone to tell them that you are thankful for having them in your life, or for something they did for you. A single visit to personally tell someone they were appreciated led to an incredible 35% drop in depression symptoms for several weeks!



Research released in 2003, in a report titled Counting Blessings Versus Burdens, showed just how routine gratitude dramatically increased physical health in several different areas. Keeping a daily gratitude journal led to ...

- An increase of 8% more sleep, and an impressive 25% increase in the quality of sleep
- Volunteers reporting 10% less physical pain
- A jump of 19% in time spent exercising
- A drop of 16% in poor health symptoms

Multiple independent studies show when you are grateful more often, you have more energy and vitality. A 2007 report titled Gratitude: Effects on Perspectives and Blood Pressure revealed a link between hypertension and emotions. Doctors that participated in that study asked their patients to "count their blessings once a week" as a complementary therapy to traditional treatment methods.

That simple once a week pattern of gratefulness led to a "significant decrease in systolic blood pressure", which led to a lowering of high blood pressure. This drop of high blood pressure symptoms was much greater in the patients who were thankful once every 7 days, than it was in patients who were not given that instruction.

Gratitude may not be able to cure cancer, but the positive emotions that come from thankfulness lead to overall health and wellness. Over 130 different research studies show that practicing gratitude can boost your immune system functioning, help you recover faster from medical procedures, make your heart healthier and decrease the likelihood that you will develop a mental disorder. All in all, this means that you have to visit the doctor less often than those people who do not express thankfulness on a regular basis.

Gratitude Helps You Live Longer

Psychologists and experts on the subject of the human brain understand that optimism and positive emotions allow you to live longer than pessimistic, negative people. It all has to do with the stress hormones your body produces when it senses you are not happy. You know from earlier that expressing gratitude creates positive emotions. These emotions make you optimistic about yourself, the people in your life, your immediate environment and the world at large.

This is how being appreciative can actually lead to a longer life.

You have fewer cases of stress, anxiety and depression. Your brain releases "feel good" hormones rather than anxiety and stress-producing hormones. This leads to a body and mind which are healthier than if they are affected by the inflammation which is caused by continuous stress and negative emotions. Practice gratitude every day and you not only live longer, but you also enjoy and appreciate the time you have.

How to Start a Gratitude Journal

Any notebook or paper tablet can serve as a gratitude journal. However, you should make sure that your journal is physically appealing to you. Try to find one that is a colour you like, and has a binding or wrapper that feels good in your hands. This will help you enjoy the process of writing down your grateful thoughts more than if you use a standard tablet or notebook.

Each night before you go to bed, think about and write down what you were grateful for that day. This night-time practice has been proven to improve sleep quality, and also to help you fall asleep quicker. Don't just think about huge, monumental, life-changing moments of gratefulness. A good book, a new movie you viewed, and other simple, daily occurrences are all worthy of gratitude.

Try to write down 5 to 10 different things that made you grateful that day. If you like to read or watch television before you go to bed, that is okay. Just make sure that journaling your thoughts of gratitude is the very last thing you do before you go to sleep.

If you are unsure how to create your own gratitude journal, turn to the Internet.

Go to your favourite search engine and look for "gratitude journal" or "thankfulness journal". There are all kinds of online gratitude journal templates that you can personalize for your own unique situation. Look for "online gratitude journal" to find pieces of software and applications that let you access your gratitude journal from any Internet connected device.

You can also head over to the online retailing kingpin Amazon and perform a search for "gratitude journal". A recent such search returned more than 500 results. A few of the thankfulness journals with very high customer satisfaction scores are ...

- Instant Happy Journal: 365 Days of Inspiration, Gratitude, and Joy
- The Secret Gratitude Book
- The Five-Minute Journal: A Happier You in 5 Minutes a Day
- Even Happier: A Gratitude Journal for Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfilment
- Five Minute Gratitude Journal: 5 Minutes A Day To Develop An Attitude of Gratitude Notebook (Five Minute Journals)
- The Simple Abundance Journal of Gratitude

How Meditation Can Help Your Gratitude Practice

Expressing gratitude is all about being aware.

You must be consciously aware of the many blessings in your life for you to be grateful for them. One way to improve your awareness is to take up the practice of meditation. For thousands of years, people have used meditation to focus on the moment, and live "*in the now*". Meditation lowers stress and anxiety levels, has been linked to heart health, lowers your risk of developing neurological problems, and can be practiced just about anywhere.

You don't have to pull out the incense and a yoga mat to meditate.

Find a place that is free of distractions, both visual and audible. Take a few slow, deep breaths. Focus on nothing more than your breathing. Recognize the pattern of your breath, and clear your mind. You should do this with your eyes open, without judging or responding to anything you see or hear.

This is called mindfulness meditation.

You are mindful of only the current moment. There is no past and no future. You are living in "*the now*", a process which leads to peace and tranquillity. This simple meditation recipe clears your mind and helps you focus your thoughts. When you are through meditating, you will find yourself feeling clean mentally, and positive emotionally. This is the perfect frame of mind for opening your eyes to the grateful aspects of your life.

As you come out of your meditation, tell yourself that you are grateful for you. Express a love for yourself exactly as you are now. Smile and feel good about your world and who you are. Then continue to move through your daily routine, and you will find yourself noticing plenty to be thankful for.



How to Stop Complaining and Focus on the Positives

It's easy to become frustrated and angry from time to time. Human beings are not perfect. You are going to lose control of your emotions every once in a while. It's just natural. When you experience the feeling that you are out of control, a normal response is to complain about the situation or problem you find yourself in.

Complaining about things you cannot change is a waste of time. This defeats your positive energy, boosts negative energy, and leads to stress and anxiety. As you learned earlier, stress is the enemy of gratitude. You can't be thankful for things in your life when you are stressed out and worrying all the time.

Fortunately, it is rather easy to stop unnecessary complaining and focus on a positive approach instead. No one can control your mood unless you let them. That means that all you have to do is change your mind whenever you like, and move your mood from negative to positive. If that sounds difficult, or even impossible, try this.

The next time something bad happens and you catch yourself complaining, either out loud or silently to yourself, say **"Stop"**. Then look at the negative situation and put a positive spin on it. If you are stuck in rush hour traffic and running late for an appointment or other responsibility, don't complain about the situation. You can't control the situation.

Instead, tell yourself you are grateful for this unscheduled period of free time. Spend it meditating, jotting down the reasons why you should be grateful today, or pick up your phone and call a friend that you are grateful for. If family members or friends are in your vehicle with you, think about why you are grateful for them, and then share your thoughts.



Problems and negative events are nothing more than opportunities.

Negative, unsuccessful, unhealthy people see nothing but problems in their lives. They are constantly complaining, increasing levels of stress in their bodies, and this leads to inflammation that causes a long list of physical problems. Positive, happy, healthy people, like yourself, can always find the silver lining in every cloud.

12 Practical Ideas for Practicing Gratitude Every Day

If you are having a tough time wondering what you should be grateful for, or you find yourself forgetting to be grateful each day, we are here to help. The following tips and strategies will make it easy for you to practice gratitude every day.

- 1 - Keep "Be Grateful" sticky notes at strategic places in your home and at work.
- 2 - Call a different person each day and thank them for something they have done for you.
- 3 - Anytime you eat, take a moment to express appreciation for your meal.
- 4 - Keep your gratitude journal by your bed or your alarm clock, where you will see it every night.
- 5 - Write in your gratitude journal the same time each day or night.
- 6 - Use all of your senses – you have the ability to feel, see, smell, taste and hear, and all of your senses can reveal something you should be grateful for.
- 7 - Each morning upon waking, make a vow to practice gratitude that day.
- 8 - Look outward, and not inward – grateful people recognize what others have done for them, rather than concentrating on their own actions.
- 9 - Find a gratitude partner. Have that person routinely ask you if you have expressed gratitude that day, and you can do the same for them.

10 - When you find yourself thinking negatively, find something positive to focus on instead.

11 - Send thank you notes to let the important people in your life know that you appreciate them.

12 - Type "gratitude quotes" into your favourite search engine, and refer to at least one quote each day.

*Thank
You*

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