ver the past decade, psychologists have not only identified the great social, psychological and physical health benefits that come from giving thanks, they've zeroed in on some concrete practices that help you reap those benefits.

Perhaps the most popular practice is to keep a gratitude journal or diary. The simple act of writing down the things for which we're grateful can have benefits including better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness, and more happiness among adults and kids alike.

The basic practice is straightforward. In many of the studies, people are simply instructed to record five things they experienced in the past week for which they're grateful. The entries are supposed to be brief – just a single sentence – and they range from the mundane ("waking up this morning") to the sublime ("the generosity of friends") to the timeless ("the Rolling Stones").

However, not everyone has found it to be helpful. Common underlying issues with people reporting no significant difference included the following:

- Journaling seemed to be a matter of 'just go through the motions'.
- Going for breadth over depth focusing on superficial lists of many things rather than elaborating in detail on one particular thing.
- Not getting personal focusing on others or things rather than themselves.
- Try subtraction, not just addition. One effective way of stimulating gratitude is to reflect on what your life would be like without certain blessings, rather than just tallying up all those good things.
- Savour surprises record the unexpected, as these tend to elicit stronger levels of gratitude.
- Don't overdo it if you find daily writing is too much then simply do it once or twice a week.

We (humans) adapt to positive events quickly, especially if we constantly focus on them. It is really about forcing yourself to pay attention to the good things in life you'd otherwise take for granted. Relish and savour your entries, don't hurry through like you are writing a grocery list.

Writing helps to organise thoughts, facilitate integration and helps you to

Gratitude And Why it Matters



accept your own experiences and put them in context. In essence, it allows you to see the meaning of events going on around you and create meaning in your own life.

10 WAYS TO BECOMING MORE GRATEFUL

Keep a Gratitude Journal
Establish a daily practice in which
you remind yourself of the gifts, grace,
benefits and good things you enjoy.
Setting aside time on a daily basis to recall
moments of gratitude associated with
ordinary events, your personal attributes
or valued people in your life gives you the
potential to interweave a sustainable life
theme of gratefulness.

Remember the Bad

To be grateful in your current state, it is helpful to remember the hard times that you once experienced. When you remember how difficult life used to be and how far you have come, you set up an explicit contrast in your mind, and this contrast is fertile ground for gratefulness.

Ask Yourself Three Questions
Use the meditation technique known as Naikan, which involves reflecting on three questions:

- "What have I received from __?"
- "What have I given to __?"
- "What troubles and difficulty have I caused?"

Learn Prayers of Gratitude

In many spiritual traditions, prayers of gratitude are considered to be the most powerful form of prayer because through these prayers people recognise the ultimate source of all they are and all they will ever be.

Come to Your Senses

Through our senses – the ability to touch, see, smell, taste, and hear – we gain an appreciation of what it means to be

human and of what an incredible miracle it is to be alive. Seen through the lens of gratitude, the human body is not only a miraculous construction, but also a gift.

Use Visual Reminders

Because the two primary obstacles to gratefulness are forgetfulness and a lack of mindful awareness, visual reminders can serve as cues to trigger thoughts of gratitude. Often times, the best visual reminders are other people, photographs, trinkets or keepsakes.

Make a Vow to Practise Gratitude

Research shows that making an oath to perform a behaviour increases the likelihood that the action will be executed. Therefore, write your own gratitude vow, which could be as simple as "I vow to count my blessings each day," and post it somewhere where you will be reminded of it every day.

8 Watch your Language

Grateful people have a particular linguistic style that uses the language of gifts, givers, blessings, blessed, fortune, fortunate and abundance. In gratitude, you should not focus on how inherently good you are, but rather on the inherently good things that others have done on your behalf.

Go Through the Motions
If you go through grateful motions,
the emotion of gratitude should be
triggered. Grateful motions include smiling,
saying thank you and writing letters of
gratitude.

Think Outside the Box

If you want to make the most out of opportunities to flex your gratitude muscles, you must creatively look for new situations and circumstances in which to feel grateful.

The information contained in this article is intended as general guidance and information only and should not be relied upon as a basis for planning individual medical care or as a substitute for specialist medical advice in each individual case. ©Co-Kinetic 2020





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