

How to Practice Gratitude

You've likely heard that practicing gratitude is good for your body, your mind, and your soul. It is also often mentioned that a practice of gratitude will help you manifest the life of your dreams.

But how do you actually put a practice of gratitude into practice? Keep reading!

Gratitude has strong links to life satisfaction and good mental health. People who are grateful experience more enthusiasm, love, and joy. They also have better protection from emotions that have a destructive impact like bitterness, greed, and envy. Simply because they are more focused on what is good in their life.

It is believed that gratitude can reduce your lifetime risk of developing a substance abuse disorder, anxiety, or even depression. It can also help those who suffer from these issues and other conditions to find healing and closure. Being thankful helps you to understand that there is goodness out there, even if you are suffering or feeling lost.

Gratitude isn't just an uplifting and warm feeling; it can also benefit your body. People who introduce gratitude practice into their lives cope more effectively with stress, enjoy better physical health, and recover more rapidly from illnesses.

Even better, gratitude extends beyond you. When you experience gratitude, it reaches past you into your wider social circle. Gratitude has the power of inspiring others to act more kindly, and it can strengthen your bond with others around you. People who are grateful are more likely to be viewed as trustworthy, optimistic, outgoing, and helpful. These are valuable characteristics that draw others to you and help you forge positive and strong relationships. And better yet?

Gratitude is contagious! Wouldn't you love to spread more good feelings to your community, to the world?!

When you introduce gratitude practice into your everyday routine, you'll experience positive effects such as:

- A sense of abundance in your life
- A greater appreciation of how others contribute to your well-being
- Recognition of the small pleasures in life
- Developing a more positive outlook that allows for a happier life experience

If you start practicing gratitude regularly, you can begin to reap all those benefits for yourself.

Banishing Negativity, Focusing On Positivity

A key element of introducing gratitude practice into your life is banishing negativity and focusing on positivity in return.

Thinking positively comes with a host of benefits including:

- Happiness – banishing negativity in favor of a positive attitude can awaken happiness in your life. You may not be rich and you may not have reached the career goals you set yourself, but happiness is all about attitude. If you have a positive mindset, you automatically become happy. Recognize your happiness doesn't depend on an external cause. Rather, it comes from within. All too often, we find reasons not to be happy. We delay adopting a positive mindset. I'll be happy when I lose weight. I'll be happy when I win the lottery... Banish negative thoughts like "I'm too fat to be happy," or "I'm too poor to be happy." You can make yourself happy right now without any of those things by simply thinking positively. It sounds hard at first, but with some

practice it can become second nature!

- Motivation – when you banish negative thinking, you can actually become more motivated to accomplish the goals and dreams you set for yourself. Being motivated in itself is a positive characteristic, pushing you forward, encouraging you, and helping you to overcome obstacles. Being positive makes you more motivated to succeed and it also helps you believe that you can be successful. As a result, you will be able to achieve more than you ever imagined.
- Self-esteem – when you have a positive mental attitude you'll have higher self-esteem. You will look at yourself more kindly and begin to see your good traits rather than only the bad ones. Ignore negative people and forget about what they say and think. As soon as you adopt a positive mindset, others around you automatically raise their opinions of you and become more respectful.
- Better health – positive thinkers are usually healthier and more energetic than negative thinkers. The mind's effect on the body is a powerful one, and positive thinkers enjoy a healthier immune system with faster recovery times.
- Better relationships – when you think positively, you'll find that other people gravitate towards you. People prefer those around them to be positive since they bring happiness, energy and joy into their lives.

Gratitude – A Skill That Takes Work

Although we're all capable of being grateful for so many things in life, it's not something that we all do naturally. This makes it a somewhat alien skill. When you first decide to start practicing gratitude it can be very difficult at first.

You may find yourself struggling to think of things to feel

thankful for, or you may try telling yourself to be grateful but not truly feeling it. All of this is normal, and it's something that needs to be worked through to come out the other side and to reap all the benefits that gratitude can bring.

Remember that gratitude is a skill like any other. How does an aspiring musician end up playing at Carnegie Hall? The answer is "practice." It's the same for gratitude. Practice makes perfect, so keep working on being grateful for the little things. It may be hard at first. In fact, it almost certainly will be. But, with a little effort and time, it will eventually become easier and, soon, being thankful will be second nature.

One great way to get started with a gratitude practice is to take a simple paper calendar (you can always make your own) and write three things you are grateful for each day. Ideally you will write your list in the morning, but any time of day you can spend two minutes reflecting on the good in your life is a great time!

As your calendar fills up with all these wonderful, beautiful, even simple things, you will start to see the bounty in which you already live!

If you forget a day, don't fret. Just fill in more things the next day. Can't think of three "new" ideas each day. That's ok! Repeating what you really love, what you are really grateful for is also a great way to start.

The point is to keep up the PRACTICE so that over time gratitude will become a natural process for you every day!