

Gratitude

“Thank you”

Two words that can make a world of difference for both the giver and the receiver. It's hard to feel down when you are feeling grateful.

Gratitude is a state of thankfulness and appreciation. Appreciating something involves taking the time to notice it, acknowledging its value and meaning, as well as feeling a positive emotional connection to it. Paradoxically, in our consumer society with its wealth and material comforts, the expression of genuine gratitude can be quite hard for many of us - partly because we have grown accustomed to on-demand instant gratification, or the quick fix. Materialistic striving - the hedonic treadmill - is strongly associated with life dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Expressions of gratitude have the potential to reduce materialistic strivings and, through doing so, may reduce the negative impact of materialistic strivings on our levels of life satisfaction.

People who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits:

Physical

- Stronger immune systems
- Less bothered by aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Exercise more and take better care of their health
- Sleep longer and feel more refreshed upon waking

Psychological

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- More alert, alive, and awake
- More joy and pleasure
- More optimism and happiness

Social

- More helpful, generous, and compassionate
- More forgiving
- More outgoing
- Feel less lonely and isolated

What good is gratitude?

1. Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present.
2. Gratitude blocks toxic, negative emotions
3. Grateful people are more stress resistant.
4. Grateful people have a higher sense of self-worth.

Cultivating gratitude

1. Keep a Gratitude Journal.
2. Remember the Bad.
3. Ask Yourself Three Questions.
4. Learn Prayers of Gratitude.
5. Come to Your Senses.
6. Use Visual Reminders.
7. Make a Vow to Practice Gratitude.
8. Watch your Language.
9. Go Through the Motions.
10. Write a letter.

Five Myths about Gratitude

1. Gratitude leads to complacency
 2. Gratitude is just a naïve form of positive thinking
 3. Gratitude makes us too self-effacing
 4. You have to be religious to be grateful
 5. Gratitude isn't possible—or appropriate—in the midst of adversity or suffering
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