
GRATITUDE

“The Power of A Positive Attitude”

You may ask yourself, “How can I be grateful during times like these?” Thinking about the good things in your life could seem a bit selfish or self-centered, especially when others around you are struggling and there are so many negative situations occurring in the world all around us. However, expressing gratitude is a simple, yet powerful way to refocus your energy on positive perspectives and to boost feelings of happiness and contentment in your life! And who couldn’t benefit from more happiness in their lives right now?

Gratitude is the act of showing thanks and appreciation for the good things in our lives without ignoring the fact that we do not exist in a perfect world. Dr. Robert Emmons, a leading scientific expert on gratitude and a Professor of Psychology at UC Davis, states that gratitude has the power to heal, energize and change lives. When individuals shift from focusing on negative actions or thoughts and consider things for which they are grateful, there is an amazing change in their mindset that may ultimately change their outlook and behavior.

Much of what we are thankful for comes from people or forces outside of ourselves, particularly when we didn’t earn it or expect it. Gratitude is not only our awareness that there is goodness in our lives, but it is also when we express and acknowledge gratitude, that we receive the most benefits. Gratitude enhances our over-all psychological and physical well-being.

This week’s bulletin will help you identify the importance of regularly expressing gratitude, its impact on various areas of our lives and suggestions to express gratefulness.

The Impact of an Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude influences dopamine and serotone levels, which are the neurotransmitters that are responsible for making us feel good. Studies show that people who are grateful experience improved mental health because they are better able to fight against depression, anxiety and other negative emotions. They are happier, more satisfied, more compassionate and more forgiving. Additionally, these individuals have improved physical health, elevated self-esteem, increased compassion, and an enhanced quality of sleep. Grateful individuals also tend to exercise regularly. People who regularly show gratitude benefit from lower stress levels, healthier relationships, stronger immune systems and more resiliency.

How Often Do I Need to Show My Gratitude?

Often, we take the things that make us happy for granted and this attitude can severely diminish our happiness. Dr. Robert Emmons suggests that we get into the habit of practicing gratitude daily. It’s important to think about what we value and then to practice expressing our appreciation consistently. Research shows that if you focus on what you are grateful for at bedtime, you’re more likely to sleep peacefully throughout

the night. Instead of thinking about what you're grateful for at holidays like Thanksgiving, shift to "Thanksgiving" in which you let your lifestyle speak to your gratefulness. John F. Kennedy once stated that "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them".

Gratitude is most often expressed by simply saying "Thank You". Showing gratitude is about more than just thanking someone after they have extended an act of kindness towards us. Our behavior should be more intentional, seeking opportunities to share our appreciation for the positive ways in which others have impacted our lives. Expressing gratitude not only makes us feel good, but also helps those around us feel good too. Ever notice how someone is positively affected after receiving a compliment, card, act of service, or even a smile?

Ways to Show Gratitude

- Develop a daily list of 3 things for which you are thankful for (Big and/or small).
- Write a Gratitude Letter. Share your gratitude with people by sending a letter, email, Thank You card, or social media message.
- Verbally Express Gratitude. Or do something special for, or with, others.
- Create a Journal. It can express your feelings and how your gratitude has impacted others.
- Create a Gratitude Jar. Insert daily "gratitude slips" about the things that you are grateful for and review them later.
- Develop Family Gratitude. Encourage your children and family members to express gratitude towards one another during family activities.
- Give Back to Others. Volunteer your time and talents where you know it is needed and to show appreciation for the things that you have
- Practice Mindfulness. Be in the moment. Think on the things that you are appreciative of right now.
- Take Gratitude Walks. "Stop and Smell the Roses" while walking through your community or your favorite place and identify what you are grateful for.
- Pray if Spiritual. Send prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings in your life.
- Use Gratitude Apps. Our Gratitude, Live Happy or 365 Gratitude are some examples of apps. to help you on your gratitude journey.

"Gratitude is the healthiest of all human emotions. The more you express gratitude for what you have, the more likely you will have even more to express gratitude for."

Zig Ziglar

Consider Ulliance's Life Enhancement Wellness Coaching to improve your gratitude, feelings of happiness, and optimism for life.